

Ten Pounds in Prizes Every Week!

The BOYS' FRIEND ^{1d}/₂

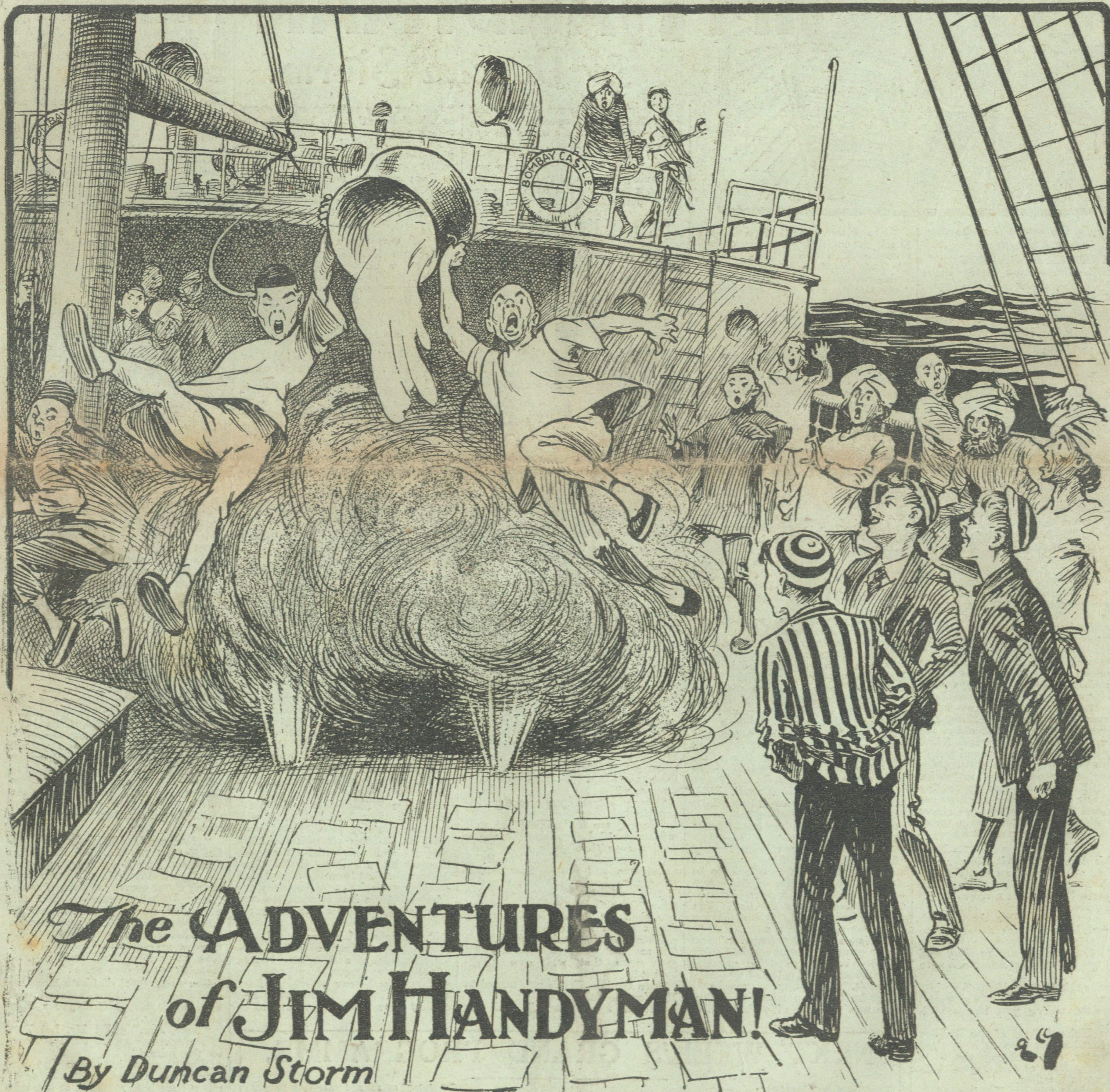
TWELVE PAGES!

TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

No. 1,031. Vol. XXI. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending March 12th, 1921.



The ADVENTURES of JIM HANDYMAN!

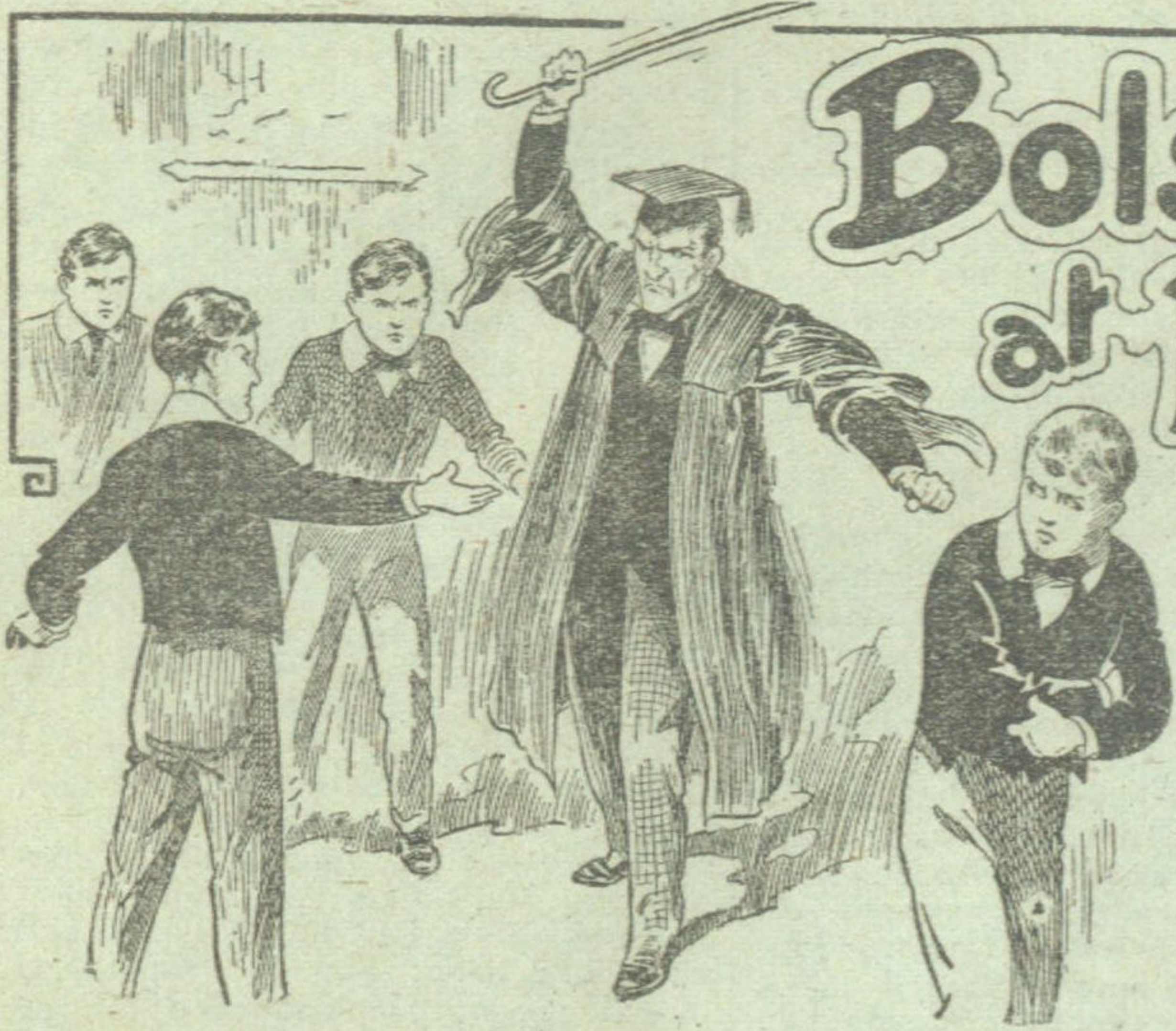
By Duncan Storm

BANG PAPERS!

A sudden lurch of the ship caused the two Chinks to stagger beneath their burden, and the result was alarming. Each of them stepped on to a "bang-paper," and there was a loud double report. The copper of treacle and rice shot into the air and the contents rained down in a sticky torrent. "Ai-oo!" yelled one. "Feet belong me tickle too much!"

Two Grand New Yarns in This Issue!

A FINE LONG COMPLETE YARN OF JIMMY SILVER & Co.



Bolshevism at Rookwood!

A GRAND TALE OF THE
CHUMS OF
ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.
BY ..
OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

The New Master of the Fourth!

"Christopher's late!"
Arthur Edward Lovell made that remark, with a grin.
The Rookwood Fourth were assembled for more than five minutes. And still they were left to their own devices.

Mr. Cutts, the new master of the Fourth, was not punctual.

All the Fourth were there—Classical and Modern. And they waited for Mr. Christopher Cutts to "blow in," as Jimmy Silver expressed it.

So far, the Fourth hadn't seen much of Christopher Cutts. That morning the Head had presented him for the first time—in the place of Mr. Bootles, retired.

They had noted that he was a tall, angular gentleman, with a jaw that closed like a vice, and a very sharp, cold eye. They had found that he had a sharp way of speaking, but not a very pleasant way. But morning lessons had passed off fairly well. The new master was getting into his stride, as it were, and the Fourth had been left rather in doubt as to what they really thought of Mr. Cutts.

Tubby Muffin declared that he was a beast. No doubt that was because Tubby had been chewing toffee in class, and had had his fat knuckles rapped with a pointer in consequence. But nobody else had suffered from the pointer, so far. And Jimmy Silver & Co. generously resolved to give the new man a chance.

His looks were against him, they thought. But as Jimmy said, wisely, a man couldn't help his looks. A man might have a jaw like a vice and a voice like a saw, and yet be a perfectly good fellow. Jimmy Silver & Co. hoped that Mr. Cutts would turn out a good fellow. They had their doubts. But they hoped!

If there was one thing more than another that had impressed them about Mr. Cutts, it was that he was the incarnation of method and discipline. He remembered every fellow's name after hearing it only once. He picked up the threads where Mr. Bootles had left them with perfect facility. He weighed up a fellow in next to no time, and discovered how much there was in him. So, naturally, the Fourth Form had supposed that he would be punctual. They had been very careful to be in the Form-room promptly to time that afternoon.

And now they had waited five minutes for him.

It was a surprise.
Now, according to all rules and regulations, the Rookwood Fourth should have sat quiet and sedate in their places, and waited for the arrival of their Form-master. They should not have stirred; they should not even have talked, and, certainly, they should not have spoken humorously of their Form-master by the name of Christopher. If they had felt bored with waiting, they could have done mental arithmetic to pass the time, or could have allowed their thoughts to dwell upon irregular verbs. The Classical portion of the Form could have let their minds linger lovingly on Greek declensions. The Moderns could have revelled in recollections of their last German lesson, or exercised their brains with imaginary book-keeping by double entry. Really, there was no need for the juniors to grow restive, with all these resources at hand.

But they did grow restive.
Tommy Dodd, the Modern, who was going to the head of a big business some day did not give a single thought to book-keeping, either by

double or single entry. Instead of that, he found a little harmless and necessary relaxation in shying paper balls at the back of Tubby Muffin's head. The Fistical Four, whose Greek really left much to be desired, from a Form-master's point of view, did not recall to mind just then any one of the thirty-six forms of the definite article. They sat on their desks instead of on the form, swung their legs, and chatted.

And the rest were as bad, or worse.

Conroy, Poi.s, and Van Ryn played leap-frog round the Form-room. Mornington and Erroll strolled to a window. Tubby Muffin gnawed toffee—and dodged the paper balls that came whizzing by his head. Dick Oswald perused a book, Flynn read a paper, Jones minor made desperate attempts to balance a ruler on his chin. Putty Grace squeezed a tube of lanoline into Lovell's ink-pot—which was to cause Lovell great surprise when he came to use his ink.

There was not a single fellow in the Form who was giving a single thought to a single substantive, verb, adverb, or interjection. They were doing the things which they ought not to have done, and leaving undone the things that they ought to have done.

And there was considerable noise going on. Leap-frog could not be played in silence. Jones minor's ruler crashed on the floor oftener than it balanced on his chin. And a score of voices going at once made a volume of sound that was much more than a whisper. So it was not surprising that the juniors failed to hear a quiet step in the passage outside the half-open door of the Form-room.

"Ten minutes late!" said Lovell, looking at the clock. "Christopher is taking things easy, you chaps."

"So are we!" grinned Raby.
"Let's hope he'll linger longer!" remarked Newcome. "I can do with a rest. We get rotten English Literature this afternoon! I wouldn't mind giving it a miss in baulk, for one."

"Hear, hear!" said Jimmy Silver heartily. "But it's jolly odd of old Chris! I thought he was no end of a punctual beast!"

"He looks as sharp as a razor!" said Lovell. "Did you notice his jaw?"

"Didn't I!" said Jimmy.
"Looks as if he would bite a chap in half for a false quantity," said Raby. "When I first saw him, my idea was that he wasn't safe without a muzzle."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"He may be all right," said Jimmy Silver tolerantly. "A man doesn't make his own face."

"He jolly well wouldn't make one like Christopher's, if he could help it," grinned Lovell. "I wonder if he'd think it rude if I offered him a Guy Fawkes mask? I've got one left over from November."

"Well, he ought to be glad of a chance to improve his looks," said Raby. "But you never know these Form-masters. He might cut up rusty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"He's a beast!" said Tubby Muffin, with his mouth full of toffee. "Dodd, you rotter, stop chucking at me. He's a beast, Jimmy! He gave me an awful rap on the knuckles this morning."

"Not so decent as old Bootles, in any shape or form," said Oswald, looking up from his book.

"I think—" Lovell was beginning.

He stopped suddenly, struck by a look of horror that was gathering on Jimmy Silver's face.
Jimmy seemed transfixed.

In fact, his eyes almost started from his head, just as if he had seen the legendary ghost of Rookwood.

"What on earth—" stuttered Lovell.

Jimmy did not speak.

He pointed.
Outside in the passage the afternoon sun was streaming in at a window. A broad wave of sunlight came through the half-open door of the Form-room. And in the middle of that pool of light was a black shadow. Lovell gasped.

Evidently, a man was standing outside the door, his person intercepting the sunlight and casting that shadow into the room.

He was making no sound, but just standing there, like a statue. But for the shadow falling into the Form-room, the juniors could never have guessed that there was anyone there at all.

"My only hat!" murmured Raby. "Christopher!" breathed Lovell.

"Listening—"

"Watching—"

"Catching us napping—"

"The cad!"

"The howling snob!"
These comments were passed in low whispers. The Fistical Four did not want Mr. Cutts to hear any more of their observations. They shuddered to think of what he must have heard already.

Jimmy Silver waved his hand to Conroy & Co., who were still leap-frogging. He could not call a warning to them without being heard by the man outside the door.

Conroy caught his eye, and stared at him.

"What's the trouble?" he asked, in astonishment.

Jimmy pointed to the shadow.

"Oh crumbs!"

There was a rush of the Colonial Co. to get into their places. The alarm spread now. A wild scramble took place. In the midst of it, the door was thrown wide open, and Mr. Christopher Cutts stalked in.

The 2nd Chapter. Master and Pupils!

"Stop!"
Mr. Cutts rapped out that word like a pistol-shot.

The Fourth-Formers stopped, just where they were. Some of them were in their seats, some a few yards from their seats. All of them were excited and breathless. Mr. Cutts' sharp voice seemed to penetrate the air like an icy wind. It stopped the juniors, just as if they were mechanisms that had suddenly run down.

They all stared at Mr. Cutts.

The tall, bony gentleman towered in the Form-room, and his icy glance swept over the confused juniors. He had two narrow and very bright eyes that glistened a good deal like a rat's. The expression on the hard face was very grim.

"So this is how you behave yourselves during your Form-master's absence!" said Mr. Cutts.

Silence.
"You play leapfrog in the Form-room, you read papers and eat toffee, and you pass disrespectful remarks upon your Form-master."

Mr. Cutts' look and tone were accusing.

The Fourth-Formers looked at their desks or at the floor. There was no denying that the accusations were well founded.

They had done all those things!

And they couldn't reply to Mr. Cutts that it was not a Form-master's duty to creep stealthily up to a door, and wait there watching and listening to ascertain how his pupils behaved in his absence. They couldn't tell him that their old master, Mr. Bootles, wouldn't have

dreamed of doing such a thing. "Back-chat" was not allowed in Rookwood Form-rooms, so in an argument with a Form-master, the Form naturally had the worst of it.

"I am ashamed of you!" said Mr. Cutts.

Some of the Form were ashamed of him; but, again, they couldn't tell him so! That, certainly would not have poured oil upon the troubled waters.

"I will not say I am surprised," continued Mr. Cutts grimly. "My first view of this Form gave me the impression that it had been allowed to get out of hand. Rule has been slack. That will be completely altered in the future—the immediate future."

This was a reflection upon Mr. Bootles, and the juniors resented it. But still they were silent.

"The whole Form will be detained for one hour this afternoon," went on Mr. Cutts. "Modern members of the Form will return here at the usual hour of dismissal, and remain in detention with the Classical members."

"Oh!" murmured Tommy Dodd.

"Silver, Lovell, Raby, Newcome!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Step out here!"

The Fistical Four stepped out.

Mr. Cutts picked a cane from his desk.

"You four juniors have been entertaining yourselves with making insulting remarks about your Form-master!"

"Oh, sir!"

"You do not deny it, I presume?"

"We—we did not mean our remarks to be insulting, sir!" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"They were insulting, whatever you may have meant."

Arthur Edward Lovell's eyes gleamed. Lovell had a rather hasty temper, and did not always reflect before speaking.

"I don't see how you know what our remarks were like, sir," he said boldly.

"I heard them all, Lovell."

Mr. Cutts made no bones about admitting that his ears had been busy at the doorway.

"Of course, we didn't know you were listening, sir," said Lovell.

"What?" thundered Mr. Cutts.

"Shurrup, Lovell!" whispered Jimmy Silver.

But Lovell would not shut up. A Form-master had no right to play the eavesdropper and act upon information thus surreptitiously obtained. Lovell felt it borne in upon him to point that out. In any case, he was going to be caned, and it seemed judicious to have his money's worth, as it were!

"Mr. Bootles would not have taken any notice of words not intended for him to hear, sir," said Lovell.

"Indeed!" sneered the new master.

"Yes, indeed, sir! What we may have said was private conversation, and was not spoken in your presence."

The Form hung on Lovell's words. They wondered where Arthur Edward was getting his nerve from.

"I heard every word you said, Lovell."

"You are bound not to take notice of it, sir."

"Wha-a-at?"

The look on Mr. Cutts' face was now so terrific that Arthur Edward's heart almost failed him. But he kept courageously on.

"As a gentlemen, sir, you're bound not to take notice of words not intended for your ears."

"Doesn't old Lovell talk like a picture-book!" Mornington whispered to Erroll. "I wonder if the Cutts' bird will leave any skin on him?"

Mr. Cutts seemed to find difficulty in breathing for some moments.

"Have you anything more to say, Lovell?" he gasped at last.

"That's all, sir."

"Very good. Stand aside. I shall leave you till last, as I have to punish you for insolence in addition to riot and insubordination. Silver, hold out your hand!"

Swish!

"Raby!"

Swish!

"Newcome!"

Swish!

"You three boys may go to your places," said Mr. Cutts.

Jimmy Silver, and Raby, and Newcome moved off, squeezing their aching palms. They had had only one cut each; but the new master had put his muscle into his work. One lash from Mr. Cutts was worse than two from Mr. Bootles.

Mr. Cutts fixed his steely eyes on Lovell.

"Your hand, Lovell!"

Swish!

"The other hand!"

Swish!

"Again!"

Swish!

"Now again!"

Lovell hesitated. His palms were aching and burning, and he was throbbing with anger and indignation from head to foot. But his hand came slowly out and the cane descended again.

Swish!

"Now go! Another example of insolence on your part, Lovell, and I shall cane you with severity."

Apparently Mr. Cutts did not think he had displayed severity already. Arthur Edward Lovell limped to his form, his face white and set, and only a strong effort of will keeping back the tears from his eyes.

Then Mr. Cutts took his Form in English literature.

He knew his subject—there was no doubt about that; he was an efficient man, perhaps more efficient, if it came to that, than little Mr. Bootles.

But his peculiar methods did not put his pupils in exactly the proper humour for enjoying the beauties of English literature. Even that great poet and dramatist, Shakespeare, failed to elicit any enthusiasm from the Fourth, under the basilisk eye of Christopher Cutts.

Valentine Mornington was the only fellow who succeeded in scoring off Mr. Cutts. Mornny had a quick brain and an iron nerve. Shakespeare being the subject, gave him his opportunity, which he seized. But Mr. Cutts fairly asked for it.

"I see by your books," said Mr. Cutts, "that you have been doing Shakespeare's works with your late Form-master. I am afraid I shall have to ask you to take the matter more seriously than you have been accustomed to. I doubt whether any boy in this Form could recite a striking passage from this great poet, without looking at his book."

"Oh, yes, sir," said Mornington, "I could!"

"So could I, sir," piped Tubby Muffin, anxious to get into the good graces of the terrible gentleman.

Mr. Cutts' lip curled. He had a most unpleasant and disconcerting way of curling his lip.

"I will ascertain the extent of your knowledge," he said. "You first, Muffin! I am listening."

Up rose Tubby Muffin, and started:

"To be or not to be, that is the question,
A ship-boy on the high and giddy mast.

How many thousands of my poorest subjects,
Are in six parts, and every part a ducat."

Tubby Muffin got no farther than that. In spite of Mr. Cutts' steely eye there was a general titter in the Form. Perhaps it was the steely eye that helped Muffin to get so mixed.

Even Mr. Cutts smiled grimly.

"Muffin!"

"Ye-ee-s, sir?"

"You will take two hundred lines."

"Oh dear!"

"Now, Mornington!"

Valentine Mornington lounged to his feet, as cool as ice, and recited in his turn, very correctly:

"Man, vain man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high Heaven
As make the angels weep!"

There was no mistaking Mornny's intonation. That he was calmly applying those telling lines to Mr. Cutts himself was obvious to every one in the Form, including Christopher Cutts.

Mr. Cutts' face became a rich purple.

The juniors tried not to grin, but they could not help it. Mornny had hit off Mr. Cutts wonderfully—with the assistance of William Shakespeare. He was dressed in a little brief authority, and in the opinion of the Fourth Form at least, his fantastic tricks might have made the angels weep.

"Mornington!" thundered Mr. Cutts.

"Yes, sir?" said Mornny in his silky tones.

"Is it your intention, sir, to be insolent?"

"Insolent, sir?" said Mornny in a tone of wonder. "I was reciting Shakespeare, sir. The lines are Shakespeare's, not mine. I—I couldn't make up lines like that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Who laughed?"

Whoever it was that laughed, he was not laughing at Mr. Cutts' basilisk eye swept over the class.

Nobody felt inclined to laugh, or even to smile; with that keen and searching eye roving in his direction.

Mr. Cutts gave Mornington a very expressive look. He had to drop the subject. He felt that he could not very well call Morny to account for it. But he did not forget. Ten minutes later Valentine Mornington yawned slightly. Then Mr. Cutts was upon him.

"Mornington! Do you consider the Form-room is the place for yawning?"

"Ahem! No, sir."

"Stand out, Mornington!"

Mornington lounged out before the class, with a smile on his face. He winked at Jimmy Silver as he passed him. His look told plainly enough that having had his little joke with the new master he expected to have to pay for it.

Swish, swish!

"I will keep discipline in this class!" said Mr. Cutts.

And he did.

From that moment the Fourth were on their best behaviour, though their suppressed feelings were anything but good. After English literature had been disposed of, the Modern portion of the Form cleared off, to take chemistry with Mr. Manders "over the way." But the hapless Classics had to endure Mr. Cutts all the afternoon. And before lessons were over there wasn't a fellow in the Classical Fourth who did not yearn to use Mr. Christopher Cutts as a punch-ball—without gloves.

The 3rd Chapter. Quits the Limit!

"The brute!"
"The beast!"
"The rotter!"
"The rank outsider!"

Such were the comments of the Fourth Form on their new master after lessons and detention that day. Moderns and Classics, for once, were fully agreed. Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd saw eye to eye.

Every unpleasant name that could possibly be thought of fitted Mr. Cutts to a hair!

He was a brute, a beast, a bully, a snob, a rank outsider, the limit, the outside edge—he was everything that was horrid and unpleasant and disagreeable.

The Moderns congratulated themselves that they wouldn't have so much to do with him as the Classics.

In Mr. Bootles' time they had rather envied the Classics; for Mr. Manders, the Modern master, was rather a cough-drop, as Tommy Dodd put it. But Mr. Manders was kind and gentle in comparison with the unspeakable Cutts. The Modern juniors felt quite a filial affection for him, in comparison with their feelings towards Mr. Cutts. And as Lovell dismally remarked, a master couldn't be more unpleasant than Manders without being the very outside edge.

Needless to say, the comments of the Fourth were not passed where Mr. Christopher Cutts could overhear them.

They had already learned to be wary of the stealthy gentleman.

Even in the Fourth-Form passage they glanced round before they called Mr. Cutts a beast, or a bully, or a bounder.

In the end study, over a late tea, Jimmy Silver & Co. discussed the situation in gloomy tones.

"How are we going to stand him," asked Lovell. "My paws are still aching."

"Can we stand him?" said Newcome.

Jimmy Silver grunted.

"How can we help it?" he asked.

"But if he goes on as he's started and—"

"Life won't be worth living—"

"He's an impossible beast!"

"A regular Hun!"

"We've got to mind our p's and q's," said Jimmy. "He's a good man as far as work goes. He knows his business. I dare say he could walk all over poor old Bootles, if it came to that. But bully-ragging isn't the way to impart giddy knowledge. He will have all the Form in a state of red-hot rebellion at this rate."

"A rotten Prussian!" said Lovell.

"A blessed Boche!" said Raby.

"Thank goodness, we're quit of him till to-morrow!" said Jimmy Silver. "That's something."

But Jimmy Silver was mistaken on that point.

The chums of the end study were thinking of beginning prep when the study door opened, without a knock.

To their astonishment, Mr. Cutts appeared on the threshold.

The juniors rose to their feet, with clouded faces. Every other master at Rookwood knocked at a door before entering.

"It is seven o'clock!" said Mr. Cutts sharply.

"We know that, sir."

"Why are you not at preparation?"

"We were just thinking of beginning."

"Thinking of it is not enough!" said Mr. Cutts sharply. "For this once I will excuse you, as you have plainly not been accustomed to anything like order. Remember that in future preparation commences at precisely seven."

"Oh!"

"And it will be done under my personal supervision," added Mr. Cutts.

"Oh!"

"Leave your door open."

"Oh!"

Mr. Cutts walked to the next study. The Fistical Four exchanged speechless looks.

Prep was supposed to be done between seven and half-past eight, and it was left to the juniors. If they neglected their prep, there was trouble in the Form-room to follow. The Second and the Third prepared their lessons in their Form-rooms, under a master's eye. But the Fourth were above that—at least, such had always been the custom. Mr. Cutts was inaugurating new customs.

Prep was to be done under his supervision, just as if the Fourth were fags like the Second and Third! Without a word the Fistical Four set to work.

Prep was quickly going on in the other studies.

All the doors were left open, so that the juniors were under the super-

"I don't suppose the Head knows."

"He ought to be told, then."

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"The Head's sure to back up a Form-master," he said. "Cutts would lick us for going to him. No good asking for more trouble. We seem to have enough to go on with."

"I'm not standin' much more of it," said Mornington. "He caned me for speakin' to Erroll durin' prep, just as if we were beastly little inky fags in a beastly Form-room."

"You pulled his leg in class," said Lovell.

"I'll do more than that!" said Mornington, between his teeth. "I hear that Cutts is takin' on seein' lights out in our dorm, instead of one of the prefects. We're goin' to have Cutts from early morn to dewy eve. It's goin' to be Cutts first, Cutts last, an' Cutts all the time."

"Keep smiling!" said Jimmy, but his voice was not so cheerful as usual.

"You've spotted the kind of brute he is," said Mornington. "He likes usin' the cane! He's a bully!"

"I'm afraid he is," admitted Jimmy Silver.

"If he comes to the dorm to see lights out he'll make an excuse for canin' at least one chap."

"Very likely."

"Well, are we goin' to stand it?" demanded Mornington excitedly.

"I don't quite see what we can do."

Mornington snapped his teeth.

"Well, I know what I'm goin' to

"I shall return in precisely five minutes!" he said. "By that time I shall expect every boy to be in bed."

Silence! Mr. Cutts walked away, after drawing the door shut behind him.

"Nice man!" groaned Oswald.

"The awful rotter!" mumbled Tubby Muffin.

"Better turn in sharp, you fellows," said Jimmy Silver. "No good asking for trouble."

"I shall be busy for a bit!" drawled Mornington.

From a cupboard at the end of the room Morny extracted a wicker-basket. Inside the basket brown paper had been pasted thickly, to render it more or less water-tight.

Into the basket Mornington emptied a number of bottles he had collected in the cupboard ready. There was a bottle of pyro, a bottle of gum, a bottle of indelible marking-ink, a bottle of red ink, a bottle of vinegar, and several other bottles.

The juniors watched him breathlessly.

"Morny!" murmured Erroll, in a tone of expostulation.

"You'll never have the nerve!" breathed Conroy.

Mornington did not heed.

To the horrid contents of the papered basket he added a packet of pepper and a tin of green paint, and proceeded to mix it up with a ruler.

His movements were rapid. The whole was ready inside three minutes. He carried it very carefully along the room to the door.

was a stealthy tread the juniors had already learned to recognise. Mr. Cutts was coming!

Some of the juniors bolted into bed, half-undressed. Some of them stood staring towards the door as if fascinated. The inevitable consequences of Mr. Cutts pushing the door open seemed to mesmerise them. The soft footfalls stopped at the door. It moved.

"Now—" breathed Lovell.

The door swung open under a push from without.

Swoosh! Crash!

The instant the door swung the basket shot downward, overturning as it fell.

The contents shot out in a sticky stream, fairly enveloping the man below. They reached him before the basket did. But the latter was only a second late, and it landed fairly upon Mr. Cutts' head, bonneting him beautifully.

"Groooooooh!"

A wild and muffled howl escaped from the astonished Mr. Cutts.

He staggered into the dormitory, streaming with various liquids, and with the basket clinging to his head like a very large hat.

Ink and gum and other things streamed down his face and his clothes. His features were totally unrecognisable. He spluttered and gasped and staggered.

"Ooooooooh! Groooooooh! Gugg-gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A wild roar of laughter rang through the dormitory from end to end. Even Tubby Muffin sat up in bed and yelled. Mr. Cutts was irresistible!

Crash! The basket went to the floor, and oozed out the remnants of its contents there. Mr. Cutts gouted wildly at his eyes. He could not see, and he could hardly breathe.

"Goo! Ooooooooh! Help! Groooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boys, you—you have dared— Yoooooooh!" Mr. Cutts spat and foamed. The horrid liquids were oozing in his mouth as well as his nose and ears. And the pepper was making its presence felt.

"Oh gad!" gasped Mornington. "There's a picture for you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groogh! Gooooooh! Yug, yug, yug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth—" Bulkeley of the Sixth strode into the dormitory.

"What is happening here? Why—what—what—" The Rookwood captain stared at Mr. Cutts, dumb-founded. "What—Who is that?"

"Yooooooh!"

"Is—is that Mr. Cutts?" gasped Bulkeley.

"Groogh! I am suffocating! I am blinded! Groogh!" Mr. Cutts dabbed his gummy eyes, and blinked uncertainly. "I—I have been—been assaulted! A—a trap was laid for me. I—I— Grrrrrg!"

"My hat!" stuttered Bulkeley. He tried to keep grave, but the aspect of the Form-master was so amazing that he simply couldn't. He simply had to smile. "Mr. Cutts, I—"

"What are you laughing at?" yelled Mr. Cutts.

"I—I—" stammered Bulkeley.

"You grinning fool!"

"What?"

"Take me to a bath-room immediately!"

"Certainly, sir! This way!"

Bulkeley led Mr. Cutts out, still gasping, spitting, spluttering, and foaming. He left a trail behind him that it would not have required an experienced scout to follow. His gurglings and gaspings died away in the distance, and from somewhere along the corridor came a sound of laughter. The Fourth-Formers stared breathlessly at one another.

"Well, he's got it!" grinned Mornington.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a chivvy!" gasped Lovell. "He'll be half the night getting that lot off! Ha, ha, ha!"

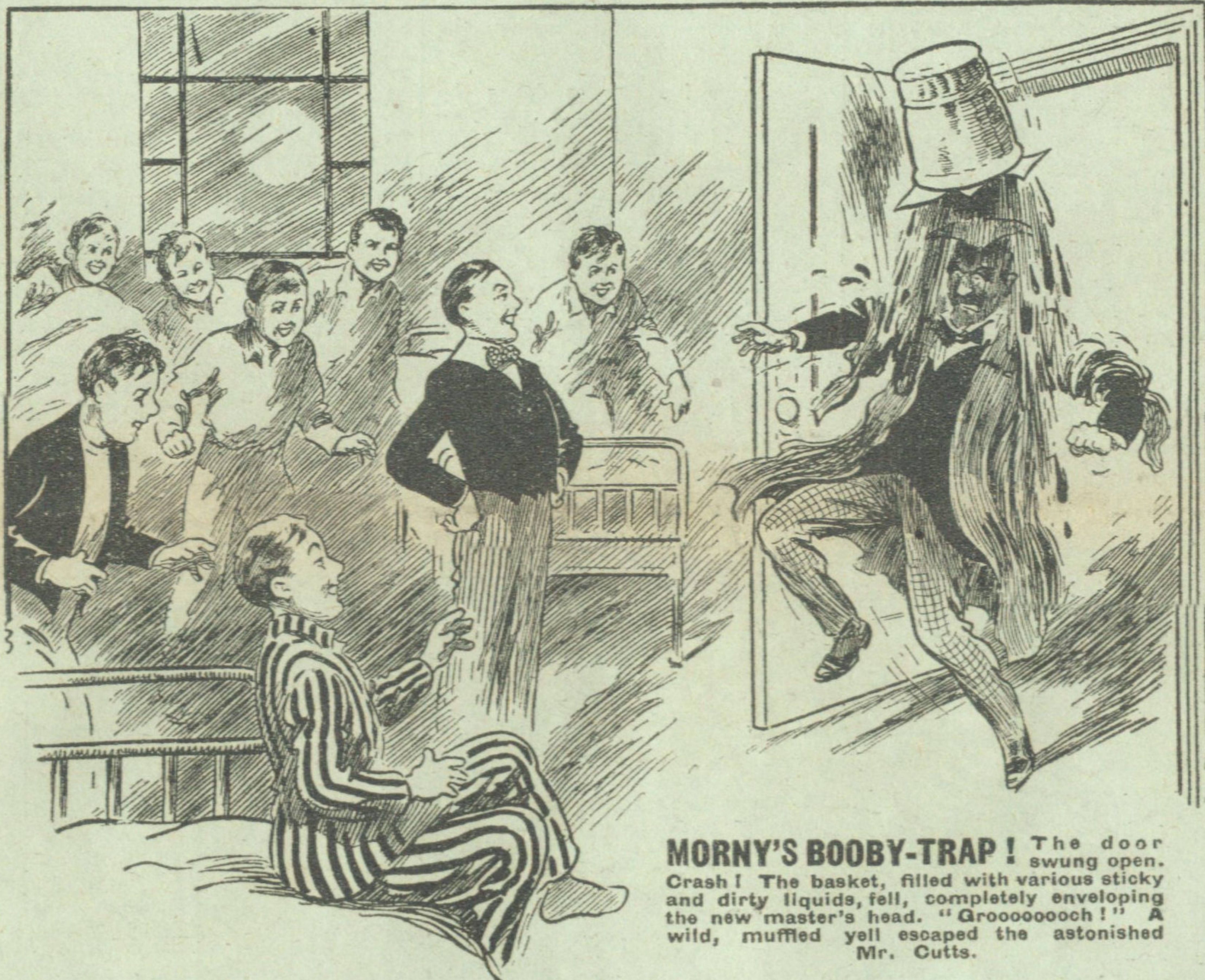
The juniors roared. But the laughter suddenly ceased as Bulkeley came back into the dormitory.

"Turn in!" said the Rookwood captain curtly. "This will be inquired into. Mr. Cutts will deal with you in the morning. He is not in a—ahem—fit state to-night. Good-night!"

And the Classical Fourth turned in, still chuckling. But there were many misgivings as they thought of the morning!

THE END.

(Mind you read "The Reign of Terror," a fine, long complete yarn of the Fistical Four's adventures under the "Rookwood Bolshevik" in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)



MORNY'S BOOBY-TRAP! The door swung open. Crash! The basket, filled with various sticky and dirty liquids, fell, completely enveloping the new master's head. "Groooooooh!" A wild, muffled yell escaped the astonished Mr. Cutts.

vision of Mr. Cutts, who walked up and down the passage, with his cane under his arm.

Schoolboys are conservative by nature, and great sticklers for rights and traditions. For the Fourth to be treated as irresponsible fags, like the Third, was an outrage.

Possibly Mr. Cutts did not realise the storm of wrath that was brewing. Possibly he did not care. Possibly, indeed, he was on the look-out for some sign of rebellion that would justify the use of the cane. At all events, he kept up his self-imposed task grimly, and twice or thrice dropped into a study to "jaw" a junior who slacked.

Prep was a painful infliction that evening. All the Classical Fourth breathed more freely when it was over, and the angular form of Mr. Cutts descended the stairs and vanished.

"Makes a fellow wish he was a Modern!" said Arthur Edward Lovell gloomily. Which was the most emphatic thing a Classical could have said.

Mornington came along to the end study. There was a tightness about Morny's mouth and a glitter in his eye that boded trouble.

"How long are we goin' to stand this slave-drivin' bizney?" Mornington asked.

"The brute can do as he likes!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

"He's breakin' up all our customs. The Head ought to stop him!" said Mornington savagely.

do," he said. "If the cad puts his head inside our dorm to-night he's goin' to put it into a booby-trap!"

"Morny!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"I mean it!"

And Valentine Mornington quitted the end study, evidently with his mind made up. Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

"After all, there's bound to be trouble!" said Arthur Edward Lovell philosophically. "It must come sooner or later, if the brute goes on as he's begun. As well sooner as later."

Jimmy Silver nodded, with a clouded brow. He realised that Lovell was right. Undoubtedly there was going to be trouble!

The 4th. Chapter. Catching Cutts!

"Bed-time!"

Mr. Cutts shot that word into the junior Common-room. He stood in the doorway, angular, bony, steely-eyed as usual. The clock indicated twenty-five minutes past nine. Ninety-three was the customary bed-time for the Fourth Form. Again the new master was invading the sacred, immemorial rights of his pupils.

"Go to bed immediately!" he snapped.

The juniors marched out in silence, many of them with sully looks. Mr. Cutts shepherded them to the dormitory. He watched them in, and glanced into the dormitory after them.

He opened the door and set it ajar. Then he placed a chair within, and stood on the chair, and carefully balanced the basket on the top of the door against the wall above.

"Great pip!" murmured Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Morny!"

Valentine Mornington took away the chair and sat on his bed, and proceeded to take his boots off, with a cheery grin.

"How's that for height?" he asked.

Jimmy Silver looked worried. There was not the slightest doubt that whoever opened the door from outside, would get that booby-trap right on his head, and his state afterwards would be simply unspeakable.

No doubt Mr. Christopher Cutts deserved it, no doubt he had really asked for it. But—There was a very big "but."

"Oh, what a surprise!" murmured Lovell. "What will he say when he gets that lot right on the napper? Something pungent—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There'll be a frightful row," said Erroll.

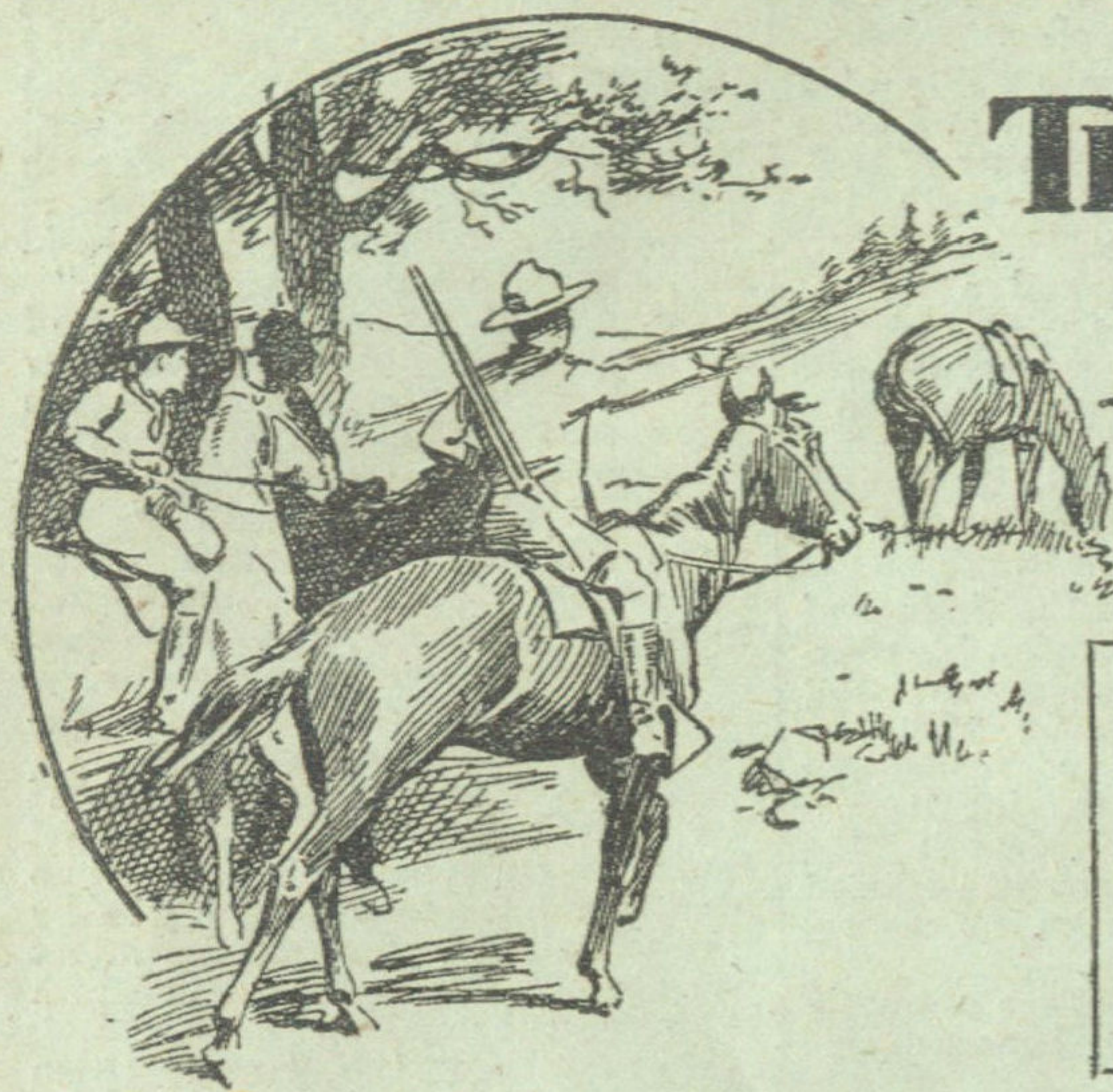
Mornington shrugged his shoulders. "Let there be!" he answered. "I've been caned five or six times to-day. Cutts has taken that booby-trap out in advance! He's going to have it, the brute, and I hope he will like it!"

"Cave!"

"He's coming!"

There was a footstep in the corridor. It was not a loud footstep. It

A FINE LONG COMPLETE YARN OF FRANK RICHARDS & Co.



THE HUNTING OF WHITE BLAZE!

A GRAND TALE OF THE
CHUMS OF THE
BACKWOODS SCHOOL.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

Rivals on the Trail!

"White Blaze!" exclaimed Bob Lawless, triumphantly.

"Good!" said Frank Richards.

"At last!" said Beauclerc.

The chums of Cedar Creek halted.

Bright sunlight fell upon the rolling prairie, far to the northward of the Thompson Valley settlement. The backwoods school at Cedar Creek lay a good thirty miles behind Frank Richards & Co.

They had been long hours in the saddle that morning, since riding away from the stockman's cabin at White Pine. But they were keeping resolutely upon the trail of "White Blaze," the runaway horse with ten thousand dollars stacked in the saddle-bags. In Doc Smith's cabin at Thompson the wounded bank messenger lay; and in the calaboose were the two rustlers who had waylaid him. But the brown horse with the white blaze on his forehead was still loose on the plains. And Frank Richards & Co. had leave from school until they had run him down.

More than once during the long sunny morning the trail had been lost, but Bob Lawless had picked it up again. He had found the grassy nook where the runaway had spent the night, and from that spot the trail led on over a rise in the prairie. Over the crest of the acclivity, dotted with clumps of live oaks, the chums were now riding—and ahead of them, in a grassy hollow, Bob's keen eyes had spotted their quarry.

A magnificent brown horse, saddled and bridled, the reins tangled in his thick mane. He was feeding now, cropping the grass by the side of a shallow spring. Every now and then he tossed up his head, shaking his mane, to drive off the flies that settled where a bullet had grazed and cut the skin. Frank Richards & Co. stopped at once as they sighted the horse, and Bob signed to his comrades to take cover behind a clump of live oaks.

"He won't scent us," said Bob. "the wind's this way. But he will see us, and take to his heels again. We want to rone him in this time."

The chums dismounted behind the oaks, and tethered their horses.

Bob took his lasso from his saddle. "I guess we're playing doggo this time," he said. "That critter can show us his heels; but if I can get near enough to him for a cast, I guess he won't get away again."

"You're going on foot?" asked Frank.

"Yep! He won't scent me so long as I keep up-wind, and he won't see me, I guess, in the long grass. I shall take care of that. You fellows stick here and watch."

"Right-ho!" said Beauclerc.

The three chums pushed through the stunted trees, and stopped on the edge of the sloping plain. Bob Lawless dropped on hands and knees, and crept forward through the grass. The grass was long and thick, and hid him from view, until he should rise to make the cast with his lariat. But that was not to be until he was within easy distance of the runaway horse.

Frank Richards, as he stood on the edge of the clump, swept the wide, rolling plains with his glance. He was wondering whether there were others in pursuit of White Blaze. It was certain that all Thompson Town had long since heard of the bank-messenger's disaster, and knew that a horse was adrift on the plains with ten thousand dollars in notes packed in the saddle-bags. Frank could imagine the effect of that news on the rough crowd at the Red Dog.

Sooner or later there would be plenty of searchers for the lost horse—not with the intention of handing over the dollars to the rightful owner. And soon, too, cowboys from the various ranches would be on the trail; if the horse was not taken in soon, there would be a reward offered for its capture, and plenty of cattlemen would saddle up to earn the reward. "We're not alone here," said Beauclerc suddenly.

"What—"

"Look—that clump of sassafras to the left!"

Frank Richards glanced in the the direction of Beauclerc's pointing finger.

The patch of sassafras on the sloping plain—sloping down into the hollow where the horse was grazing—was several hundred yards from the clump where the schoolboys stood. From the midst of the twigs there came a glimmer—the glimmer of metal that caught the rays of the morning sun.

"A rifle-barrel!" said Frank.

"Yes."

"Might be a cowboy after the horse," said Frank, "but—"

Beauclerc shook his head.

"A cowboy wouldn't shoot a splendid animal like that; and that rifle is coming to a level. Whoever it is, doesn't care about the horse—he's after the dollars."

Frank set his lips.

He could see now the glinting barrel that peeped from the bush, bearing directly upon the cropping horse by the spring.

"The rotter!" he muttered. "The brute! If I had a gun, I'd—"

He broke off savagely. He was too far off to interfere with the unseen rifleman.

The shooting of the unsuspecting horse was like murder, to the eyes of the Cedar Creek schoolboys. Evidently the rifleman was no honest cowboy, but some "bulldozer" from Thompson, who was "after" the dollars for his own purposes.

"The horse has winded him!" said Beauclerc.

White Blaze tossed up his head, and his bright eyes were turned directly towards the distant clump where the rifle-barrel glistened.

The horse knew that an enemy was at hand.

Crack!

From the bush came the ringing report of a rifle; a little cloud of smoke curled up to the blue sky.

But the wary steed was already in motion—the shot had come a second too late.

It barely grazed a lashing leg, as the brown horse set off at a gallop through the grass.

The next moment a burly form leaped from the cover of the sassafras, a smoking rifle in his hand.

"Four Kings!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

They knew the burly, bearded ruffian by sight. Four Kings, the leader of the Red Dog crowd, had recently returned to his old haunts, after a term of imprisonment. Evidently he was now on his way to earn another term.

The ruffian shook his fist after the runaway horse, cursing.

Frank Richards snapped his teeth.

"Bob hasn't shown up!" he said. "He'll never get near enough for the lasso now."

The chums watched for Bob Lawless. He was still hidden in the grass, though the shot and the galloping hoofs must have told him that his task was now in vain.

Four Kings plunged back into the bush, and drew out a mustang. He threw himself into the saddle, his rifle slung on his back, spurred the

mustang cruelly, and dashed in pursuit of White Blaze.

The horse was now dashing forward, into the almost untrodden wilderness, at a long stretching gallop, evidently scared and frantic to escape. Four Kings plied whip and spur in pursuit. Then suddenly, from the long grass, Bob Lawless rose into view, almost directly in the path of the ruffian. His revolver was in his hand now, and it rose to a level.

"Halt!"

"Good old Bob!" shouted Frank Richards in delight. "Come on, Beauclerc!"

They loosed their horses, threw themselves into the saddle, and dashed to join their chum, Bob's horse following them.

"Halt! Hands up, Four Kings!" shouted Bob Lawless, and his revolver bore straight at the ruffian's breast.

For the moment Four Kings rode right on. He was taken by surprise, and his hard, bearded face was flushed with rage. But there was grim determination in Bob Lawless' sunburnt face. The hammer of the revolver rose a trifle, and the Red Dog ruffian read death in the levelled barrel. He dragged in his mustang a dozen yards from Bob, and his hands went up over his head.

The 2nd Chapter.

Four Kings for the Home Trail!

"Keep them up!" said Bob Lawless grimly.

His revolver never wavered for a moment. The hand that held it was as steady as a rock, and the finger was ready on the trigger.

Four Kings had no time to touch a weapon.

Long before he could have drawn a revolver from his belt the bullet would have sped, and the ruffian would have rolled from his horse.

Frank and Beauclerc came up with a clatter and a rush.

"Keep him covered, Bob!" panted Frank Richards.

"You bet!" said Bob.

"Let up, young Lawless!" said Four Kings hoarsely. "I guess I'm arter that hoss. You're wasting time—"

"I guess we're after it, too," answered Bob Lawless coolly. "And we're after it for the owner, Four Kings."

"I guess—"

"Take his gun away, Frank!"

"What-ho!" said Frank.

He pushed his horse close to the ruffian, whose hands were still above his head.

A desperate look came over Four Kings' hard, stubby face.

Evidently the thought of resistance was in his mind; he could not endure to see his plunder escape him.

Bob Lawless took a step nearer to him, his face hard and set.

"Keep your hands up, Four Kings, or I'll drive a bullet straight through you!" he said. "I guess you know I'm a fellow of my word, and I won't stand on ceremony when it comes to shooting. Keep your paws up, or you're a dead coon!"

The ruffian trembled with rage, but his hands remained above his head. Frank Richards plucked the revolver and knife from his belt, and unslung the rifle from his back.

"I guess you've no call to chip in, young Lawless!" muttered Four Kings. "You're robbing me—"

Bob laughed.

"We'll leave your weapons for you at the Red Dog, when we get back to Thompson," he said. "They're safer in our hands just at present. Take his cartridges, Frank, and the lasso."

Four Kings hissed out a savage curse.

In the distance, the runaway horse, still galloping, was fading out of view.

"Now it's you for the home-trail," said Bob.

The ruffian gritted his teeth.

"I'm arter the hoss," he said doggedly. "There's ten thousand dollars in them saddle-bags. Look hyer, we'll divvy up!"

"Why, you rascal—" began Frank Richards indignantly.

"A fair divvy," said Four Kings. "A galoot can't say fairer than that."

"I guess we don't want to divvy up another man's money," said Bob Lawless. "I tell you, it's you for the home-trail. Git!"

"There'll be a reward out!" said Four Kings eagerly. "Look hyer, then, I'll go Co. with you, and we'll rope in the critter, and tote him home, dollars and all. What do you say?"

"You tried to shoot the horse, you brute!" said Frank Richards.

"I guess it's worth shootin' a horse for ten thousand dollars," said Four Kings. "Is it a cinch?"

"Nope!" answered Bob Lawless.

"Do you think we'd trust you? We're borrowing your guns for a bit; and you're going to mosey back where you came from. I give you five minutes to get out of rifle-shot. Frank, when I give the word, pump lead after him!"

"What-ho!" answered Frank.

Four Kings took up his reins, with a glare of fury at the chums of the backwoods school.

"I guess I'm vamoosing," he said.

"You hold the cards this time. But you'll see me back, and my pards with me, afore long, young Lawless; and then look out for your neck!"

With that threat the ruffian wheeled his horse, and rode away at a gallop to the south.

There was no need for Frank Richards to "pump lead" after him; Four Kings was riding at full speed, and in a few minutes he disappeared over the rolling prairie.

"I guess he means business," remarked Bob Lawless, as he returned his revolver to his belt. "He will get a crowd of the bulldozers from the Red Dog, and mosey this way as fast as he can. He knows he hasn't a chance now without a rope or a gun. But I reckon he can't hit this trail again till the morning. Before that, I hope, we shall have rounded up White Blaze."

"And now we've got to ride like thunder!" said Frank Richards, as Four Kings' Stetson had vanished over a distant grassy crest.

"You bet!" said Bob. "Get a move on!"

And the chums of Cedar Creek rode at a gallop on the trail of the ten-thousand-dollar horse.

The 3rd Chapter.

"Injuns!"

The sun was red in the west; the trees cast long shadows on the plain. The rolling prairie had been left behind; the chums rode on amid clumps of timber and patches of bush. Here and there rock cropped out of the soil, as they neared the foothills. Frank Richards & Co. had ridden on with scarcely a halt, eating their dried beef and corn-cake in the saddle, quenching their thirst from the leather water-bottle they had brought from the stockman's cabin at White Pine. Hardy as they were, the three schoolboys were feeling the fatigue of the long ride, but they were resolute to keep on. It was not only the hoped-for capture of White Blaze that drew them on; but there was danger behind, when Four Kings and his gang should take the trail. And although they had a good start, that counted for little. For the wandering horse did not take a direct track—the trail wound aimlessly on the plains, and sometimes turned back for a mile or two—so that at sundown the trailers were not many miles from the spot where they had first sighted the runaway.

And by sundown, as Bob reckoned, Four Kings would be riding out of Thompson again, reinforced by a crowd of the "bad men" who made the Red Dog saloon their headquarters. If Four Kings and his gang came up before the horse was captured, the position would be serious enough; for certainly the ruffians would not hesitate to shoot the schoolboys out of hand, for the sake of "roping in" such a prize as ten thousand dollars in banknotes.

White Blaze had not been sighted again yet.

His trail was easy enough for Bob Lawless to pick up, in that untrodden wilderness, and several times they found spots where he had stopped to graze, or to drink at a spring. As they rode on in the red glow of the

sunset, they felt certain that the horse was not far away; but now the trees and bushes intercepted the view in all directions; he might have been within a hundred yards and yet invisible.

In places, as the tracks showed, White Blaze had gone on at a trot; in other places, at a furious gallop. The horse was evidently in a state of "nerves"; the clip of the bullet, and the excitement of the hunting, had made him as unmanageable as a wild horse. There was no hope of getting near him, if he saw or scented the hunters; but Bob Lawless hoped to get within a lasso-cast. Only as a very last resource would the chums have thought of "winging" him with a rifle-shot.

"I guess we shall have to drop him if he takes to the hills, and we 'draw a bead' on him," Bob Lawless remarked. "We can't let him carry ten thousand dollars into the wilderness. But I reckon I'd rather put in a week on the trail, than draw trigger on a hoss."

"Yes, rather!" said Frank.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Bob suddenly.

He reined in his mount, and jumped to the ground.

His face was suddenly excited.

"I guess we've got rivals on this trail," he said.

The trail of the brown horse no longer ran solitary in the trodden grass. It disappeared into a crowd of tracks. Horsemen had joined the trail, evidently riding after White Blaze.

"Injuns!" said Bob laconically.

Frank Richards felt a thrill.

"Redskins?"

"Yep!"

"Sure?" asked Frank.

"I guess so; the horses are unshod, for one thing. And there's six or seven of the reds."

Bob Lawless examined the tracks carefully. He rose to his feet at last, his sunburnt face very grave.

"Seven Redskins," he said. "A hunting-party of Kootenays from the upper valley of the Fraser, I reckon. They sighted White Blaze, and naturally reckoned they'd rope him in. They don't know anything about the dollars, of course; but the hoss would be a big prize to them. We're going on."

Bob looked at his chums.

They were quick to realise the seriousness of the situation now.

Between them and the runaway was now a party of Redskin riders; and they were far enough from the settlements for the Indians to be lawless. A hunting-party of Redskins from the northern wilderness was not likely to stand on ceremony with three young palefaces, who sought to deprive them of so valuable a prize as the magnificent brown horse.

"We're armed," said Beauclerc quietly. "You two have revolvers, and I have a rifle. We can take care of ourselves. We don't want to shed blood, but—"

"But the man's lying wounded in Doc's house at Thompson, and we've promised to get back his horse and the dollars for him if we can," said Frank Richards. "We're bound to keep on, Bob."

"I reckon so," said Bob soberly. "If you fellows are game, I want to keep on."

"Yes, rather!"

"Come on, then. But we've got to keep our eyes peeled. See that your guns are in order. When we come up with the Injuns it may mean a scrap."

In a very sober mood the Cedar Creek chums rode forward again.

There was no longer any need to pick up, sign, or examine the trail. The heavy trampling of half a dozen horses left a trampled belt through the grass, and an infant could have followed it. Frank Richards & Co. rode at an easy gallop, the sun sinking lower and lower towards the far Pacific as they rode.

Dusk deepened on the plain and the hills. Darkness enshrouded them at last.

The horses dropped to a walk.

"I guess we shall spot the Redskins soon," said Bob Lawless. "They're bound to camp for the night, and they've no reason for not lighting a camp fire. I guess we shall see it from a good distance. If they had any luck with White Blaze they've got him by this time."

"If they've got him?" said Frank.

"Then we've got to get him back."

"We'll try, anyhow."

The chums rode on at an easy pace. Their eyes were watchful for a sign of the Indian camp fire. It was not long before they sighted a red glow in the distance of the night.

As they rode nearer they could make out the leaping blaze of the camp fire burning by the side of a shallow stream, on the edge of a thicket. Shadowy figures moved dimly in the firelight.

"Halt!" muttered Bob. The trio drew in their horses. "If we get any nearer their horses will wind us, I reckon," said Bob. "We'll leave the critters here. We've got to see whether the Injuns have bagged White Blaze, and to do that we've got to creep up as close as may be to their camp, without giving the alarm. They don't reckon that there's any white men hereabouts, and that's in our favour. If they've not got the hoss, we can give them a wide berth and steer clear. If they've got him, he's got to come our way, even if we have to shoot. Tie up the critters!"

Bob selected a spot where a tall fir towered over a thicket of larches as a landmark for finding the horses again. The three steeds were tethered to the fir, in the thicket, with a length of trail-ropes to give them room for feeding. The horses, wearied with the long trail, at once lay down to rest, and the schoolboys followed their example, taking a rest of half an hour in the grass and a snatch of food before they pushed on again.

Then they pursued their way on foot, with weary eyes, towards the dancing fire in the distance.

As they came closer, creeping now on hands and knees in the grass, they made out the camp clearly. The fire, fed with fir-wood and pine-chips, blazed up high and bright, and cast a ruddy glow for a good distance round. Six Redskins could be seen in the fire glow, two of them occupied with cooking over the red embers. Six rough-coated horses were staked out close by the water. But of White Blaze there was no sign.

"They've not got him!" whispered Frank Richards, and he was relieved at the thought. His courage did not falter, but he would have been very glad to avoid the possibility of bloodshed.

"I guess there's only six Injuns there, and we've followed the trail of seven riders," answered Bob.

"Then the other—"

"Still after White Blaze, I reckon."

"He'll never get him after dark, Bob."

"May have come up with him before dark a good way from here," said Bob. "Anyhow, I reckon we'd better watch till the seventh man comes in. He's bound to turn up at the camp sooner or later. If he doesn't bring in White Blaze, we shall know the hoss is still loose, and we can vamoose."

"Good!"

There was evidently nothing for it but to wait and watch. The chums of Cedar Creek were not sorry for the rest. They lay at their ease in the thick grass, watching the Indian camp. Several times an Indian stood up in the firelight and stared out into the darkness of the plains. At first it crossed Frank's mind that they suspected pursuit, but he soon guessed that the Indians were expectant of the return of their absent comrade.

An hour passed, and another. Frank Richards was dozing in the grass now, and Beauclerc had closed his eyes; but Bob Lawless was watching keenly, untiringly. And suddenly the sound of hoof-beats on the plain awoke all three to the alert.

Gallop! Gallop!

There was instant activity in the Indian camp.

The six Redskins stood watching in the direction whence came the beat of horses' hoofs, but they did not touch their weapons. Evidently they were expecting a comrade.

Gallop! Gallop!

A shadowy form loomed up, and an Indian rode by the crouching schoolboys, within twenty yards of them. Frank Richards breathed with relief that he did not ride nearer. Chance might have led him by the very spot where the chums lay in cover. As it was, only the darkness could have saved them from discovery.

Bob gripped Frank's arm. "He's leading a hoss!" he whispered.

Frank could see nothing in the dark. But as the horseman rode up to the camp, in the circle of firelight, they could all see that he was leading a riderless horse by the rein. And one glimpse was enough to tell them that it was the steed they had been hunting so long. They knew the powerful brown limbs, the white blaze on the forehead.

White Blaze had been roped in at last!

The Redskins gathered round their successful comrade with guttural exclamations of satisfaction, which faintly reached the ears of the hidden schoolboys.

The Indian rider dismounted,

evidently weary with the chase that had led him far. The other Redskins stood in a group round the captured horse, plainly admiring the magnificent animal, and one of them tapped the saddlebags with his dusky hand. Possibly they were discussing what might have become of the rider. The brown horse shied and whinnied among the Redskins. One of them, whose eagle features indicated that he was the chief, looped a trail-ropes on the animal to stake him out.

"They've got him," said Bob Lawless grimly, "and now we've got to get him. They're going to take the saddlebags off him. If they do that, it means that we've got to fight that crowd to get the dollars away. Even Redskins in these wilds know Canadian bankbills when they see them. We've got to show ourselves, you fellows."

There was a moment's pause.

The chums knew that they would be taking their lives in their hands, but there was nothing else for it. They could have poured in a sudden volley on the unprepared Indians from the darkness, and shot them down, leaving only two or three to deal with at close quarters. But that step, which would have been taken without hesitation by Four Kings and his gang, was impossible to Frank Richards & Co. It was pos-

whiteskins who came striding up to the fire. The warrior with the eagle plumes in his hair made a step towards them, holding up a coppery hand in reply to Bob's sign of amity.

It was not like the old days, when white man and red met on the plains as natural foes. Even in that northern wilderness the long arm of the Canadian Government had made itself felt. The Kootenays had seen the scarlet-coated troopers of the North-West Police; the days of reckless bloodshed and scalping-knives were long past. But when it came to a question of the ownership of the brown horse, the complexion of affairs was likely to change.

The eagle-plumed chief spoke in English. "What do my white brothers seek in the camp of the Kootenays?" he asked, his black, watchful eyes searching the schoolboys. He noted the ready firearms, which probably helped him to decide on keeping the peace.

"We seek a horse which is lost," answered Bob Lawless. "We have promised to take him back to his master, who lies hurt in the white man's wigwams."

A change came over the Redskins at once.

They gathered between the Cedar Creek chums and the brown horse,

light now. The six braves were gathered behind their chief, evidently ready for trouble. It was quite clear that the captured horse would not be yielded without a fight, in spite of the chief's uneasy dread of the scarlet-coated troopers.

Bob Lawless remained perfectly cool, though he was aware that a savage rush might take place at any moment now.

"Let the Kootenay chief listen," he said. "If we are harmed, the red troopers will ask who has shed our blood, and there will be sorrow in the lodges of Eagle Plume."

"The prairie vultures will not tell them who has shed the blood!" said Eagle Plume. "The coyotes will not tell the secret of the bones they have picked!"

Red Leaf broke in with a torrent of angry words in the Indian dialect. His eyes blazed at Bob Lawless, and the knife in his hand glittered and flashed as he shook it in the air. The chief motioned him to be silent, and Red Leaf fell back again savagely and sullenly.

"My warrior Red Leaf will not give up the horse he has taken," said Eagle Plume. "I say again, let my white brothers go, or my young men will forget that there is peace between the Redskin and the pale-face!"

"Bob," whispered Frank, "let them keep the horse, if they hand over the saddlebags and what's in them."

Bob Lawless nodded. The chums were very keen on taking White Blaze back with them, but the horse was not worth a deadly

"But if there is fire-water in the bags, the red chief will keep it," added Eagle Plume.

Bob smiled. "There is no fire-water, chief. There are bundles of papers, which we must take back to our friend in our lodges, even if we have to fight with the Kootenays to obtain them. Bring the horse here, and Eagle Plume shall see me remove the papers. I will not even take the saddlebags; they shall remain with the horse."

"It shall be as my white brother says. Wah! I have spoken."

Eagle Plume himself took the rein of the brown horse, and pulled him towards the schoolboys. Red Leaf and the rest stood watching suspiciously. But they were probably quite as glad as Frank Richards & Co. to avoid a fight, on such good terms to themselves. The rifle and the revolvers looked deadly enough, and they could see that the white boys had the courage to use them, if it came to that.

Bob groped in the saddlebags. His chums watched warily; the savage nature was uncertain, and the seeming peace might be broken any moment by a ferocious outburst. The Redskins, standing near at hand, watched Bob wolfishly as he removed two bundles from the saddlebags. Had there been gold or silver, or a bottle of fire-water, the slumbering ferocity of the Redskins would probably have awakened on the spot. But the two fat bundles of papers meant nothing to them. Had the bundles been opened, and the rolls of Canadian bank-bills revealed, probably Eagle Plume would have known their value, and trouble would have ensued. But the inscriptions on the bundles told him nothing; he could not read English.

"That is all that my white brother seeks?" asked the chief, evidently astonished.

"That is all," answered Bob, after a careful glance had assured him that the bundles were what he sought. He held them up for a moment for the Indians to see, and then slid them into his wallet.

"For the papers my white brothers have ridden many miles on the prairie," said Eagle Plume, puzzled.

"The papers are important to our wounded brother in our wigwams," said Bob. "They were given into his charge by a chief in Kamloops, and if they are lost he is disgraced. We bid farewell to Eagle Plume and his warriors, and wish them good hunting and a happy return to their wigwams."

"Eagle Plume loves his white brothers," said the chief gravely. "Let them stay, and sit by the fire of the Kootenays, and eat the deer-meat with Eagle Plume."

"We thank the red chief," answered Bob, with equal gravity. "But our friends are expecting us, and will be searching for us if we do not return."

And with that he moved off. Red Leaf laid a proprietary hand upon the neck of White Blaze, and grinned. He was quite satisfied with the compromise, and Eagle Plume and the rest seemed equally satisfied. They watched the schoolboys with curious eyes, till Frank Richards & Co. disappeared into the darkness of the plains.

Bob Lawless drew a panting breath. "Thank goodness we're out of that!" he said. "But don't lose a second. Injuns are pesky uncertain cattle, and they might take it into their heads to come after us in the dark. If we get clear now with the dollars, I reckon it will be cheap to let them keep the horse. The man in Thompson will be mighty pleased to see the money again, I guess, and he won't worry about the critter—though he's a good horse," added Bob, "and it's a pity to lose him."

"If he bothers about the horse after getting the dollars back, he will be an ungrateful ass!" said Frank. "Here we are!"

They were going at a run now, and they soon reached the spot where they had left their horses.

Without a moment's delay they mounted, and rode away as fast as the horses could go, into the shadows of the night.

Behind them, the glow of the Redskins' camp-fire sank into darkness.

The 5th Chapter. Home Again!

"Hush!" whispered Bob Lawless. The chums had ridden on till an hour before dawn, when they stopped at last to rest their steeds and their own wearied limbs. They had camped for a short rest in a clump of trees, and slept like tops in the grass.

(Continued on page 118, column 3.)



AMONG THE REDSKINS!

"That is the horse, chief!" said Bob Lawless, calmly. "And if he is not handed over to me this minute the red-coated troopers will be here to take him!"

sible, at least, that the Indians might keep the peace, that they might listen to reason; and even for the ten thousand dollars it was impossible for the chums to fire on them in cold blood. Frank Richards drew a deep breath, and rose to his feet.

"We've got to chance it," he said. "You do the talking, Bob. You know some of their lingo."

"Keep your shooting-irons handy," said Bob, "but don't fire if you can help it. But if we do have to shoot, shoot to kill. If it comes to a fight it will be their lives or ours."

Weapons in hand, the three schoolboys strode on to the Indian camp, their hearts throbbing, but their nerves steady.

There was a sudden burst of exclamations among the Redskins, and all of them turned from the captured horse to stare at the three figures that emerged into the circle of firelight.

The 4th Chapter. Among the Redskins!

Bob Lawless held up his left hand, empty, as a sign of peace. In his right the revolver was gripped.

Frank Richards' hand was on the revolver he had taken from Four Kings; Beauclerc held the rifle ready.

The trio were ready for an attack, if it came. But the Kootenays made no motion to attack them. They only stared in wonder at the three

muttering to one another gutturally. The man who had brought in the horse half-drew a knife from his belt.

"Peace!" said Bob Lawless quietly. Evidently the red braves knew enough of English to understand that their prize was claimed, and their looks showed what they thought of the claim.

"Let my young white brothers depart and seek the horse that is lost!" said the chief, in a sarcastic tone.

Bob Lawless pointed to White Blaze.

"That is the horse, chief." "My white brother is mistaken. This horse was found on the prairie by my brother Red Leaf."

"That is the horse," said Bob calmly. "If he is not handed over to us, chief, the red-coated troopers will be here to find him."

"Are the red soldiers with my young brothers?" asked the chief cunningly.

"They are not far away, I guess," answered Bob Lawless. "We've been after the horse for two days, chief, and we must take him back to the settlements."

"Eagle Plume's braves do not catch horses for the white man!" answered the chief. "Let my white brothers turn their faces towards their wigwams while their lives are safe!"

Knives were glittering in the fire-

and desperate affray of which the outcome would be very doubtful. The superior weapons of the three whites hardly compensated for the heavy odds against them. And, after all, the Redskins had captured the horse, and the sullen Red Leaf had a sort of claim to it after his long and hard ride.

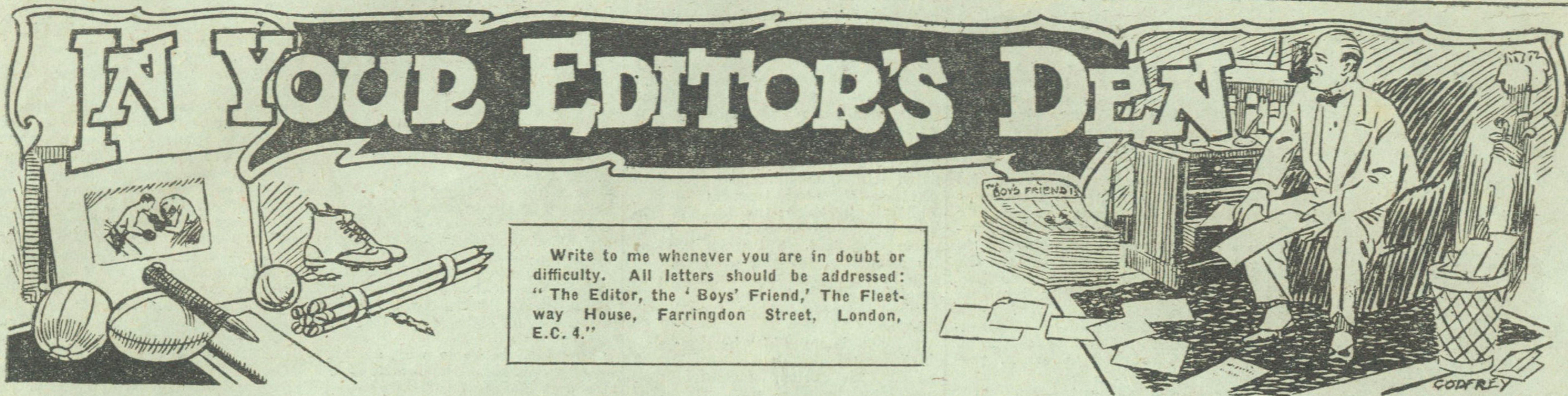
"Let the chief listen again!" said Bob, still speaking in the flowery style beloved of the Red Indian. "In the white man's lodges lies our friend, wounded, and he looks for us to return with his horse. But Red Leaf has captured the horse, and we do not desire war with our red brothers. Let Eagle Plume and his braves keep the horse, and hand to us the saddlebags, which contain papers belonging to our brother in the settlements. With these papers we will be satisfied, and the horse shall remain with the Kootenays."

There was a clearing of the brows at once among the Indians.

Eagle Plume nodded slowly. "Now my white brother speaks with the voice of reason!" he said amicably. "The horse belongs to the Kootenays, who have caught it. But if there are papers, my white brother shall have them."

Frank Richards breathed more freely.

The deadly struggle that had seemed so near was more remote now. Even the sullen Red Leaf seemed satisfied.



AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY.

A camera is the only instrument that will make permanent records of the happy days spent on outings, picnics, and holidays. It is a glorious thing to glance over albums of photographs which recall to memory the pleasant hours spent among merry companions.

Why not buy a camera, and set to work with it to-day? You can either do your own developing and printing, or take it to the chemist's. Myself, I prefer the former, as it adds to the interest that will be found in the work. There is a distinct feeling of excitement in watching the image gradually appear on the sensitive plate.

A small pocket camera is quite suitable to begin with. It should be of fixed focus, and with a lens not working at too small an aperture. The vest-pocket Kodak is perhaps the most suitable camera an amateur could use. The pictures it produces are large enough for most purposes, but are sharp enough to be enlarged to postcard size, or even larger.

Although it is usually confined to the summer, photography can be practised at any time of the year. Each season offers its own advantages. The spring and summer are seasons in which any outdoor subject can be photographed. The brightness of the light gives a contrast which is unknown at any other time of the year. The autumn is entirely

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, the 'Boys' Friend,' The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

unsurpassed for tone values. The golden tints of the dying leaves give very pleasing results on a colour sensitive plate. Winter scenes should always form part of a collection of photographs. A snow scene with barren trees in the foreground can be made to give a very artistic effect. Portraiture by the fireside can always be practised during the winter evenings, using magnesium ribbon as the illuminant.

The most interesting branch of photography is animal portraiture. This demands great patience on the part of the photographer. Bright light is essential, as the exposure must be instantaneous. With a fixed focus camera, the operator must be very careful not to stand too near his

subject, otherwise the result will be out of focus and blurred.

In the summer a wide-angle lens is an advantage. This enables the photographer to embrace a larger area on his plate from the same standpoint. This type of lens can also be used for copying other photos. To photograph figures in architecture from a distance, a telephoto lens must be used. Small figures are then magnified sufficiently to take up the whole of the picture.

Many people think that photography is too expensive to take up as a hobby. It is quite easy, however, to make it pay. Illustrated newspapers will often give a guinea for the publishing rights of a good picture. Appropriate subjects can be

forwarded to the makers of the materials used, who will liberally remunerate the amateur in return for allowing the photograph to be used for advertising purposes.

Sent in by L. G. Dicker, 64, Burlington Road, The Polygon, Southampton, to whom I am awarding a cash prize of 5s.

Boys clever in making small, useful articles should write to the Editor describing the process. Every letter printed will be paid for handsomely.

Your Editor

HOW TO PLAY FOOTBALL.
BY AN INTERNATIONAL.

More on Cup-ties!
Another thing which has to be remembered in regard to Cup-ties, too, is that you can't get knocked out of a Cup competition unless your defenders give away at least one goal. I believe this was the way the Barnsley players looked at it years ago, because in the first place they concentrated on defence. They saw to it that their rear division had all the help which it could possibly need. When the defenders were hard pressed the forwards—at least, two or three of them—fell right back into goal to help keep out the invading hosts of the opposition.

This meant, of course, that the other forwards were largely left to look after themselves, but often a stray kick would find its way to one of these forwards, who would then dash off and score what was called a snap goal. Having got their snap goal, the Barnsley players hung on to their lead like grim death, packing their goal, and striving might and main to prevent their opponents from getting the equaliser.

The Art of the Corner-kick.

It is right and proper to include the corner-kick as among the important events which happen in the course of the average football-match.

When big games are in progress, and there are lots of spectators looking on, it is always evident that the hopes of those onlookers rise and fall according to whether a corner-kick has been gained by the side which they hope to win, or the side which they want to see defeated.

In other words, corners are the things from which it is generally expected that goals will come. Yet, from a long experience of all classes of football, I am convinced that, as a rule, hopes are centred too high on these corner-kicks, for the fact should never be overlooked that the odds are always on the defenders. They have a much easier task in front of them to repel the ball which is kicked in from the corner-flag, than the attackers have of guiding that ball between the goalposts and into the net.

A moment's consideration will show the truth of this statement. In the first place, there is nobody on the attacking side who is in a similar position to the goalkeeper on the defending side. That is to say that the activities of the attackers are confined to the things which they can do with head or feet. On the other hand, the goalkeeper has the privilege of using his hands, and it very often happens that he does use his hands to get his side out of the awkward holes which the corner-kicks might otherwise get them into.

Of necessity, the ball which is kicked in from the corner-flag must be sent through the air in order to get into the goal-area, and when it is

sent through the air the chances are that the goalkeeper will get his hands to it and clear. But even if the ball is so placed from the flag that the goalkeeper cannot reach it with his hands, the odds are still on the defenders. You see, all they have to do is to get the ball away from goal. So far as they are concerned, it doesn't much matter where it goes so long as the direction is away from their own goal. The forwards, however, if they are to turn the corner-kick to something tangible which can be counted at the end of the match, must guide the ball between the posts into a comparatively small area, which is, as a rule, quite ably defended.

Although, I repeat, that at the taking of these corner-kicks the odds are on the defenders, I still feel that more goals ought to be scored as the outcome of the flag-kicks, and I am also convinced that more goals would be scored if greater attention were paid to the proper placing of the ball from the corner-flag. Young players especially are inclined to blunder badly in regard to the placing of these corner-kicks.

First of all, there seems to be an impression abroad that the nearer the kicker gets to the goalposts with the ball from a corner-kick the better the kick. Time after time I have seen young players, and some players not altogether young, try to drop the ball in from the corner in such a way that it almost grazed the whitewash off the crossbar. Yet in my opinion, and in the opinion of all the real experts of the game, such a corner-kick is a badly-placed one.

Let me explain why. By way of a start, the nearer to goal one tries to drop the ball from the corner the greater the likelihood of the ball going behind, and this means, obviously, that a big occasion has been wasted.

Even if the ball does not go behind, however, there are still good reasons why it should not be dropped right against the crossbar, because, as explained above, the goalkeeper is generally there, and as he has the privilege of using his hands it is comparatively easy for him to clear before any of the attackers can reach the ball with their heads.

Watch carefully, and note how few goals are scored from the corner-kick which is placed well into goal. Occasionally a goal results from such a kick because the goalkeeper blunders, or because someone hustles him just as he is making the save. But for the most part, too accurate corner-kicks are cleared by the goalkeeper with comparative ease.

(You play footer! Then read "How to Play Football" every week in the old Green 'Un and improve your game. Order your copy of the BOYS' FRIEND to-day.)

"THE HUNTING OF WHITE BLAZE!"
(Continued from page 117.)

Dawn was brightening the sky over the summits of the Rocky Mountains to the east, when tramping and jingling aroused them. Bob's warning whisper fell on his chums' ears as they started out of sleep.

"Indians?" breathed Frank.

"I reckon not! Horsemen coming up from the south," said Bob.

"Maybe cowboys after White Blaze, or—"

"Or the Red Dog crowd!" muttered Beauclerc.

"I reckon!" Keeping close in cover of the trees, the chums of Cedar Creek peered out upon the dawn-lit plain. A bunch of horsemen could be seen, riding at a gallop from the south. As they came nearer in the early sunlight the chums recognised the stubby-bearded face of Four Kings—the ruffian they had dismissed on the home trail the previous day.

Bob Lawless chuckled softly.

"Four Kings reckons that the dollars are still on the back of White Blaze," he remarked. "I reckon he will be pleased—some!—when he gets back to Thompson later on, and learns that the dollars have been brought home. I guess the Kootenays are far enough off with White Blaze—or will be long before that gang gets near where we left them."

Frank Richards laughed heartily. The Red Dog crowd were riding hard on a wild-goose chase. The dollars they sought were already behind them, and would soon be in safety in the bank at Thompson.

With great amusement the chums of Cedar Creek watched the desperate gang ride away, and disappear over a billow of the prairie far to the north. "Now I guess we're moving!" said Bob.

And the three chums took up the trail again for the south.

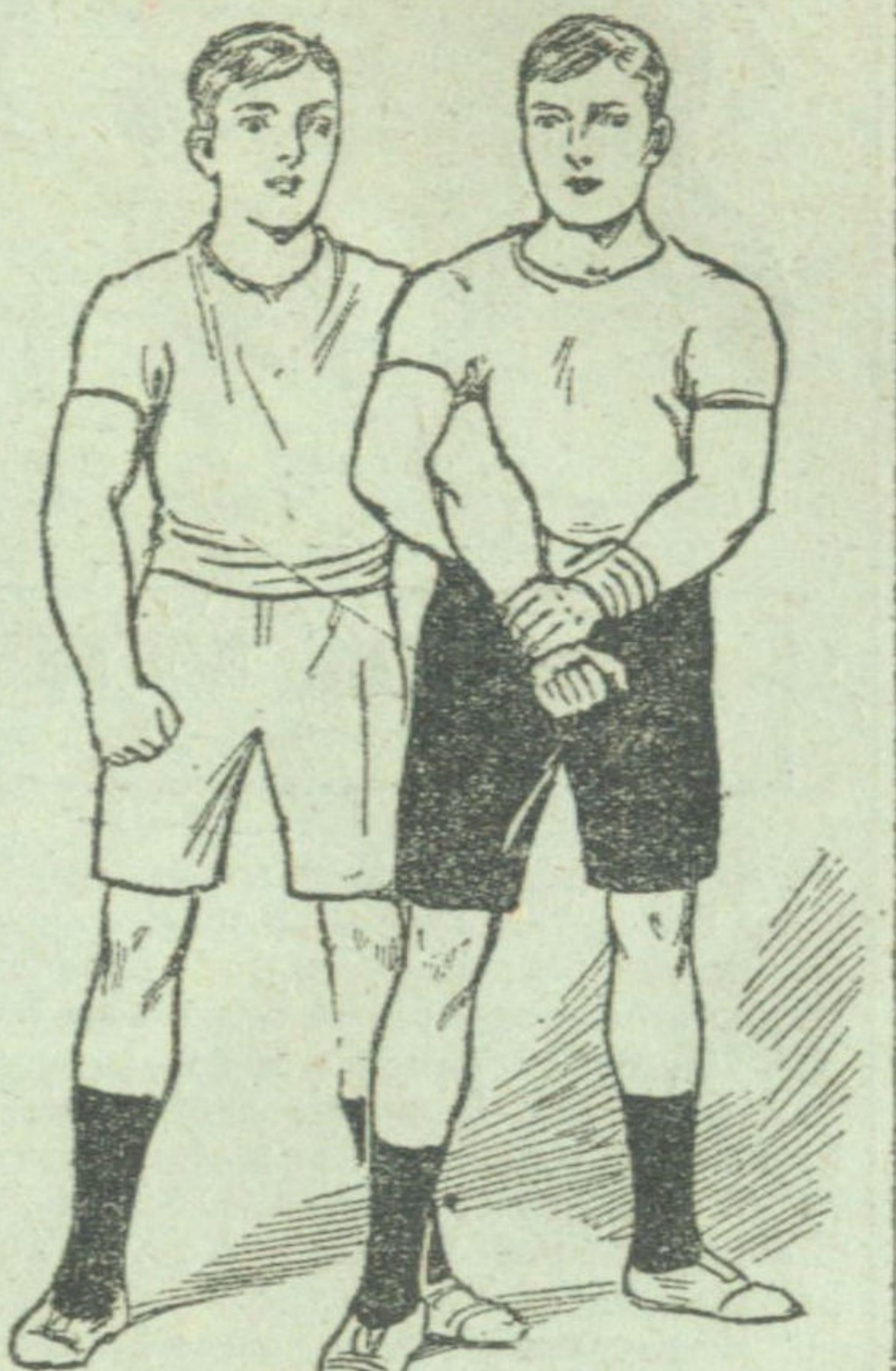
THE END.
(Look out for "Todgers the Tenor!" A grand, long complete tale of Frank Richards & Co. in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

HEALTH AND EXERCISE.
Conducted By PERCY LONGHURST.

Another Problem in Self-Defence.

Here's another problem in self-defence, and I dare say that when readers glance at the accompanying drawing they'll conclude that I'm trying to discover a satisfactory counter to it. I shouldn't be surprised to know that some will say it "can't be done."

But it can be done, and I'm hopeful that some of my clever jiu-jitsu readers will be able to discover what the correct counter is. If one does, he will well deserve the prize offered—a book on boxing, jiu-jitsu, or any other sport such as he may select—for there are scores of chaps who know jiu-jitsu who aren't acquainted with the counter, and regard the



The "Come along" Hold.

"Come along"—which is the hold illustrated—as a practical "finisher."

Try to work the problem out with the help of your pals. But the fellow who has taken the hold must bear in mind that he must exercise no more pressure than is absolutely necessary to maintain his grip. He mustn't force down the captured hand too far.

The counter is really quite simple, only it's not easy to think out. But try, for all that. Remember that the solution should contain a "counter," not a "get away."

How to Walk.

No, I don't mean track walking or race walking of any kind, but the ordinary walking you do every day of your life. How do you walk?

Most persons don't think much about the matter, but there's a whole lot more in walking than just getting over the ground—somehow. Slouching isn't walking. Getting along

hands in pockets, chest sunken in, nose poked forward, shoulders drooping—that isn't walking, either. To walk properly means style; and style means making the best use of your legs and feet, your body, and your internal organs. Walking affects all of these.

Military training, not many years ago (they haven't wholly lost the habit now), used to demand that in walking the soldier must have his chest lifted and puffed out, his abdomen drawn closely in, shoulders well set back. Now, that was not the proper style of walking. You don't want all the air in your lungs confined to the upper part, and if you're going to keep your stomach always drawn in, as the drill-sergeant required, you've a mighty poor chance of getting any air into the lower part of the lungs. Moreover, it wasn't possible to get all the used-up air out. The Army has learned something of late; but not everything. It still sticks to a certain stiffness.

Stiffness, anywhere, is altogether wrong; it means compression of something or other, and compression interferes with circulation, which is bad.

Walking, in which the feet are turned out, or turned in, or come down flatfootedly, is also incorrect. In any one of these some of the true walking muscles are wholly neglected, while others are called upon to do more work than they should. Walk fair heel and toe, sole flat on the ground, forepart of the foot and toes of the behind foot being still on the ground at the moment the heel of the advance foot takes its place; swing your arms slightly; walk springily, but don't exaggerate this to the extent of lifting yourself in the air; keep the head up and the shoulders back without any stiffness; avoid thrusting your chest forward; let your stomach move in and out with each indrawing or exhaling of air; and you'll be all right. You'll walk like an athlete with a properly developed body.

And this kind of walking is far less tiring than any of the incorrect styles. You know why? Because the work is distributed; each muscle does a share of the work.

Walking shows character. The healthy, confident, straightforward man doesn't slouch. The Indians of North America say that only liars turn their toes out, while the crafty and cowardly turn them in.

Percy Longhurst

(The column which keeps you fit—"Health and Exercise"—every Monday in the BOYS' FRIEND.)