

LOOK OUT FOR NEXT WEEK'S EASTER BUMPER NUMBER!

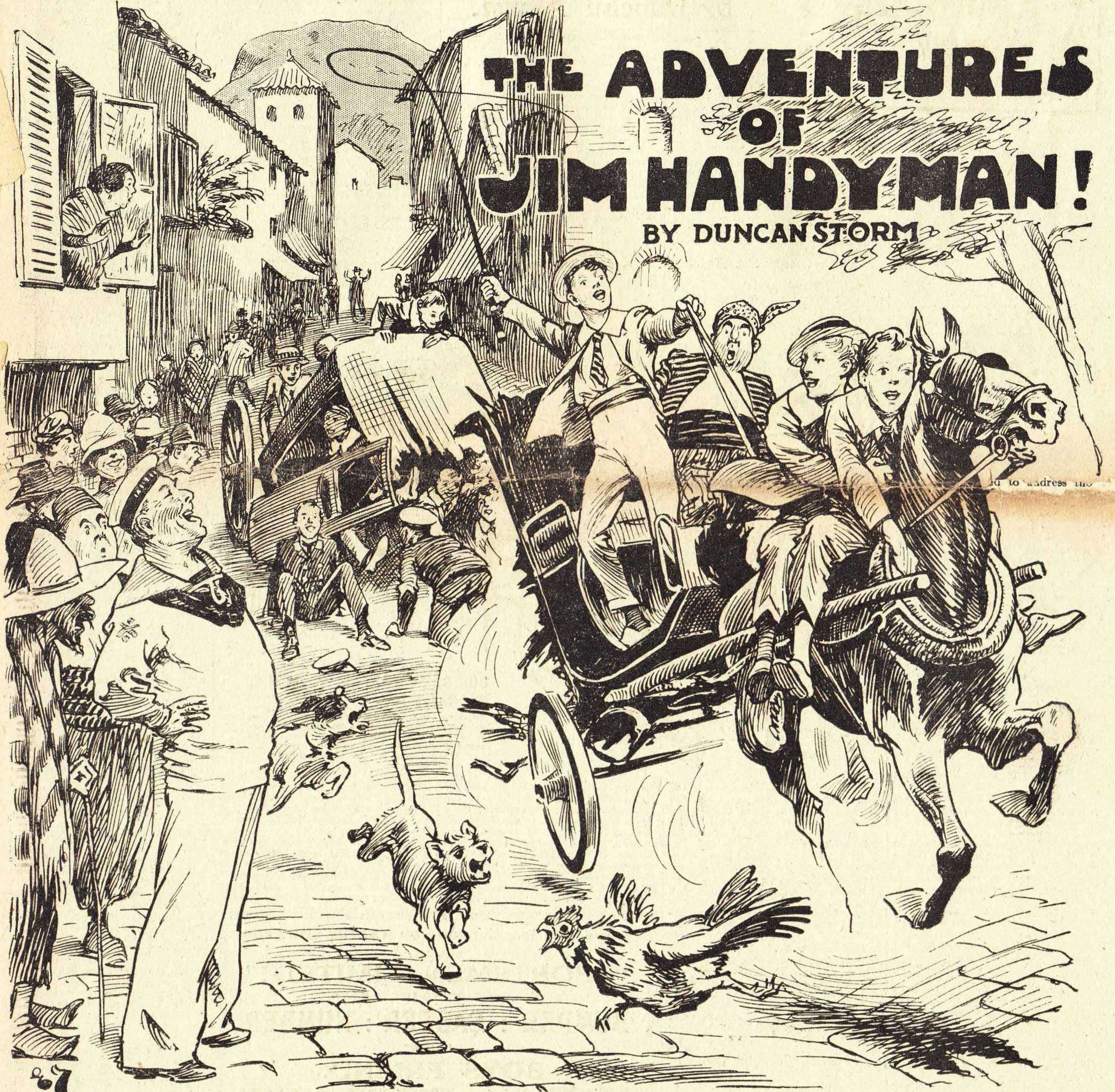
The BOYS' FRIEND ^{1d}/₂

TWELVE PAGES! TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

No. 1,033. Vol. XXI. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending March 26th, 1921.

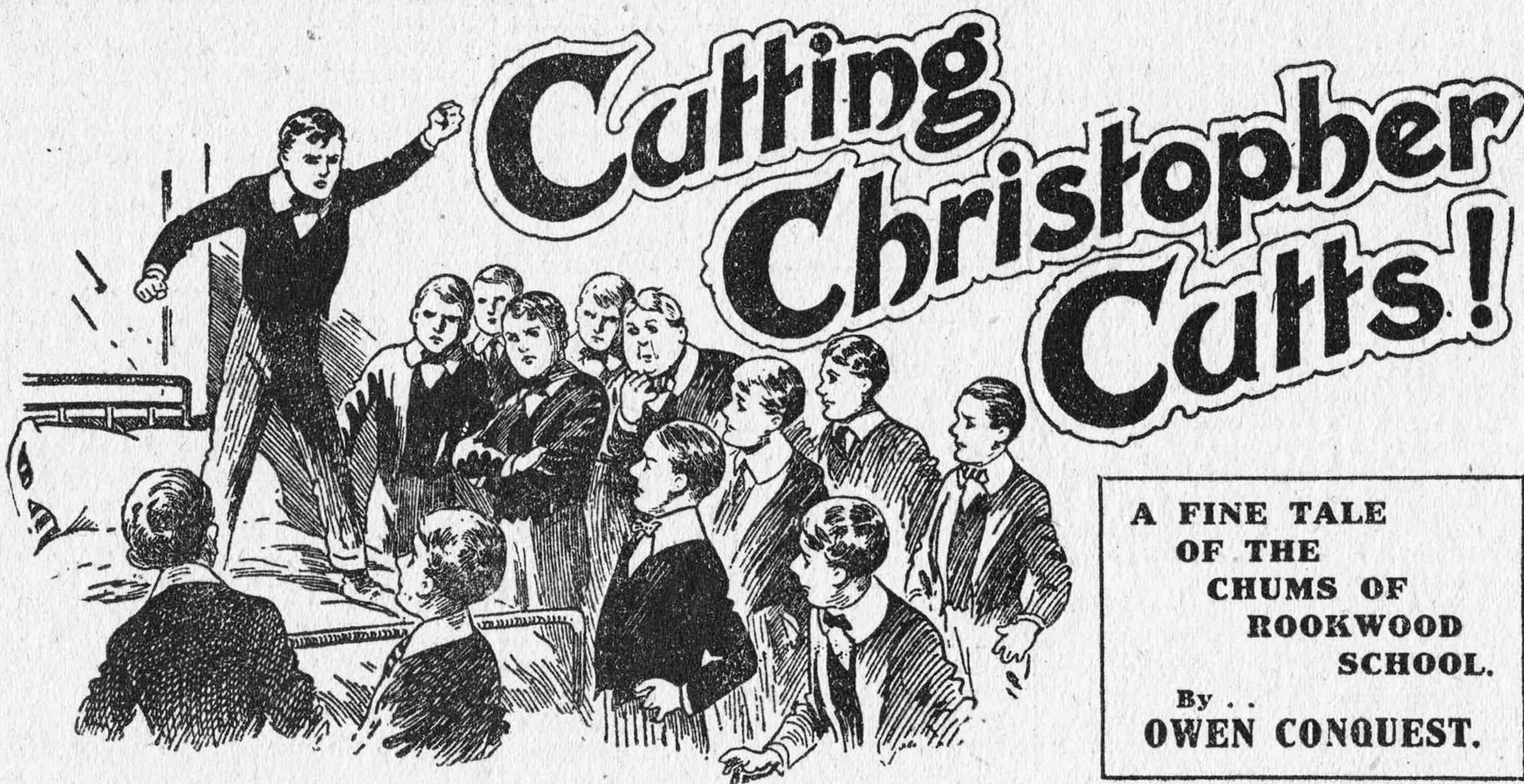


FUN WITH A RUNAWAY!

"Stop ze cab!" yelled the unfortunate owner of the vehicle. "If 'av come in 'alves!" Skeleton plied the whip once more to the horse on which Pongo and Arty were seated. "Keep your seat, Allæssandro! Don't get excited!" he yelled. "Just leave it to old Skeleton to see you through!"

THREE GREAT NEW FEATURES NEXT MONDAY!

A GRAND LONG COMPLETE YARN OF JIMMY SILVER & Co.



A FINE TALE
OF THE
CHUMS OF
ROOKWOOD
SCHOOL.
By . .
OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

The Plan of Campaign!

Clang, clang!
The rising-bell clanged out over Rookwood School in the windy March morning.

Jimmy Silver sat up in bed, in the dormitory of the Classical Fourth, and yawned.

Clang, clang!
Jimmy turned out of bed. He was generally first out. Arthur Edward Lovell gave a portentous yawn, and followed his example.

"Tumble out, you fellows!" called out Jimmy Silver. "No time to waste this morning."

"Anythin' special on this mornin'?" drawled Mornington.

"Yes. There's got to be a Form-meeting before we go down," answered the captain of the Fourth. "We've got to decide how to deal with Mr. Cutts—"

"Before he deals with us!" grinned Lovell.

"Exactly!"
Tubby Muffin sat up and rubbed his eyes.

"I say, Jimmy—"

"Well, fatty?"
"Form-meetings are all very well," said Muffin. "But we can't be late for brekker, you know. That's important."

Jimmy Silver hurled a pillow at the fat Classical.

"Never mind brekker!" he said.

"Yaroooh!"

"What are you howling about, you fat duffer?"

"You—you—silly idiot!" gasped Muffin. "You nearly knocked my head off, you burbling chump!"

"I'll quite knock it off, if you don't shut up."

The Classical Fourth were unusually rapid with their ablutions and with their toilet that morning. Every face in the dormitory was grave. The position was serious, from the point of view of the juniors.

It was war, now, between the Fourth Form and the Fourth Form-master. All the Fourth agreed that they had had enough of Mr. Cutts' ragging and caning, and that they weren't going to stand it. But it was easier to make such a resolve than to carry it out.

There was authority on the side of Mr. Christopher Cutts. Behind the Form-master loomed the awe-inspiring figure of the Head!

True, the juniors felt that if the Head knew exactly what kind of a brute Mr. Cutts was, he would award him the immediate order of the boot, and Rookwood School would see the last of him. But the Head did not know—and was not likely to know. And anything like insubordination was likely to rouse the dire wrath of Dr. Chisholm.

As captain of the Fourth, a great responsibility rested upon Jimmy Silver, and he realised it.

But Jimmy was in a resolute mood. His Form-fellows looked up to him to lead them, and he was prepared to lead.

"Now for the giddy meeting!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, as he finished lacing his boots. "Who takes the chair?"

"I don't mind taking the chair," said Tubby Muffin, "so long as we're not late for brekker."

"Shut up, Muffin!"

Jimmy Silver mounted on a bed to address the meeting, and the Classical juniors gathered round him.

"Gentlemen!" began Jimmy Silver.

"Go it, Jimmy!" said Lovell encouragingly.

"Gentlemen, you know how the matter stands—"

"Then you needn't tell us!" suggested Peele.

"Shut up, Peele!"

"We've got a new Form-master, now that Mr. Bootles has gone, and the new master is an out-and-out rotter!" continued Jimmy Silver.

"He is a beast—"

"Hear, hear!"

"And a brute—"

"Yes, rather!"

"And a bully—"

"What-ho!"

"He's down on us—" continued Jimmy.

"And we're down on him!" said Mornington.

"We've had enough of his rot!" went on Jimmy, warming to his subject. "Last night he wanted to whack us all round, and we locked him out of the dorm. We've got to let him learn somehow that we're not going to stand any more of his rot. We got on all right with Mr. Bootles. It's all Cutts' fault that we don't get on with him."

"Hear, hear!"

"There's going to be a row when we go down!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Now, the whole Form has got to stand together. It's us against Mr. Cutts, and the word is shoulder to shoulder!"

"Bravo!"

There was not a dissentient voice. Evidently the Classical Fourth were in full agreement with the orator mounted on the bed.

"The man isn't fit to be a master at Rookwood," resumed Jimmy Silver. "He knows his business, so far as that goes. But he don't know how to handle us. We can be led, but not driven!"

"The man's a cad—"

"Yes, rather! He is!"

"The very outside edge in cads and—"

"Hear, hear!"

"The question is, what are we going to do with the rotter. We can't lynch him—"

"What a pity!" murmured Lovell.

"We can't bump him—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But there's one thing we can do," said Jimmy Silver. He paused impressively. "We can send him to Coventry!"

The 2nd Chapter.

Mr. Cutts is Cut!

"Send him to Coventry?"

"My hat!"

"Phew!"

There was a buzz of astonishment in the Fourth Form dormitory.

Jimmy Silver's suggestion took the Classics by surprise.

They had heard of sending a fellow to Coventry, certainly, but sending a Form-master to Coventry was rather a new idea.

"Off your rocker, old bean?" asked Peele politely.

"Shut up, Peele!" roared Lovell.

"How exactly are we going to work it?" asked Mornington.

"Easily enough," answered the captain of the Fourth. "We simply boycott the bouncer. From this hour he's in Coventry, and no fellow in the Fourth Form will speak to him!"

"Phew!"

"I say, Jimmy—" began Tubby Muffin.

"Well?"

"What about breakfast?"

"Kill him, somebody!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Muffin, as Arthur Edward Lovell smote him wrathfully, and he rolled over on a bed.

Breakfast was not a primary consideration with the Fourth Form just then.

"But in class?" exclaimed Gower.

"We shall have to speak to the cad in class!"

"He can't make us speak," answered Jimmy Silver.

"But—but—" stammered Townsend.

"But we can't do our lessons without speakin' to the blighter!" howled Topham.

"We're not going to do any lessons."

"Oh, my sainted aunt!"

"Great pip!"

"No lessons!" Tubby Muffin brightened up. "I say, that's a jolly good idea if it can be worked!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mind, we've all got to stick together," said Jimmy Silver impressively. "But, shoulder to shoulder, we can beat that brute hollow. He will have to call in the Head to deal with us."

"Oh!"

The Classical Fourth did not look specially pleased at the idea of being dealt with by the Head.

"You see," continued Jimmy Silver, "the brute had to call in the Head several times yesterday. Now, the Head don't employ a Form-master just to come and do the Form-master's work for him, does he?"

"I should say not!" chuckled Mornington.

"Dr. Chisholm was a bit snappy about it yesterday," said Jimmy. "He didn't like being yanked away from his precious Sixth, and Greek roots, and things, to take on Cutts' job. The oftener he gets it the less he will like it. If Cutts proves that he can't manage the Fourth, Cutts will have to go. That's clear, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Erroll. "But it looks as if we shall collect up a record number of lickings in the process."

"Who cares?" exclaimed Lovell.

"Hem! I care, for one," said Peele.

"Oh, you don't count!" retorted Lovell. "You're nobody, you know. Less than nobody, in fact!"

"Look here—"

"We'll put it to the vote," said Jimmy Silver. "If any fellow can suggest a better plan for handling

Christopher Cutts, let him stand up on his hind legs and say so."

"Or for ever hold his peace," said Raby.

The Classical juniors looked at one another dubiously. Jimmy Silver's plan seemed a risky one and a thorny one, but certainly nobody seemed to have any better scheme to suggest.

"Then hands up for sending Cutts to Coventry!" said Jimmy.

Nearly every hand in the dormitory went up. Risky as the plan seemed, the Classics were prepared to follow their leader. For undoubtedly Mr. Cutts had to be dealt with in some manner. Life under the severe and tyrannical rule of Mr. Christopher Cutts was not worth living.

There were only four or five dissentients. Jimmy Silver looked over the crowd.

"Carried?" he asked.

"Unanimously!" said Dick Oswald.

"Not quite unanimously," said Jimmy.

"But the dissenters will have to toe the line with the rest. All the Classical Fourth must stand together."

"United we stand, divided we fall," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Any chap who stands out can please himself, but he will be licked by the Form."

"Hear, hear!"

"Any fellow speaking a word to Cutts will be sent to Coventry by the rest of the Form," said Jimmy Silver. "Also, he will be bumped six times for every word he speaks to Cutts."

Peele and his friends looked rather glum.

"And now," said Jimmy Silver, jumping off the bed—"now we'll go down. Not a word to Cutts. From this giddy moment we cut Cutts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jimmy unlocked the dormitory door.

The Classics streamed out, and met Bulkeley of the Sixth in the corridor. The Rookwood captain eyed them.

"I was just coming to rout you out," he said. "You're late down. Cut down to brekker."

"Yes, Bulkeley," said Jimmy Silver meekly.

The Classical Fourth streamed down the staircase. Their hearts were beating rather fast. At the breakfast-table they were to meet the new Form-master, who had visited the dormitory with a cane, and had been unable to obtain admission. It was not likely to be a pleasant meeting with the tyrant of the Fourth. However, they reflected that he could scarcely begin with the cane in the dining-hall.

Mr. Christopher Cutts sat at the head of the Fourth Form table as the juniors came in.

His narrow eyes glistened at the juniors, and his thin lips closed hard and tight. It was evident from his look that Mr. Cutts had neither forgotten nor forgiven.

The Classical Fourth did not bid their master good-morning.

They dropped into their places at the table in silence, without looking at him, or, indeed, seeming aware of his presence.

"Silver," said Mr. Cutts, in his grinding voice, "I hold you responsible for the locking of the dormitory door last night, and I shall deal with you in the Form-room."

Jimmy did not look up or speak.

"You hear me, Silver?" exclaimed Mr. Cutts, raising his eyebrows.

Jimmy's heart throbbed a little.

It was a new and strange experience to be sending his Form-master to Coventry. But "Uncle James" of Rookwood did not falter. He was called upon to set an example to the Fourth, and he was not found wanting.

"Silver!" rapped out Mr. Cutts. Jimmy kept his eyes fixed upon his plate. Some of the juniors breathed hard. The tussle was beginning already.

If Jimmy had weakened the whole scheme would have fallen through on the spot. But Jimmy did not weaken.

Mr. Christopher Cutts looked puzzled, as well as angry. He did not quite catch on to this new and unexpected development.

"Are you deaf, Silver?" he ejaculated. "Why do you not answer me, boy? How dare you not answer me?"

No sign from Jimmy Silver!

"Lovell, is Silver deaf? What is the matter with him?" exclaimed the perplexed master.

Lovell seemed deaf, too. At all events, he did not answer, and he did not look up.

"Lovell!" thundered Mr. Cutts. Arthur Edward Lovell breathed hard, but he was silent. He was loyally ready to follow Jimmy's lead.

By this time the rest of the dining-hall was quite aware that something very unusual was going on at the Fourth Form table. Smythe & Co. of the Shell stared across at the Fourth; Hansom of the Fifth blinked at them; even the great men at the Sixth Form table seemed interested.

For once, the Classical Fourth were the centre of attention.

Mr. Cutts grew crimson.

He began to realise that there was resistance in his Form—that his commands no longer carried authority.

"Lovell," he said, in concentrated tones, "I order you to answer me!"

Frozen silence from Arthur Edward Lovell. The rest of the Classical Fourth hardly breathed.

"Very well," said Mr. Cutts, at length. "I comprehend fully that this is insubordination. I shall not deal with you here. I shall deal with you in the Form-room!"

And breakfast finished in stony silence.

The 3rd Chapter.

"In Coventry!"

Mr. Christopher Cutts came into the Fourth Form-room, and found his pupils in their places. The Modern Fourth were busy with Mr. Manders that morning on the Modern side; but all the Classics were there. Some of them were looking rather uneasy—especially Tubby Muffin. The fat Tubby made himself as small as possible, as Mr. Cutts' glinting eyes wandered over the class. Cyril Peele and Lattrey and Gower looked dubious and glum; Townsend and Topham were distinctly uneasy. But the rest of the Fourth were in a resolute mood; especially the Fistical Four, and Mornington, and Conroy and Pons and Van Ryn.

As a matter of fact, the Fourth-Formers realised that they had little to lose by standing up against their tyrant. Mr. Cutts' methods were so exceedingly drastic, that in any case they would have had to "go through it" that morning. And as Arthur Edward Lovell had sapiently remarked, a fellow might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb. If they were going to suffer, anyway, they might as well have their money's worth, as it were.

Mr. Cutts took a cane from his desk, and stood before the class. The juniors waited breathlessly. The real tug-of-war was about to commence.

"Silver!"

Mr. Christopher Cutts rapped out the name like a bullet. But the owner of the name seemed deaf.

"Silver, stand out before the class!"

The captain of the Fourth neither spoke nor moved.

"You hear me, Silver?" thundered Mr. Cutts.

No answer.

Mr. Cutts' grip closed almost convulsively on his cane. Like the dying gladiator of old, the junior heard him, but he heeded not. Mr. Cutts strode in among the forms. As the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet had to go to the mountain.

He stopped beside Jimmy Silver. With all his courage and nerve, Jimmy felt a tremor as the tall, angular gentleman bent over him.

"Silver, stand up and hold out your hand!"

Silence!

"If you do not obey me, Silver, I shall cane you across the shoulders!" Still silence.

Slash!

Mr. Cutts' temper was at boiling-point now. He brought down the cane with a terrific lash across Jimmy Silver's back.

"Yaroooh!" roared Jimmy. That terrific cut made him find his voice involuntarily.

"Now hold out your hand!" thundered Mr. Cutts.

Jimmy sprang from the form. He did not intend to sit still and be lashed at Mr. Cutts' pleasure.

He ran out into the middle of the Form-room, and Mr. Cutts rustled after him.

"Hold out your hand, Silver!"

Jimmy did not answer, or hold out his hand. He dodged behind the master's high desk.

"Come here!" panted Mr. Cutts.

GRAND EASTER PROGRAMME!

Here are some of the contents of next week's great bumper number:

The opening chapters of a new boxing yarn, entitled:

"SPORTSMEN, LIMITED"

By WALTER EDWARDS.

Long instalments of

"THE ADVENTURES OF JIM HANDYMAN"

and

"THE SCHOOLBOY MULTI-MILLIONAIRE"

There is going to be a big demand for next week's issue. ORDER YOUR COPY TO-DAY.

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"FRANK RICHARDS' FLIGHT"

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"PEELE'S PLOT"

There are also starting in this issue two new series of useful articles:

"CHOOSING A CAREER"

and

"SECRETS OF SUCCESS"

"Stick it out, Jimmy!" shouted Lovell.

Mr. Cutts spun round. "Lovell, step out here at once! Hold out your hand, sir!"

Lovell did not answer or move. Mr. Cutts strode towards him, with his cane uplifted. Lovell moved fast enough then. He dodged round the form.

"I—I will deal with you presently, Lovell!" panted Mr. Cutts. "Silver, once more I command you to come here and take your punishment!"

Jimmy watched him warily over the high desk, without speaking. Mr. Cutts made a rush at him, and Jimmy dodged round the desk. After him came the infuriated Mr. Cutts, his gown streaming behind him, his cane swishing in the air.

Whiz! An inkpot flew through the air, and caught Mr. Cutts under the chin. A stream of ink shot over his gown.

"What—what—"

The inkpot crashed on the floor. "Mornington! That was you, Mornington! You—you have dared to hurl an inkpot at me!" shrieked Mr. Cutts.

Mornington smiled serenely. The enraged Form-master made a rush at him, and Morny leaped up and dodged round the back of the class.

There were now three juniors on their feet, dodging Mr. Cutts; and the rest of the Form sat and looked on breathlessly.

Mr. Cutts seemed rather at a loss. Lessons did not seem likely to begin early, at this rate. Mr. Cutts had determined, that morning, to make a severe example of the rebellious spirits in his Form. He found his path a thorny one.

"Silver!" he gasped. "Once more I command you to come here!"

Jimmy was behind the big black-board easel now. He eyed Mr. Cutts warily without speaking.

Evidently he did not intend to come.

Mr. Cutts started for him, and Jimmy backed round the easel, watching him. The Form-master made a sudden rush. Whether he bumped on the easel, or whether Jimmy gave it a push at the psychological moment, was not clear. The big easel went over with a crash—on Mr. Cutts!

Crash!

"Oh! Ow! Ah!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth. Mr. Cutts went sprawling on the floor, with the easel on him. Conroy jumped to his feet.

"Turn him out!" he shouted. "We've had enough of this! Turn him out of the Form-room!"

"Back up!" shouted Lovell.

Conroy led, but Jimmy Silver was a good second. Before Mr. Cutts could gain his feet, they had hold of an ankle each. Lovell and Raby and Newcome had a hold a second later.

The dazed and astounded Form-master found himself whisked along the floor to the doorway.

Morny ran to open the door.

"Out with him!"

"Hurrah!"

"Outside!"

"Let go!" shrieked Mr. Cutts. He grabbed wildly at the floor with his hands, but his legs were safe in the grasp of nearly a dozen hands, and he had no chance. "Help!"

"Outside with him!" roared Lovell.

Mr. Cutts rolled into the corridor. He lay there, gasping stertorously, and the juniors jumped back into the Form-room. Jimmy Silver slammed the door and turned the key.

He was only just in time.

A second after the key turned, Mr. Cutts hurled himself against the door, and it shook under his weight.

Crash!

Lovell chuckled.

"He can keep that up as long as he likes!" he remarked. "That door is a bit stronger than Cutts, I fancy."

Arthur Edward was right. The stout oaken door stood quite firm. Outside, Mr. Cutts could be heard spluttering with rage.

"We're fairly started now!" said Mornington. "It's us against Cutts; and there's no turnin' back!"

"No fear!"

A voice, hoarse and husky with rage, penetrated through the keyhole. "Open this door instantly, or I shall call the Head here!"

No answer.

Mr. Cutts' footsteps stamped away down the corridor. The Classical Fourth exchanged glances.

"The Head!" murmured Newcome. "What will the Head say?"

"We've got to stand it!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, rather!"

The juniors waited in rather painful anxiety. Footsteps sounded in the corridor at last. Then there was a

quiet, but very commanding voice without.

"Open this door!"

It was the Head!

The 4th Chapter.

The Revolt of the Fourth!

Jimmy Silver unlocked the door at once.

He drew it wide open, and Dr. Chisholm rustled into the Form-room. Mr. Cutts, pale with rage, followed him in. Dr. Chisholm's brow was darkly knitted.

He had had to leave his duties in the Sixth Form room in support of Mr. Cutts, and he was deeply annoyed and exasperated.

But all his wrath was not directed against the juniors. A Form-master who could not handle his Form was not likely to please the Head of Rookwood.

Mr. Bootles had had no trouble of this kind in his time, but since Mr. Cutts' arrival there had been incessant trouble in the Fourth Form room. The Head could not fail to see that the fault could not all lie with the Form.

"Boys, Mr. Cutts informs me that you have ejected him from this Form-room!" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm. "Such an occurrence has never taken place at Rookwood before."

"There's never been a master like Mr. Cutts before, sir!" said Mornington.

"Silence! I shall cane the whole Form!" said the Head. "And if there is any further disturbance here, I shall flog the whole Form!"

It seemed only too likely that the rebellion would fizzle out, and Mr. Cutts would resume his sway. But Jimmy Silver was resolved. If he was called upon to construe, he was determined not to speak.

Perhaps intentionally, Mr. Cutts called upon Tubby Muffin to construe first. Tubby was pretty certain not to adopt an heroic attitude, and his submission would break the ice, as it were.

"Muffin!"

Tubby rubbed his fat hands, and cast an anxious blink at his Form-fellows. He did not answer for a moment.

"Muffin!" thundered Mr. Cutts. "Yes, sir!" squeaked Tubby desperately.

Such courage as he had oozed out at Tubby's podgy finger-tips.

"You will construe, Muffin!"

"Yes, sir!" groaned Tubby.

Arthur Edward Lovell gave the fat Classical a ferocious look.

"I—I can't help it!" mumbled Tubby. "I—I can't stand any more cane, you know! Oh dear!"

"Muffin, are you talking to Lovell?"

"Eh? Oh, no, sir!"

"To whom are you talking, then?" thundered Mr. Cutts.

"I—I wasn't talking, sir!"

"Do not tell me falsehoods, Muffin! Lovell, was Muffin speaking to you?"

Arthur Edward Lovell's lips closed like a vice. He was made of sterner stuff than Reginald Muffin.

"You hear me, Lovell?"

Lovell stared directly in the Form-

and ran for it. Mr. Cutts at the same moment jumped up and ran for Tubby.

The tyrant of the Fourth was purple with passion now. He seemed to have thrown all self-control to the winds. His cane came down again and again on Tubby Muffin's back as the fat Classical fled.

Tubby roared and yelled, and put on speed, but Mr. Cutts' long legs enabled him to keep pace easily with Tubby's greatest efforts, and the cane rose and fell without ceasing.

The hapless Tubby was really the least offending in the Form, but he was at Mr. Cutts' mercy, and the infuriated man was thirsting to "take it out" of somebody. So he took it out of the unfortunate Reginald Muffin.

Lash, lash, lash!

"Yaroooh! Help! Yooop! Murder! Help!" raved Tubby Muffin as he fled with ducked head from the lashing cane.

Crash!

"Stop!"

"Oh crikey!"

At the corner of the passage the fleeing junior rushed right into a figure in cap and gown, and the Head of Rookwood reeled against the wall. Tubby, in utter horror at having cannoned the Head, darted away. Mr. Cutts stopped irresolute, and lowered his cane.

The 5th Chapter.

Exit Christopher Cutts!

Dr. Chisholm panted for breath. It was no joke to be cannoned by

said Mr. Cutts. "Unless every boy in the Form is flogged for this behaviour—including Muffin, sir—I shall have to consider whether to hand you my resignation! Milk-and-water methods will not answer with these unruly boys! I demand the most severe and exemplary punishment!"

"You—you will hand me your resignation!" gasped the Head. "Do you imagine, for one moment, that I should allow you to remain another day at Rookwood, after the way I have seen you treat this boy Muffin? I should be failing in my duty, sir—"

Mr. Cutts paused. Apparently he had not expected the Head to be so ready to accept his resignation.

"I—I spoke hastily, sir," he said. "I—I withdraw my remark about handing in my resignation! I am prepared—"

"I am not prepared to allow you to remain, sir! I am glad—I am thankful—that I have seen you in your true colours! What, sir! I was brought away from my duties by the sounds of disturbance, and I found you—"

"I—I was perhaps a little hasty in—"

"You can withdraw your resignation if you please, Mr. Cutts!" said the Head sternly. "You may resign your position, or not, as seems to you best. But if you do not resign your position, sir, you are dismissed—dismissed this day from your post in Rookwood School, sir! Kindly do not add another word! My decision is irrevocable! I should not be fit to hold my present position in this school, sir, if I allowed you to wield authority for one hour longer! You are dismissed, sir!"

"Sir! I—"

"Enough!"

And the Head—having recovered his wind—sailed majestically away, leaving Mr. Christopher Cutts with an expression on his face that a Prussian Hun might have envied.

"Sacked?"

"Yow-ow! Yes!"

"Sure of it?"

"Wow! Yes! Ow!"

Tubby Muffin joined the crowd of the Classical Fourth in the quad, squeaking with pain, but bursting with the glad news. He had heard what the Head had said to Mr. Cutts, and it almost consoled him for the aches and pains in his fat back.

"Hurrah!" roared Lovell.

"Yow-ow-ow!" mumbled Tubby.

"I'm hurt—I'm fearful hurt! But you should have heard the old sport jawing him—Yowowow! Talked to him like a—yow-ow!—picture-book! Cutts was quite—ow!—green! Wow!"

Tubby Muffin bubbled with satisfaction and anguish at the same time, and the result was peculiar.

"Hallo! Here comes Bulkeley!"

The Rookwood captain came out of the School House.

"Get into your Form-room!" he rapped out.

"Cutts there?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"No. The Head has asked me to take you for the rest of the day," said Bulkeley. "I think Mr. Cutts is leaving! Get along with you!"

With joyous faces the juniors trooped in. They had aching palms still—but Mr. Cutts was going! They had all been through it—but Mr. Cutts was going! Mr. Cutts was going—that was a consolation for everything.

And in the Form-room, in charge of the prefect, the Classical Fourth were as good as gold. They wanted it to be quite clear that the trouble wasn't their fault, and they knew the value of discipline, though they rebelled against tyranny.

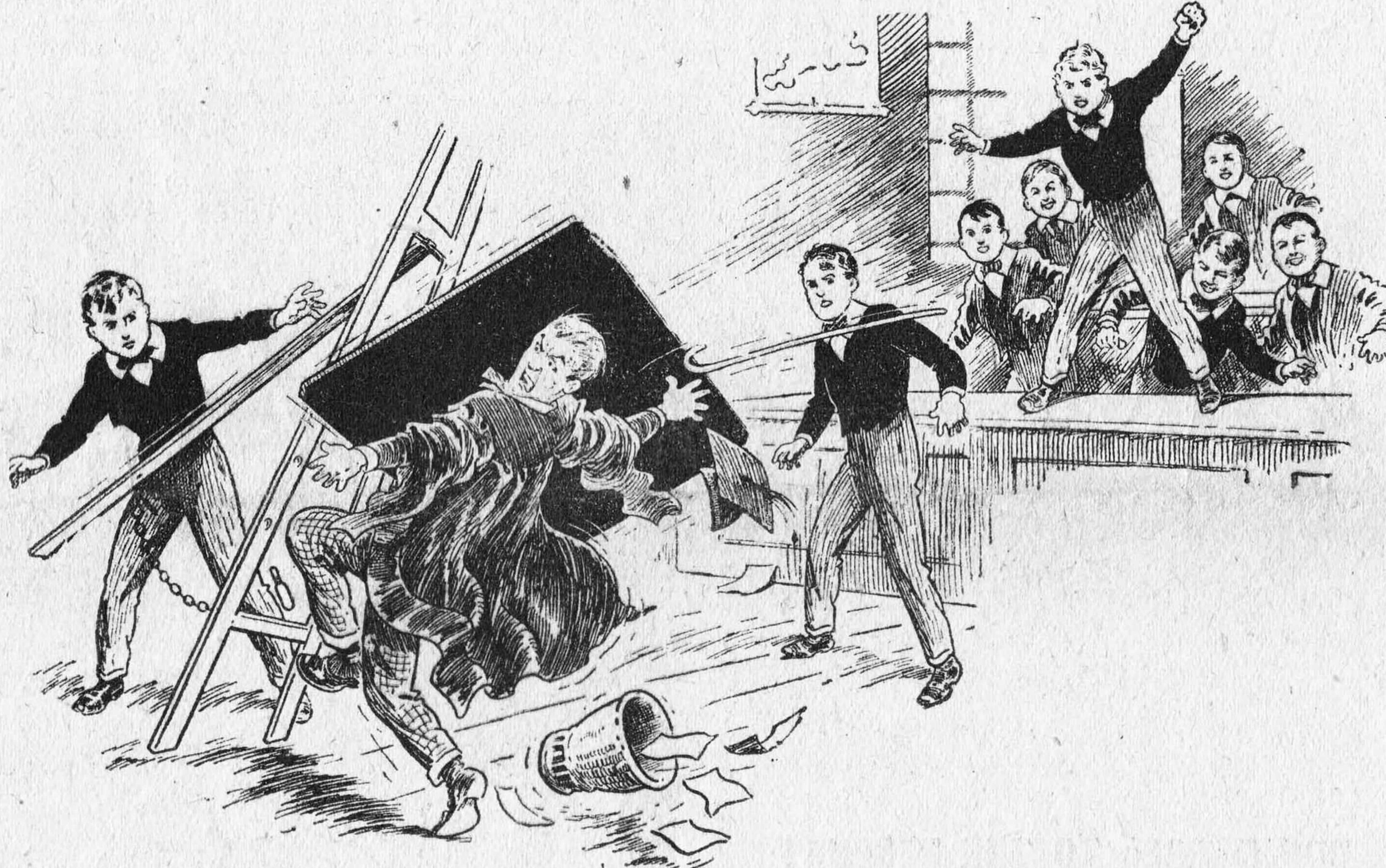
Bulkeley had no fault to find with them that morning, and they were equally satisfied with Bulkeley. It was, as Arthur Edward Lovell observed, a ge-lorious change after Christopher Cutts.

It was after morning lessons that the hack came from the station to take away Mr. Cutts and his baggage. He was going that day; the Head had determined that another sun should not go down upon him at Rookwood. Peele suggested hissing and cat-calling; but Jimmy Silver frowned him into silence. The Classical Fourth would not triumph over a fallen enemy.

So in silence Mr. Cutts shook the dust of Rookwood from his feet, and glad enough were the juniors to see him go. He gave the crowd of Classics a black and bitter look as he drove away, but they stared at him with expressionless faces, in silence, still Cutting Christopher Cutts!

THE END.

(You must not miss next Monday's grand, complete Rookwood school tale, entitled, "Peele's Plot!")



THE "FOURTH" REVOLT! The enraged Mr. Cutts made a rush. Whether he bumped against the easel or whether Jimmy Silver gave it a push was not quite clear. But it went over with a crash—on the Rookwood Bolshevik!

Jimmy Silver set his lips. This was the second time the Head had awarded a caning to the whole Form since Mr. Cutts' advent at Rookwood. But, after all, it was no more painful than what Mr. Cutts had intended for his pupils; and it was quite certain that the headmaster would very soon be fed up with being called upon to perform such duties.

The Head lost no time in carrying out his drastic sentence.

One after another the Classical Fourth went through it—most of them in silence, though there were loud howls from Tubby Muffin.

Dr. Chisholm looked a little tired when he had finished. He had put some energy into the infliction.

He laid down the cane at last.

"Now I shall leave you with your Form-master!" he said. "Let there be no further disturbance here. I am ashamed of you!"

With that crushing remark the Head swept out.

Mr. Cutts eyed his Form almost wolfishly when the headmaster was gone. The hapless juniors were rubbing and squeezing their hands, most of them in the lowest possible spirits.

Probably Mr. Cutts would have been pleased to repeat the punishment on the spot, but he realised that there was danger in the air.

"We will now proceed!" he said harshly.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

The path the rebels had set themselves was a thorny one, and after their experience at Dr. Chisholm's hands there was much doubt and hesitation.

master's face without speaking. His palms were aching savagely from the Head's caning. But his spirit was unbroken. He was sticking to the plan laid down and adopted at the Form meeting in the dormitory.

Mr. Cutts picked up his cane. "I command you to speak, Lovell!"

Not a word from Arthur Edward.

"Stand out before the class!"

Lovell did not move.

Mr. Cutts' eyes glinted with rage. He seized Lovell by the collar, and wrenched him bodily out of his place.

Then his cane came down with a savage lash across Lovell's shoulders.

Arthur Edward roared, and tore himself loose.

His face was crimson with wrath.

"Come out of this, you fellows!" he roared. "We've had enough."

He rushed to the door, and threw it wide open. Mr. Cutts brandished his cane.

"Come back!" he howled.

Lovell strolled furiously out into the corridor. Jimmy Silver jumped up and called to his comrades. With one accord the Classical Fourth followed their captain.

Mr. Cutts threw himself between the juniors and the doorway.

"Stop! Stand back! I—"

The cane fell on Jimmy Silver. There was a scuffle, and Mr. Cutts went whirling away. He sat on the Form-room floor violently. The Classical Fourth marched out.

Only Tubby Muffin remained in his place, too terrified to move. But as he found himself left alone with the terrible Mr. Cutts, Tubby jumped up

Tubby Muffin in full career. The Head leaned on the wall, and gasped. It was a full minute before he could speak.

But even before he found his voice his eyes glittered over his glasses at Mr. Christopher Cutts. It was evident that a storm was coming, but Mr. Cutts was too enraged himself to care very much.

"Mr. Cutts!" stuttered the Head at last. "How dare you!"

"Sir!" hooted Mr. Cutts.

"I engaged you, sir, to take up the duties of a Form-master here!" stormed the Head. "I find you chasing a junior along the corridor, and beating him in a cruel and brutal manner—"

"Dr. Chisholm!"

"How dare you use a boy in such a way?" thundered the Head.

"Muffin must be covered with marks from your cane! Do you think for one moment, sir, that such hooliganism will be permitted at Rookwood?"

"The boy refused to stop! The Form is out of control!" snapped Mr. Cutts savagely. "My methods have been interfered with—"

"Your methods, sir, seem to be more suitable to a slave plantation than to a public school! Why are the boys out of control? They were never out of control with Mr. Bootles!"

"Confound Mr. Bootles!" snorted the angry master. "I have heard quite enough of Mr. Bootles!"

"Sir!" stammered the Head.

"You—you venture to use such expressions to—me—"

"I demand the exemplary punishment of the whole Fourth Form!"

A GRAND LONG COMPLETE YARN OF FRANK RICHARDS & Co.



THE ROBBERY AT CEDAR CREEK!

By
Martin Clifford

A FINE TALE OF THE
CHUMS OF
CEDAR CREEK SCHOOL.

The 1st Chapter.

Ten Dollars Wanted!

"Nicey ole Flanky!"
Yen Chin, the Chinese of Cedar Creek, spoke in his softest and most wheedling tones.

Frank Richards was wary at once. When the Cedar Creek heathen assumed that manner which was "child-like and bland" it was evident that the heathen wanted something—probably something that he shouldn't have.

"Well?" said Frank.
He stopped good-naturedly. Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclere were going down to the frozen creek, skates in hand—and Frank Richards was following them when Yen Chin came along. The little heathen blinked at Frank with serious and solemn almond eyes.

"Nicey ole Flanky Richards—"
"Cut that out!" suggested Frank, with a grin. "What do you want, Yen Chin? Come to the point!"
"Poor lill' Yen Chin likey ole Flanky vely muchee," said the Chinese. "Ole Flanky vely good boy."

"I wish I could say they came of you," answered Frank. "But leave out the soft sawder!"

"Nicey ole Flanky—"
"Chuck it, I tell you!" exclaimed Frank. "Look here, I want to skate! If you've got anything to say, get it off your chest! Have you been getting into trouble again?"

"Poor lill' Chinese in great trouble!" said Yen Chin sadly. "Nicey ole Flanky helpee."

"I thought that was coming!" said Frank Richards grimly. "Well, what's the trouble? Have you been playing poker again and losing your money?"

"No playee poken. Plomise Flanky neeve playee poken no more," said Yen Chin. "Keepee plomise, allee samee white man."

"I hope so," said Frank, rather dubiously. "Well, if it isn't that, what is it?"

"Pool lill' Chinese losee ten-dollee note!"

"Phew!"
"Ten dollee lot money," said Yen tearfully. "Chinese flaid goey home and sayee losee money. Me goey dlownee in cloek, me tinkee!"

"Don't talk rot, kid!" said Frank Richards gruffly. "How did it happen?"

Yen Chin explained in a faltering voice.

"Fathel givee Yen Chin ten-dollee payee at Gunten Store when comee to school. Wind blowee notee way. Chinese lookee, no findee. Flaid to goey home and tell John Chin. Lickee with slap, you bet. Me tinkee lun away!"

"You young ass!" said Frank. "You'd better tell your father exactly what's happened."

Yen Chin shook his head.

"Flaid tellee. Whackee pool lill' Yen Chin. S'pose nicey ole Flanky lendee Yen Chin ten dollee?" suggested the Chinese. "Chinese findee notee some time and givee backee to Flanky. What you tinkee?"

Frank Richards hesitated.
Ten dollars was a considerable sum to a schoolboy at Cedar Creek, though it happened that Frank had, at that moment, a ten-dollar note in his pocket, payment received for his weekly story in the "Thompson Press" from Mr. Isaacs.

He could not help wondering whether Yen Chin was aware of that fact: though Frank was not, as a rule, suspicious. But Yen Chin was not exactly a trustworthy youth.

The little Chinese watched his face. "Flanky no gottee money?" he asked. "If Flanky no gottee money, no can give. Allee light!"

At which Frank Richards felt rather ashamed of his half-formed suspicion. Apparently the little heathen did not know anything about the ten-dollar note the schoolboy author had received from Mr. Isaacs.

"Are you coming, Frank?" bawled Bob Lawless from the bank of the creek.

"I'm coming!" called back Frank. "Well, get a move on, then! We haven't much time before dark!"

"Don't wait for me, Bob!"
The rancher's son was putting on his skates, but he dropped them again and came back up the trail.

"What's on?" he demanded. "What's Yen Chin trying to get out of you, you soft-hearted jay? Is he pulling your silly leg again?"

"Nicey ole Flanky—"
"Stow that, Yen Chin!" said Bob Lawless gruffly. "That sort of chin-music cuts no ice with me! What does he want, Frank?"

Frank Richards explained, rather uncomfortably. Bob Lawless gave a grunt.

"Rats!" he said.

"But—" began Frank.
"You're not going to give Yen your ten dollars!" said Bob Lawless decidedly. "He's up to some of his heathen games again. He's been playing fan-tan at the Chinese joint in Thompson and losing his money; and that's about the truth of it. I don't believe for a minute that he's lost ten dollars!"

"But—"

"You're too soft, Frank. You'd believe any yarn that was spun you!" growled Bob. "Look here, Yen Chin! When did you lose that ten-dollar note?"

"When me comee to school," said Yen Chin; "wind blowee away!"

"Where?"

"Neal Gunten Store, in Main Street!"

"Your father gave it to you to pay an account at the store—eh?"

"Yes."

"And you were carrying it in your hand on a windy morning?"

"Yes."

"More jay you!" growled Bob Lawless. "You want to be licked for it, and if your father licks you it will be a lesson for next time. Keep your ten dollars in your pocket, Frank!"

"But—I say—" murmured Frank Richards.

"I guess it's only a yarn, and he hasn't lost any ten dollars!" growled Bob. "I know that pesky heathen. He's had us before. But I'll tell you what. We'll ride home through Thompson, and ask at John Chin's laundry. If he really gave the kid a ten-dollar bill to take to Gunten's store this morning we'll lend Yen Chin the money."

Yen Chin looked alarmed.

"No tellee John Chin!" he exclaimed.
"And why not?"
"Whackee pool lill' Chinese."
"I guess I don't see any reason why you shouldn't be whacked, if you've lost ten dollars," said Bob Lawless. "I guess I'd sure larrup you if you'd lost ten dollars of mine. But we'll ask John Chin to let you off if we make up the loss."

"He doesn't know I've got ten dollars," said Frank.

"I guess he does, because he was hanging round when Chunky Todgers was trying to touch you for it this morning," answered Bob.

"Oh!" ejaculated Frank.

"I guess you're too soft for Canada, Frank," said Bob Lawless. "You wouldn't have a red cent to bless yourself with if I didn't keep an eye on you. Chunky nearly had your ten-dollar bill this morning, and now you want to give it to this pesky heathen."

"I don't want to. But—"

"Well, we'll ride home by Thompson, and ask John Chin," said the rancher's son. "If the ten is really lost we'll make it up. Can't say fairer than that!"

Frank Richards nodded. "That's all right," he said. "I'm sorry, Yen Chin, but you're such a blessed prevaricator, you know. It's a go!"

The pathetic, appealing look vanished from the heathen's face at once.

He grinned.

"No goey to John Chin!" he said. "Ugly ole Bob pesky blute! You go and choppee chips!"

And Yen Chin backed away from the chums of Cedar Creek. Bob Lawless gave a snort.

"What did I tell you?" he growled. "He's owning up now!"

"Ugly ole Bob—"
"I guess—"

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Frank Richards wrathfully. "So you were pulling my leg, after all!"

"What your tinkee?" said Yen Chin coolly.

"Why, I'll—I'll—"
The heathen Chinese jumped away and ran.

Frank Richards drew a deep breath. "Come on, you old ass!" said Bob Lawless, grinning. "I guess you were born to have your leg pulled, Franky. Come and get your skates on!"

"The young rascal! I should never have thought—"

"You never do, old scout! Come on!"

And the chums joined Vere Beauclere, and ran out on the ice, and soon forgot all about the heathen Chinese and his wiles.

The 2nd Chapter.

The Heathen's Luck!

"Hallo! What is Hopkins up to?"
It was the following morning, and Frank Richards & Co. were riding up the trail to Cedar Creek, when they came in sight of Harold Hopkins. The cockney schoolboy seemed very busy on the trail. He was poking among the larches and frozen thickets with a long stick, as if in search of something.

He glanced up as the three chums came trotting by, and they pulled in their horses.

"Lost anything?" asked Beauclere. "Well, I haven't exactly," answered Hopkins; "but I'm looking for a ten-dollar note."

"I guess you'll never find it, anyhow," said Bob Lawless, with a grin. "You've been done, you ass!"

"Ow?" demanded Hopkins.

"Yen Chin never had a ten-note. Has he stuck you for ten dollars to play fan-tan?"

"Yes. Oh, my 'at!" ejaculated Hopkins.

Yen Chin had found the cockney a much easier victim than Frank Richards—though, indeed, he would have victimised Frank, but for Bob Lawless' intervention.

"If 'e's been a-pulling of my leg,"

said Hopkins, "I'll give 'im a jolly good 'iding! But 'ow do you know?"
Bob chuckled.

"Because he sprang the same yarn on Franky yesterday, only he lost the ten-dollar bill in Main Street at Thompson," he answered.

"The 'orrid little rogue!" exclaimed Hopkins.

Frank Richards & Co. rode on to the school, and Harold Hopkins followed them, giving up his vain search for the ten-dollar bill that did not exist.

Yen Chin was in the playground, and he greeted Frank Richards & Co. with a grin as they dismounted. Harold Hopkins bore down on him at once.

"You 'orrid little 'eathen—" he began.

"Whatee mattee?" asked Yen Chin.

"You stuck me for ten dollars yesterday, with a yarn about losing a bill!" exclaimed Hopkins. "You was a-pulling of my leg."

"You bet he was!" chimed in Chunky Todgers, with a chuckle. "I saw him going into the Chinese joint at Thompson after school. He was going to play fan-tan, I guess, with your ten dollars. He, he, he!"

"I'll take it out of his 'ide!" said Hopkins.

Yen Chin backed away. "No whackee pool lill' Chinese!" he exclaimed. "Me payee!"

Hopkins sniffed suspiciously. "Pay up, then, before I wallop you!" he said.

Yen Chin shoved his hand into his loose garments, and, to the astonishment of the Cedar Creek fellows, drew out a little roll of bills. There were at least a dozen fives and tens in the roll.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Have you been robbing the Thompson Bank, Yen Chin?"

Chunky Todgers blinked at the bills with fascinated eyes.

"Where did you get all that dust?" he gasped.

"Hele you ten dollee," said Yen Chin carelessly detaching a bill, and handing it to the astonished Hopkins. "Allee light!"

"My honly 'at!" said Hopkins, as he took the bill. "Is it a good one?"

"Looks all right—good Canadian," said Bob Lawless. "Where did you get it, Yen Chin?"

"Lill' Chinese velly lich now," said Yen Chin loftily. "Winnee muchee money playee fan-tan, you bet!"

"You young rascal!" said Frank Richards.

"Ole Flanky velly silly ole donkey!" said the heathen. "No wantee ten dollee from silly ole Flanky now! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"So you've really been gambling?" said Beauclere.

"What you tinkee! All Chinese play fan-tan," said Yen Chin. "Me winnee lot dollee. Me lich. Go again and winnee mole! Oh, yes! Yen Chin velly clevee lill' lascal! What you tinkee?"

And the Chinese strolled away, evidently highly satisfied with himself.

Apparently he had had luck at the fan-tan game in the Chinese "joint," and he was far from understanding that he had been guilty of any wrongdoing. Yen Chin's ideas and beliefs were quite Oriental, and it was probable that he never would catch on to the morality of the white man. Though, for that matter, white men as well as yellow went to the Chinese joint to gamble.

Frank Richards & Co. put up their horses, and walked across to the lumber schoolhouse. Frank was looking very thoughtful. More than once he had taken the heathen Chinese in hand, and tried to instil into his mind some useful precepts; but it had been uphill work. Yen Chin was always ready to make a "plomise," but keeping it was quite another matter. As for telling the truth, Yen Chin was a true Oriental—he was absolutely indifferent on that point.

Truth and falsehood came just the same to him—indeed, he seemed to have rather a preference for falsehood, which appealed to his wily nature.

"The young ass!" said Frank. "If Miss Meadows should hear of this he will get into an awful row. He ought to be jolly well licked. It's no good speaking to him, I suppose."

"Try it!" grinned Bob.

Frank Richards did try it, but without much success.

The 3rd Chapter.

Yen Chin Raises the Wind!

Frank Richards again bestowed some attention on Yen Chin the next day. He was rather concerned about the young rascal, though he realised that it was useless to talk to him. For Yen Chin's own sake he hoped that his luck at fan-tan would not

last. As soon as the heathen had lost his ill-gotten dollars he would have to stop. Frank noticed, at morning lessons, that the little heathen was looking extremely doleful, and he guessed that the run of luck had not lasted. When the Cedar Creek fellows came out the Celestial sidled up to Frank with an ingratiating grin.

"Pool lill' Chinese in tlouble," he said pathetically.

"You've lost your money?" asked Frank.

"Losee all!"
"All the better for you," said Frank Richards.

"Me losee ten dollee note, too," said Yen Chin. "Win' blowee away on tlail this morning."

"What?" gasped Frank.

"Fathel givee me ten dollee to payee at Gunten Store, and wind blowee away. Flaid to goey home!"

"My hat!"
"Nicey ole Flanky lendee Yen Chin ten dollee!" said the heathen hopefully.

"You cheeky young rascal!" roared Frank, in great wrath. "Do you think you can take me in again with the same yarn?"

"Lill' Chinese tellee tluth—" "Why, you—you—"

"Nicey ole Flanky! Yawahoop!" howled Yen Chin, as Frank Richards took him by the collar and shook him. "Lettee goey! Ow! Wow! No shakee pool lill' Chinese!"

"Shake! Shake!"
"Oh! Ow! Woop!" roared Yen Chin. "Nastee ole blutee, you lettee goey! Silly ole donkey! Ow!"

Thud!

Frank Richards planted his boot behind the heathen Chinese. He was wrathful, and, like the prophet of old, he felt that he did well to be angry. His kindness to the young rascal had simply led Yen Chin to believe that he was "soft," and could be imposed upon with any flimsy yarn. Naturally, that was exasperating to a youth who was conscious that his tender heart sometimes betrayed him into weaknesses. He gave the heathen the full benefit of his boot, and Yen Chin's howls rang across the playground.

Unfortunately Mr. Slimmey came out of the schoolhouse just then.

"Richards!" exclaimed the master. Frank let go the Celestial as if he had suddenly become red-hot.

"Yes, sir!" he stammered.

"Oooooowooooo!" roared Yen Chin, doubling up as if in great anguish. "Kickee pool lill' Chinese velly hard! Oooooooh!"

"Richards, how dare you kick that little fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey angrily.

Frank Richards crimsoned. Certainly he could not explain Yen Chin's tortuous rascality to the master. The results to Yen Chin would have been too serious. He crimsoned and stammered.

Mr. Slimmey looked at him very severely.

"I am surprised at this, Richards. I had not expected it of you."

"I—I—," stuttered Frank.

"Ooooooh!" howled Yen Chin. "I cannot pass this over," said Mr. Slimmey. "Go into Miss Meadows' sitting-room, Richards, and wait for her. When she comes in, tell her that I have sent you to be caned!"

"Oh, sir! I—"

"Go at once!" said Mr. Slimmey, with an impatient wave of the hand. With a crimson face Frank Richards went into the lumber schoolhouse.

Mr. Slimmey turned kindly to the heathen.

"Are you much hurt, Yen Chin?" he asked.

"Oooooooh!" wailed Yen Chin. "Pool lill' Chinese velly muchee bad hurt. Oooooooh!"

"Richards will be caned severely," said Mr. Slimmey, and he walked on, feeling quite angry with the unfortunate Frank.

As soon as his back was turned, Yen Chin's anguish ceased all of a sudden. His agonised face relaxed into a grin, and he put his thumb to his nose, and extended his fingers towards the unconscious master's back. That was Yen Chin's gratitude for Mr. Slimmey's kindly intervention.

Meanwhile, Frank Richards went into the Canadian schoolmistress' study.

Miss Meadows was not there; she was busy in the household department with Black Dinah, the cook.

Frank had to wait.

It was not agreeable for him. Mr. Slimmey's error was exasperating enough, and it was still more annoying that Miss Meadows should be made to suppose that he had bullied the little heathen. But there seemed to be no help for it.

His wait in the sitting-room was a

long one. Miss Meadows did not know that he was there, and she did not come.

As Mr. Slimmey had commanded him to wait for her, Frank could not go; and he waited restlessly.

There was a Montreal magazine lying on Miss Meadows' desk, which was open. Frank picked it up to pass the time by reading it.

A little yellow face grinned in at him at the doorway.

"Silly ole Flanky gettee lickee!" said Yen Chin.

Frank glanced at him with a frown.

"Get out, you young rascal!" he snapped.

"You gettee muchee lickee, me glad!" said Yen Chin.

"By Jove! I'll—"

Frank Richards started towards the little heathen angrily.

Yen Chin chuckled, and scuttled away into the school-room across the passage.

Frank returned to the schoolmistress' desk, and took up the Montreal magazine again.

It was close on dinner-time now, and Frank could hear the Cedar Creek crowd gathering in the dining-room.

He debated in his mind whether he should wait any longer. He had waited nearly half an hour already, and he doubted whether Miss Meadows would come in now before dinner.

She was much more likely to go direct from the kitchen into the dining-room—and certainly Frank could not wait on and miss his dinner.

He decided to chance it at last, and he quitted the room, and went down the passage.

From the school-room doorway two almond eyes watched him go, though Frank did not observe them.

The passage was clear; and Yen Chin stole out of the school-room, and crossed to the study doorway.

With a tread as stealthy as a cat's, the little heathen came into the room.

He stood for a moment listening.

The Cedar Creek fellows were crowding into the dining-room by the door on the playground, and Frank Richards had joined them.

From the kitchen the little heathen could hear Miss Meadows' voice, addressing Black Dinah.

His eyes glistened.

He turned swiftly to the schoolmistress' desk, against which Frank had been leaning while he read the magazine.

His nimble fingers ran quickly through it.

Yen Chin was not even thinking of the rascality of what he was doing. He was thinking of the "fan-tan" game at the Chinese joint—the gambling fever was in his Oriental blood. At the back of his mind was the knowledge that the blame of his action would not fall upon himself, but he did not actually think it out.

The heathen was not more than two minutes at the desk.

Then he trod stealthily to the door and peered out cautiously into the passage.

It was clear; and he scuttled across silently into the school-room. A minute later he emerged into the playground by the door at the other end of the long school-room.

A few minutes more, and Yen Chin joined the crowd going in to dinner, with a perfectly calm and composed face. Hidden in the wood-pile, to be taken away later, was a hundred-dollar bill he had abstracted from Miss Meadows' desk. And there was a calm and placid smile on Yen Chin's face as he dropped into a seat at the dining-table beside Frank Richards.

In the palm of his yellow hand was a ten-dollar note, also taken from Miss Meadows' desk. Before dinner was over that ten-dollar note was reposing in Frank's jacket-pocket.

And Yen Chin smiled serenely.

The 4th Chapter. A Startling Accusation!

Miss Meadows came into the school-room to take her class, that afternoon, with a slight frown on her brow. Frank Richards noted it, and as he had seen Mr. Slimmey speaking to the Canadian schoolmistress, he guessed the cause. He was not surprised when Miss Meadows called him out.

"Richards!"

"Yes, Miss Meadows?"

"Mr. Slimmey sent you to my study to be caned, before dinner."

"Yes, ma'am."

"You were told to wait for me," said Miss Meadows severely.

"I waited till nearly dinner-time, Miss Meadows," answered Frank meekly.

"You should have told me that you were sent to me to be caned," said Miss Meadows. "Had not Mr.

Slimmey mentioned the matter. I should not have been aware of it."

Frank made no reply to that. He had felt that, as he had waited in vain for Miss Meadows in her study, the matter might as well drop. He was not anxious to be caned, especially as the caning was undeserved. But evidently the matter was not to be dropped so easily.

"Come out before the class, Richards."

"Yes, ma'am," said Frank resignedly.

Bob and Beauclerc gave him sympathetic looks as he went. The swish of the schoolmistress' cane was heard.

Yen Chin grinned at Frank Richards, as the latter came back to his place, with his lips compressed.

Frank did not look at the heathen. His feelings towards Yen Chin, at that moment, were anything but amiable.

Lessons were rather a worry to Frank that afternoon. His palm was aching; and he was in the black books of both Miss Meadows and Mr. Slimmey. He was far from being in his usual sunny spirits.

However, lessons ended at last, and the Cedar Creek boys and girls crowded out into the playground.

Yen Chin was the first to depart on his pony; he lost no time in getting clear of the backwoods school. Frank Richards & Co. led out their horses onto the trail, and mounted for the ride home.

upon them to stop; but they did not make out the words, and they did not intend to let him get near enough for them to make out what he was calling.

Bob Lawless glanced back without turning his head, and grinned. Mr. Slimmey came out of the timber at full speed, galloping across the plain after the schoolboys, and still shouting.

"Don't look round, Franky!" chuckled Bob. "Mustn't let the dear man know we've seen him! I wonder if he will run after us as far as the ranch? We'll stand him some supper if he does!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of the backwoods school rode on cheerily, in a merry mood. It seemed rather a lark to them to give Mr. Slimmey a hot chase across the plains.

They were better mounted than Mr. Slimmey, and, for that matter, were better riders, and the Cedar Creek master had no chance of catching them unless they chose.

"What the thump can he want, though?" asked Frank Richards, as the chums dashed on side by side.

"It can't be another row, can it?"

"Blessed if I know! Must be a row of some sort, or why should he be pelting after us at this rate?" said Bob.

"But he can explain at the ranch. We're not going back to Cedar Creek this evening, I guess! Poor old Slimmey!" Bob took another cautious peep over his

shoulder. "He's going it! He'll lose his specs soon, at this rate!"

Frank Richards laughed.

In the gathering dusk the chums dashed on, and the lights of the ranch-house gleamed in the distance at last. Rancher Lawless loomed up on the plain ahead, on his big horse, riding in from the range. He glanced towards the two schoolboys as they came riding up, not observing, for the moment, the pursuing figure in the dusky distance.

"Hallo! Racing home, are you?" said the rancher good-humouredly, as the Cedar Creek chums came alongside.

Frank Richards and Bob slackened pace to keep level with the rancher.

"Yep!" answered Bob. "I guess we're ready for supper, popper! We're giving Mr. Slimmey a race, too!"

"Mr. Slimmey?" repeated the rancher.

"Sure! He's on our track!"

"What for?"

"I guess I haven't the least idea; but we reckoned we'd give him a run for his money!" answered Bob, with a grin.

Mr. Lawless glanced back across the plain.

Mr. Slimmey was coming on fast, riding rather awkwardly, and evidently in a fatigued and breathless state. The rancher frowned.

"You young rascals! You should not play such tricks on your master!" he exclaimed. "If he wants you, you should have stopped at once!"

guess you are looking for these young scallywags—what?"

"Yes!" gasped Mr. Slimmey.

"Well, here they are."

"Were you following us, Mr. Slimmey?" asked Frank Richards, with an air of dovelike innocence.

Mr. Slimmey spluttered breathlessly.

"You are perfectly well aware that I was following you, Richards!" he gasped.

"Ahem!" murmured Frank. "I—I—"

"We couldn't make out what you were shouting, sir," said Bob Lawless meekly. "I—I reckoned perhaps you'd like supper at the ranch, sir."

"You will stay to supper now you are here, Mr. Slimmey?" said the rancher, with a smile.

Mr. Slimmey shook his head.

"I am sorry, Mr. Lawless—I must return to Cedar Creek at once, and take Richards with me."

The rancher frowned.

"What have you been doing, Frank?" he inquired, glancing at his nephew.

"Nothing that I know of," answered Frank Richards. "I kicked Yen Chin to-day, and Miss Meadows caned me. I haven't any remembrance of doing anything else."

"Really, Richards—" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey angrily.

"Well, what have I done?" exclaimed Frank, in surprise. "I cannot imagine for a moment why you should ride after me from school like this, Mr. Slimmey!"



YEN CHIN'S MYSTERIOUS FORTUNE!

"Here your ten dollee," said the Chinese carelessly. "Yen Chin velly rich now. Winnee muchee money playee fan-tan. You bet." So this was the explanation to the Chink's newly acquired wealth. He had been to one of the gambling "joints" in the Thompson Valley and had "struck lucky"—for once!

They trotted easily along the trail through the timber, and Frank's face, which had been rather glum, cleared, as he trotted through the clear, invigorating air. At the fork in the trail Vere Beauclerc left his chums, as usual, and Frank and Bob rode on towards the ranch.

They were close on the edge of the timber, with the open plain before them, when there was a beat of horses' hoofs on the trail behind.

"Hallo, the Cherub's coming after us for something," remarked Bob Lawless, and he looked back.

But the rider behind was not Vere Beauclerc. To their astonishment, the chums recognised Mr. Slimmey.

Mr. Slimmey was riding fast, on the track of the two schoolboys.

"After us!" said Frank. "It's Slimmey!"

"What the thump does he want?" said Bob Lawless. "Look here, ride on; he doesn't know we've seen him. If he thinks you want caning again, he's off the mark, and we'll give him a chase."

Frank Richards laughed.

"Good egg!" he said.

The chums of Cedar Creek touched their horses with the whip, and broke into a gallop.

They came out of the timber trail at good speed, and the horses stretched in a gallop across the dusky plain.

A voice came faintly on the wind behind, but the schoolboys did not choose to hear it.

Mr. Slimmey was probably calling

"Well, we didn't know officially that he wanted us, uncle," said Frank Richards. "We just sighted him on the trail behind, that's all."

"I guess it's pretty clear that he wants you," said the rancher. "He's waving his hand to us now. Stop where you are."

"All right, popper," said Bob meekly. "We were only giving him a run to the ranch. I dare say he can do with some supper after his ride."

The rancher smiled slightly.

Frank and Bob halted, as Mr. Lawless had done, and the three of them waited for Mr. Slimmey to come up.

That gentleman was still at a good distance; the schoolboys had very nearly left him out of sight in the race. But he came on at a gallop, jolting in his saddle in a way that made the Canadian rancher smile.

Mr. Slimmey was a very estimable young man, but he was never likely to "witch the world with noble horsemanship."

He was breathless when he rode up at last and dragged in his horse on the trail.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless raised their Stetson hats to him very politely. They rather liked Mr. Slimmey, though they had not been able to resist the temptation of giving him a "run for his money," as Bob expressed it.

"Good-evening, Mr. Slimmey!" said the rancher, as the young man sat his horse gasping for breath. "I

"This prevarication, Richards—" "Prevarication!" exclaimed Frank.

"What else do you call it?" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey angrily. "You know perfectly well why I have followed you!"

Frank Richards flushed.

"I know nothing of the kind, sir," he answered very quietly. "I haven't the faintest idea. Neither has Bob."

"Lawless is not concerned in the matter," said Mr. Slimmey. "I am certain—and so is Miss Meadows—that he was not your confederate."

"My—my confederate!" ejaculated Frank Richards.

"Neither do I suppose that Beauclerc had any knowledge of your conduct," said Mr. Slimmey. "You alone are wanted, and you must return to Cedar Creek with me immediately."

Mr. Lawless broke in.

"What has happened at the school, Mr. Slimmey?" he demanded. "I am assured that my nephew is speaking the truth so far as he knows it. Tell me at once what has happened."

"A—most unpleasant happening, Mr. Lawless," stammered Mr. Slimmey. "I—I am sorry to be the bearer of news which will be a great shock to you, I fear. There has been a theft at the school—"

"A theft!" exclaimed the rancher.

Frank Richards' face was flooded with colour. His eyes blazed at Mr. Slimmey.

"A theft!" he ejaculated.

"You know it, Richards."

"I did not know it!" exclaimed Frank Richards fiercely. "And who dares to connect me with anything of the kind?"

"Richards, this bravado—" "It's a lie!" exclaimed Frank, his temper blazing out. "You must be mad to accuse me of it, Mr. Slimmey! Uncle, you will not believe it, I know! Either Mr. Slimmey has gone mad or he is drunk!"

"Richards!" gasped the Cedar Creek master.

"That is not the way to speak to Mr. Slimmey, Frank!" rapped out the rancher.

"It is the way to speak to anyone who dares to call me a thief!" said Frank Richards savagely. "It is a lie—a rotten lie! And Mr. Slimmey must be out of his senses, I think!"

Mr. Slimmey gulped down his wrath.

"Mr. Lawless, I have Miss Meadows' order to take Richards back to the school at once—"

"He shall come!" said the rancher. "I will come, too—and you, Bob! The sooner this nonsense is thrashed out the better! Come!"

Mr. Slimmey wheeled his horse, and the rancher and his son and nephew followed his example. They rode together up the trail, back to Cedar Creek, in gloomy silence, Frank Richards' face still burning with anger and indignation.

And this indignation was perfectly justified. Frank knew nothing of the alleged theft, and it was only perfectly natural that he should feel absolutely dumbfounded at being accused of the robbery. Frank Richards was a name which stood for everything that was right and manly to the inhabitants of the Thompson Valley. There was not one of them who would not have trusted him with their last cent, and to have Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master at Cedar Creek School, who had hitherto regarded Frank in the same admiring light, accuse him of a common burglary, and apparently to believe in the accusation, taking his guilt as a foregone conclusion, was naturally a bitter blow to the young schoolboy.

Rancher Lawless quite apparently believed in his innocence, and the grim expression on his face as they made their way to Cedar Creek School plainly showed that he was only too anxious to have the matter thoroughly sifted, and his nephew's innocence once more established with those such as Mr. Slimmey and Miss Meadows, who, at the moment, were ready to condemn his nephew for a robbery he was entirely unaware of.

The first thing to be done was plainly to find the real culprit in the robbery at Cedar Creek.

(Have you ordered your copy of next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND yet? It contains another fine complete Backwoods yarn, entitled "Frank Richards' Flight!")