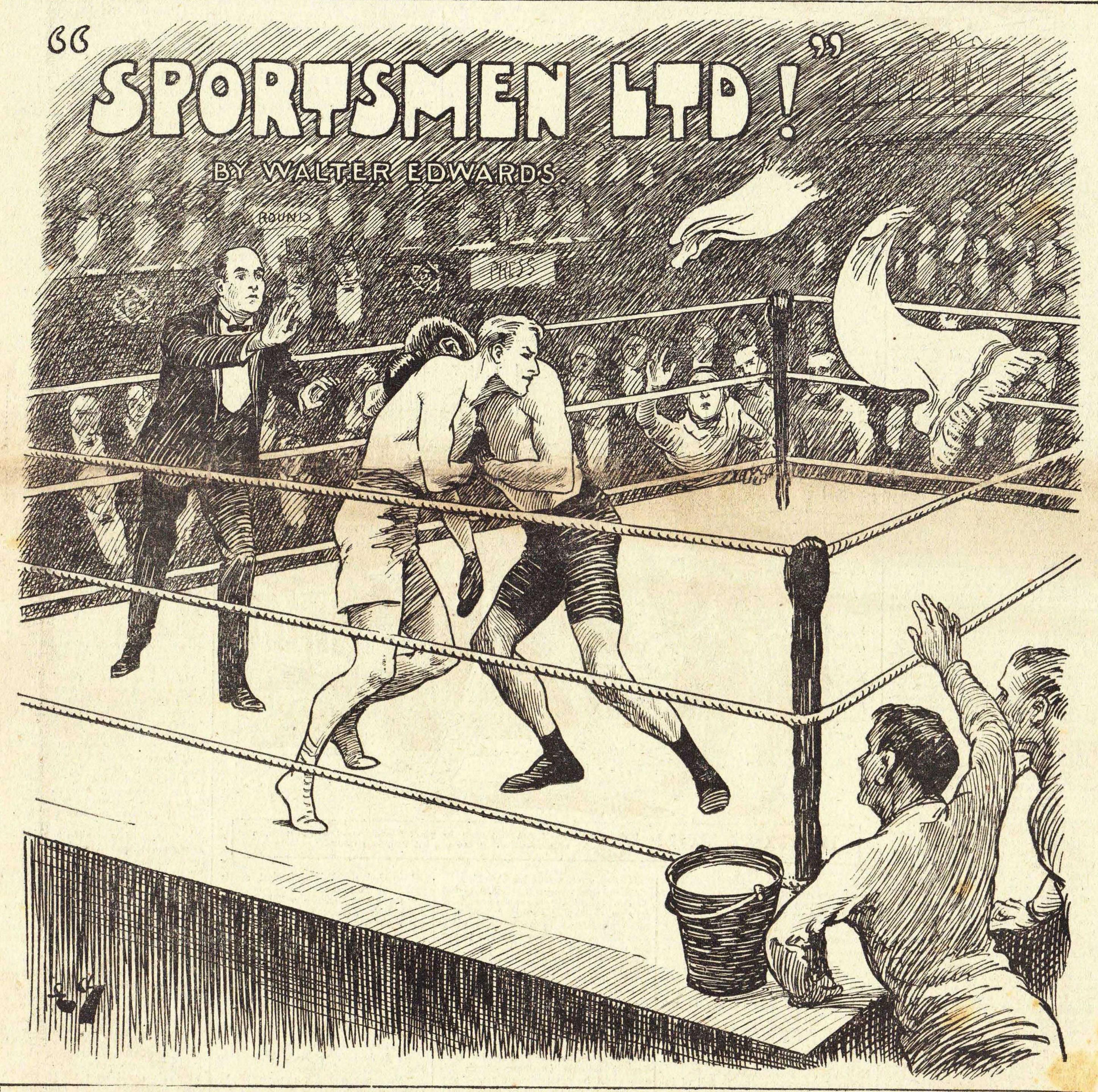
### £10 IN PRIZES GIVEN AWAY THIS WEEK!

# THE BOYS TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR!

No. 1.035. Vol. XXI. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 9th, 1921.



SIMULTANEOUS SURRENDER!

One blow—ever such a light punch—would have meant the death-knell for the recipient; but neither man had strength enough to deliver that blow! Then suddenly two towels, one from each corner, sailed across the smoke-laden air together. Each man's seconds had thrown up the sponge at the same moment!

WHAT CAREER SHALL I TAKE UP?

The Special Article on Page 167
Will Help You to Decide.

#### A FINE LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & Co.



#### The 1st Chapter. Smythe's Little Joke!

"Just the man for the Fourth!" said Adolphus Smythe, with a merry chuckle. "The Head couldn't have done better!"

"Just the man!" agreed Tracy. "Just!" chortled Howard.

Jimmy Silver & Co., of the Classical Fourth, looked round suspiciously. The Fistical Four could not | fellows howled: help hearing the remarks of the Shell fellows-in fact, it was clear that Smythe & Co. intended them to hear. Smythe & Co., strolling through the | tellects!" quad at Rookwood, had stopped quite near the Fourth-Formers, evidently with the intention of letting the latter have the benefit of their remarks.

"The Head," continued Smythe, "is a downy old bird. I always said so. He knows what's wanted for the Fourth."

"He does!" agreed Tracy and Howard.

"Couldn't have made a better choice!" went on Adolphus.

"Couldn't possibly!" chorused his chums.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell, Raby and Newcome, stared grimly at the Shell fellows. They could guess the subject of the discussion. The new master of the Fourth-Form was to arrive that day. Evidently Smythe & Co. had heard something about that gentleman which was still unknown to the chums of the Fourth.

"What are you cackling about, you silly duffers?" queried Arthur Ed-

ward Lovell politely. Adolphus Smythe glanced round, as if suddenly becoming aware of the existence of the Fistical Four.

"Oh! Did you fellows hear-" he began.

Jimmy Silver. "You meant us to job, and wait for something better to hear. Have you heard anything ! about our new master?"

Smythe & Co. exchanged glances and chortled.

"Just a little!" said Adolphus.

"Just a few!" grinned Tracy. "The very man you want!" said

Howard. "He's had a trainin' specially for dealin with you fellows!" "Ha, ha, ha!" Evidently Adolphus & Co. were

greatly tickled. There seemed to be a comic side to the appointment of Mr. Oliphant, the new master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, as yet a stranger to the school. Jimmy Silver knew nothing, so far, excepting that Mr. Oliphant was a Master of Arts, that his arrival had been delayed by an attack of influenza, and that he was to arrive, at last, that afternoon to take up his duties. They were annoved, and they were curious.

"Well, get it off your silly chests!" said Lovell. "What have you heard

about him, Smythe?" "He's had special charge of Lord George St. Leger," said Smythe.

"I've heard that he was tutor to a titled man," said Jimmy Silver. "What about that?"

Smythe grinned.

"The St. Leger man is potty," he explained. "Oliphant was called his tutor, but he was really a sort of keeper. He lived at St. Leger Place, somewhere in the North, and had the merry young man in his charge, and had to keep him out of mischief. He found it rather wearyin', and jumped | tutorial experience was going to beat a chance of gettin' an appointment | come a standing joke at Rookwood. in a school, so Mr. Mooney said. Mooney doesn't know him, but he I table frowned, the other tables were knows a man who knows him, so he all smiling. knows all about him. He's been Lord George's tutor-I mean, keeper-for a couple of years."

'And is that all?" demanded 1 Jimmy.

"That's all."

"Bang his head!" Crack!

"Yaroooooop!"

the juniors released him. He backed i Shell--' off the scene with Howard and Tracy. But at a safe distance the three Shell

"You're gettin' a keeper now! Just what you wanted! Specially selected to deal with your feeble in-

And then Smythe & Co. fled.

#### The 2nd Chapter. Not at all Funny!

Jimmy Silver frowned as he came in to dinner with his chums.

His chums frowned, too. A good many more of the Classical Fourth were frowning.

The Shell fellows, on the other hand, were grinning. So were a crowd of fags of the Third and Second.

Oliphant, M.A., was being taken as a joke by fellows who did not belong to his Form.

Really, it wasn't at all comic; nothing whatever up against the Fourth, and no reason at all for these incessant grins. It was, perhaps, unfortunate that Mr. Mooney's talk with Mr. Greely had been heard, and reported up and down Rookwood. But really there was nothing to make a song about—so far as Jimmy Silver | ably. & Co. could see, at all events.

Masterships were not easily found, of course; that profession was as crowded as any other. Many a bright young man, leaving the University, "You know we did!" interrupted | was glad enough to take on a tutorial turn up. Mr. Oliphant had become tutor to a young man of feeble intellect, according to what Smythe had heard. Probably, so far as the salary went, he had found it a very handsome job. It was not exactly a job a man would have jumped at, but no somethin'. Now, this man Oliphant doubt there had been compensations. has been in charge of a potty johnnie Having devoted two years to the for two years, I hear." irresponsible young man, Mr. Oliphant had secured a mastership at Rookwood School, in the place of Mr. Bootles, retired. There was simply nothing in it to cackle about.

And vet all the fellows who weren't in the Fourth Form persisted in cackling in a most exasperating way.

Smythe of the Shell took the view that Mr. Oliphant, having had training in dealing with feeble intellects, had been selected for the Fourth for that very reason.

And merely for the sake of pulling the Fourth-Form leg a crowd of other fellows affected to take the same

It was distinctly irritating to the Fourth.

Wegg of the Third had already christened the Fourth "The Lunatics," and had been severely ragged in consequence. And every fellow outside the Fourth, in alluding to the new master, referred to him as "The Keeper."

Hence the frowns of Jimmy Silver

But the more they frowned the more the other fellows grinned, and evidently Mr. Oliphant's unfortunate

At dinner, while the Fourth-Form

Jimmy Silver & Co., but certainly he had succeeded in scoring this time.

"It's rotten!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell, as the juniors came out of the dining-room. "There isn't "Nothing in that," said Lovell. | any joke in it, so far as I can see, but | those silly owls seem to think there

"They do!" said Raby. "Now Adolphus Smith wriggled away as | if the man had been appointed to the

"I suppose we should have pulled their leg about it," said Newcome doubtfully.

"Well, the Shell are all idiots, and it would have been appropriate," said Lovell. "But us-"

There was a howl in the quad from a bunch of fags.

"Here come the lunatics!" The Fistical Four made a furious rush, and the fags were scattered far and wide, yelling.

"Yah!" roared Wegg from a dis-"Yah! Where's your tance. keeper? You oughtn't to be allowed out without your keeper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "This is going to be amusing." said Jimmy Silver grimly. "I really think Mr. Mooney might have kept his knowledge to himself. I suppose Evidently the appointment of Mr. | he didn't know that cad Smythe was listening. Dash it all, the Head needn't have engaged Oliphant! Plenty to choose from."

> Hansom of the Fifth came along. and stopped to speak to the Fistical Four. Hansom of the Fifth seldom bestowed any of his valuable time on the juniors, but he found time for them now.

> "What's this about your new master, Silver?" said Hansom agree-"Are you going to begin, you

> Fifth-Form dummy?" inquired Lovell, with a ferocious look. "Oh, I'm not goin' to chip you!"

said Hansom affably. - "I was only goin' to put you on your guard."

"You know that fellows who have charge of lunatics often catch a little pottiness themselves," said Hansom. "I believe keepers in asylums, and so on, are changed pretty often for that reason, or given long holidays, or

"Well?" snapped Jimmy. "Well," said Hansom, "I don't want to alarm you." He smiled sweetly. "I wouldn't alarm you for worlds. But, of course, having been in close association with a potty chap so long, Oliphant may have become a bit potty. I think you kids ought to be on your guard. If you find your Form-master trying to swallow the ruler, perhaps you ought to stop

Jimmy Silver breathed hard. "Anything else?" he inquired.

"If he tells you he's made of glass. or anything like that," continued Hansom agreeably, "you'd better humour him. If he walks on his hands instead of his feet take it quite seriously. Of course, he mayn't do anything of the kind-"

"Oh, he mayn't?" asked Jimmy. "No. But he might. You never can tell!" said Hansom, wagging his head sagely. "I hope I haven't alarmed you."

That statement was not quite veracious. As a matter of fact, the humorous Fifth-Former hoped that he

"Not at all." said Jimmy Silver. "We're used to potty asses, you know. Rubbing shoulders as we do with the Fifth every day-" "What?"

Adolphus Smythe seldom scored off potty duffers," said Jimmy. this! Collar the cheeky cad, you

Before Hansom knew what was going to happen he was in the grasp of the Fistical Four.

He yelled as he was swept off his feet, and laid at full length on the cold, unsympathetic ground-hard!

Jimmy Silver grasped the ears of the dazed and astounded Fifth-Former, and tapped his head gently on the earth.

Then, after jerking Hansom's tie out, and pulling his collar loose, and jamming his cap down the back of his | "Some sort of a merry joker," said neck, the Fistical Four walked away.

Hansom of the Fifth was so dizzy that he just lay, gasping, for a full minute, hardly aware of what had happened to him.

When he scrambled up, in a fury, the heroes of the Fourth were far away. Loud shouts of laughter greeted Hansom of the Fifth as he cut off into the School House, to set himself to rights. And probably the Fifth-Former wished that he hadn't been quite so humorous.

It was understood that Mr. Oliphant was to arrive in time to take the Fourth that afternoon, but the juniors had seen nothing of him when the time came for lessons. They went along to the Form-room, and on the door a rather surprising placard met their gaze. Some merchant of humorous proclivities had stuck up a large sheet of paper, with the words daubed on it in large letters:

#### COLNEY HATCH! ONLY LUNATICS ADMITTED!

"By gad!" said Mornington. "This is gettin' rather thick." He jerked down the placard and tore it across.

"I wish I'd been around when the funny idiot was sticking it up!" growled Lovell vengefully.

The Fourth went in, but Mr. Oliphant was not there. Apparently the new master had not arrived yet. And the Fourth had been chatting and playing leap-frog for ten minutes when Bulkeley of the Sixth entered.

#### The 3rd Chapter An Amazing Arrival.

"Now, then-" Bulkeley.

There was a rush of the juniors to

their places. The prefect had taken the class on

several occasions during the absence of a master, and apparently he was to have another afternoon of it.

"Hasn't Mr. Oliphant come yet, Bulkeley?" asked Tubby Muffin.

"But he was expected to lunch," said Tubby. "I heard---" "Well, he hasn't come yet," answered Bulkeley gruffly. "I shall

take you as usual this afternoon." "Jolly glad!" said Muffin. "You ain't half so rotten as a Form-master, Bulkeley."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" rapped out the Rookwood captain.

Bulkeley's task with the Fourth was not exactly enjoyable, but he had | first, sir?" asked Dodd. taken it on to oblige the Head, and he was very patient and painstaking. And the fiat had gone forth from the end study that Bulkeley was not to be ragged in class. Jimmy Silver & Co. were pleased to approve of George Bulkeley, and they meant him to have as easy a time as possible with the Fourth. So lessons proceeded quite amicably in the Form-room, prefect and pupils quite on good terms with one another. After the first lesson Tommy Dodd & Co., the Modern juniors, cleared off, to go over to Mr. Manders' house for chemistry. And it was then that the surprise of the term happened at Rookwood.

Tommy Dodd & Co. came out into the quadrangle, and indulged in a few minutes' "loaf" before crossing over to the Modern side. And it was then that they beheld a wondrous sight.

From the direction of the school gates came a cyclist.

He pedalled his machine up the gravel path at a great rate. That was not so surprising in itself. What was surprising was the fact that on the machine was a large carrier, and on the carrier was the painted inscription:

#### J. BANDY, GROCER, COOMBE.

The juniors had seen that bike before. It was the ancient machine on which Mr. Bandy's boy delivered goods in the neighbourhood. The rider of it, however, was not a grocer's boy.

The rider was a young man, dressed with scrupulous care, in clothes that were evidently expensive. He wore a silk hat that glistened in the spring "Besides, we know how to treat sunshine. In his right eye gleamed a "Like | gold-rimmed monocle.

His face was very open and frank

looking. In build he was rather slim,

but strong. The Modern juniors blinked at him. That well-dressed young man, mounted on a grocery goods bike, was

a very extraordinary phenomenon. "What sort of a merry lark is this?" ejaculated Tommy Dodd, blinking at the new arrival. From the direction of the gates old Mack, the porter, could be seen blinking after him, in amazement.

Buzzzzz! rang the bicycle bell. The young man stopped and jumped off the machine.

He raised his silk hat to the astonished juniors with a graceful

"Good-afternoon, young gentlemen!" he exclaimed.

His voice was pleasant and cultivated. "G-g-g-good-afternoon!" stuttered

Tommy Dodd. "This is, I believe, Rookwood

School?" "Yes, rather."

"Ah! I am very pleased to meet you, my young friends. I am Cecil Oliphant-Mr. Oliphant. Doubtless you have heard my name-"

"My only hat!" stuttered Tommy. He almost staggered.

For a new master to arrive at Rookwood School, mounted upon a grocery bike, was unexampled. The Fourth-Formers could scarcely believe their

"You seem surprised!" said Mr. Oliphant.

"Oh dear!"

"Have you-have you come all the way on that, sir?" stuttered Cook, pointing to the bike.

"Not at all. I came by train," said Mr. Oliphant. "Fearing that I was late I borrowed this bike." "Great pip!"

"D-d-d-did the grocer boy lend you his bike?" exclaimed Leggett.

Mr. Oliphant smiled. "He objected," he answered.

"My hat! Did he?" "Yes. I sat him down in a bed of

nettles---" "Oh crumbs!"

"And left him there!" said Mr. Oliphant calmly. "He seemed surprised. For his surprise I cannot account. But it is a surprising world, my young friends."

Tommy Dodd & Co. certainly thought it was at that moment. What sort of a Form-master was this?

Really, it seemed that there was possibly something in Hansom's theory, and that "pottiness" was catching! Unless Mr. Oliphant was some un-

heard-of sort of a practical joker, it was hard to believe that he was quite right in his mind. "Dear boys," continued the

astonishing young man, "pray show me the way to my Form-room. Perhaps you belong to the Fourth?"

"Ye-e-es, sir." "Then show me the way in." "Aren't you going to see the Head

"No. I am not anxious to meet the Head." Mr. Oliphant lowered his voice confidentially. "Possibly he may not be satisfied with me."

"B-b-but you'll have to see him sooner or later, sir," said Dodd dazedly. Mr. Oliphant's manner changed.

"Boy!" he thundered.

"Oh dear! Yes, sir?" "Take me to the Fourth Form

room at once!" "Oh, very well, sir!" Tommy Dodd turned to lead the

way into the School House. Mr. Oliphant signed to Cook to take charge of the bicycle. "Take this machine, boy.".

"Put it up carefully, and see that it is comfortable." "C-c-kik-comfortable?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Cook.

"Yes. Do not give it beans, how-

"Beans!" said Cook dazedly. "No beans!" said Mr. Oliphant impressively. "I do not want it to be too fresh when I ride it again." "Oh crumbs!"

Having given those valuable instructions, Mr. Oliphant followed Tommy Dodd into the School House. The Modern juniors looked at one another, and Doyle tapped his fore-

head significantly. "Potty, and no mistake!" said Cook. "Does he think the dashed thing is a horse? Beans! Beans for a bike! My only Aunt Jane!"

"The Head will give him beans when he sees him, I should think!" grinned Leggett. "Beans!" repeated Cook, quite

dazedly. "Hallo! There's a giddy young merchant looking for his

A youth with a shock head and an in expression and decidedly good- infuriated face, dodged round old

and sped towards the juniors.

"My jigger!" he roared, "The blooming covey stole my jigger! Wot'll Mr. Bandy say, hay? My jigger! Gimme my jigger!" "Here you are, kid!" Cook handed it over. "Better get it away!"

"Chucked me orf it!" roared Mr. Bandy's boy. "Chucked me orf, and borrered my jigger! You'll 'ear about this, I promise yer!"

And the justly-indignant youth mounted his machine, and careered away. The Modern juniors went across to Mr. Manders' house in a dazed state. They had wondered what the new master of the Fourth would be like. But in their wildest imaginings they had never thought of anything like this.

#### The 4th Chapter! Something New in Form-masters.

Tap! Bulkeley and the Fourth-Formers looked round as the knock came at the door of the Form-room. opened, and the startled face of Tommy Dodd appeared.

"Mr. Oliphant's come!" gasped Tommy.

And he withdrew, and scuttled away after the other Moderns. Mr. Oliphant walked into the Form-room. Jimmy Silver & Co. eyed him with interest.

Mr. Oliphant's manner was quite grave now; he seemed quite a different person from the jocular young man who had spoken with the Moderns in the quadrangle. The Classicals saw nothing queer about him. They saw a tall, slim, excellently-dressed young man, with an eyeglass, and a frank, goodhumoured face. And most of them decided on the spot that they liked Mr. Oliphant.

Bulkeley of the Sixth greeted the young man politely. He was glad enough that Mr. Oliphant had come. "Good-afternoon, sir! You are

Mr. Oliphant?" "Quite so," said the new master. "And this is my class?"

"The Classical Fourth, sir. The Modern Fourth have just gone across

to Mr. Manders." "Ah, quite so-quite so! But you do not belong to the Fourth?"

Bulkeley stared. Mr. Oliphant asked the question with grave politeness. Certainly he did not look as if he was joking. But it was hard to believe that he was serious.

"ILI beg your pardon, sir!" stammered Bulkeley.

"I asked you a plain question, I believe, my boy," said Mr. Oliphant. "I am Bulkeley of the Sixth Form," said the prefect coldly.

"Ah, quite so-quite so! I thought you were rather big to be in the Fourth!" said Mr. Oliphant. "What are you doing here, may I ask?"

"I was taking the Form, in the absence of a master." "I quite understand," said Mr.

Oliphant. "Naturally, the Form could not be left to itself. Boys will be boys-what?" "I will leave them to you now, Mr.

Oliphant," said Bulkeley, utterly unable to guess what to make of the new master. "Not at all," said Mr. Oliphant.

"Please continue, and I will watch you for a little time, in order to get the hang of the thing-what?" "Really, sir--"

"What subject were you taking, pray ?" "Geography, sir."

"My favourite subject," said Mr. Oliphant. "Pray continue, and I will sit on the desk and watch you." "Really, sir-" said the amazed

prefect. "Go ahead, my boy."

"I-I will do so if you wish, sir, of course-"Haven't I said so?"

"Ye-es: but---"

"Then shut up, and go ahead!" "Oh! Ah! All right, sir!"

Bulkeley turned to his class again, wondering whether he was on his head or his heels. The Fourth were amazed now. They had heard all that was said, of course, and they were exchanging peculiar glances. Jimmy Silver felt a sinking of the heart. Was it possible, after all, that his tutorship with Lord George, of feeble intellect, had affected Mr. Oliphant's own brain? Surely this wasn't the way a Form-master ought to behave!

Mr. Oliphant seated himself on the master's desk, and swung his long legs. In all the history of Rookwood School, a master had never been seen swinging his legs from his desk. The lesson proceeded, but much more

Mack and rushed into the quad- sight of the long legs swinging from | ing in some respects. When a man is | ately, and see you as soon as I had | rangle. He caught sight of the bike | the high desk seemed to fascinate the | down with influenza, he can't meddle | dismissed my class, sir." It is most unfortunate. You are juniors.

Bulkeley to proceed, he soon took it you think so, Silver?"
upon himself to interrupt. "I—I——"

captain, looking round. "You told me your name was Silver jumped. Hulkeley."

"No. sir-Bulkeley."

"Nonsense! Your name Hulkeley. Kindly do not argue with of the class." me!" snapped the master. "Now, "I-I'm at the top of the class now, took up your duties here." doubt, put it into his head." Hulkeley, you have just referred to Madrid as the capital city of Spain." "Well, sir?"

"I cannot allow such an error to pass," said Mr. Oliphant. "What do I you mean, sir, by telling the juniors that Madrid is the capital city of

Bulkeley blinked.

"But-but it is, sir!" he gasped. "Nonsense! I will take the class myself." said Mr. Oliphant, slipping from the desk. "You had better

clear off. You are no good." "Very well, sir," said Bulkeley, glad to escape. And he left the

Form-room at once. The Classical Fourth eyed their new master. There really was no instruct you in a very important guessing what he might say next.

To the increasing amazement of the Fourth, Mr. Oliphant distinctly winked at them.

"I dare say you fellows are sur- ington, aghast. prised to see me here?" he remarked. "I shall demonstrate how easy it gravely. "I certainly sent you no

so much with another fellow. A The juniors gazed at him, and aware, sir, that Lord George St. Although Mr. Oliphant had told fellow has a chance, you know. Don't

"Excuse me, Hulkeley," he said. | "Answer yes or no, boy!" thun-"Bulkeley, sir," said the Rookwood | dered Mr. Oliphant, with so sudden a change of manner that Jimmy | Oliphant's manner as he interviewed | way dangerous, but had a peculiarity

"Yes!" gasped Jimmy.

"Then go to the bottom of the

" Eh?"

"Will you obey me, sir?" thundered Mr. Oliphant. "Am I to use my cane, sir, on my first day at Rook-

"Oh crikey!" Jimmy Silver left his place, and limped to the bottom of the class. The Classical Fourth were quite breathless now. The astonishing new Form-master was quite enough to take any fellow's breath away.

"That is better," said Mr. Oliphant, smiling gaily. "Always obey orders, my boy. I shall now branch of knowledge. Can you walk on your hands, my boys?"

"Mad as a hatter!" breathed Morn-

marvelled. They almost wondered Leger, my pupil, though a very the Head.

"Most irregular, sir," said Dr. | pranks. Undoubtedly the sending of "Very good. You are a bright Chisholm. "Naturally, I desired a that telegram was one of his pranks." boy, Silver, and will go to the top personal interview with you, and to He must have heard some talk of my go into your credentials, before you appointment here, and that, no

> "I fear that I have made a mistake," said Mr. Oliphant. "I can only ask you to overlook it for once.

"Well, well," said the Head, mollified by Mr. Oliphant's dignified humility. "There is, of course, no harm done. But I am very glad to see you, Mr. Oliphant, as no doubt you can explain the matter of the telegram. After receiving it. I hardly expected to see you to-day."

Mr. Oliphant's features twitched for a moment.

"A telegram, sir!" he repeated. "Yes; the one you sent me this morning.

"That I-I sent you, sir!"

"Surely, Mr. Oliphant, you have not forgotten sending me a telegram from St. Leger Place this morning!" exclaimed the Head.

"I fear, sir, that you have been the victim of a hoax," said Mr. Oliphant

'Nunno, sir!" gasped Jimmy is," said Mr. Oliphant. "Watch me." telegram."

"I shall now instruct you in a very important branch of FUKM-KUUM! knowledge—that of walking on your hands," said the new master. Suiting the action to the words, he immediately took a little run, turned over, and raised himself on his hands with an ease that hinted at much practice.

Silver. "We-we were expecting a new master this afternoon, sir."

"Quite so. You will find me much more agreeable than the other fellow," said Mr. Oliphant.

"The-the other fellow, sir?" "Certainly. He does not know I a bump on the floor.

have come." "D-d-doesn't he, sir?" stammered Jimmy, as Mr. Oliphant seemed to expect him to say something. Jimmy had not the remotest idea of what Mr. Oliphant was driving at.

"The question arises," said Mr. Oliphant, speaking to Jimmy very confidentially, "will he wire?"

"If he does, what will be the result?"

"Really, sir--" "However, we must carry on," said Mr. Oliphant. "We have not come here to waste time, have we?"

"Nunno, sir." "What is your name, boy?"

"Silver, sir." "Very good. I think we shall get on together, Silver. I like this ever so much better than St. Leger Place. There were too many restrictions there."

"Were there, sir?" "There were!" said Mr. Oliphant. "Suppose, for instance, that a fellow felt disposed to turn head over

heels?" Jimmy Silver could only blink.

"Someone would be sure to restrain | extremely informal manner." a fellow," said Mr. Oliphant. "Most disconcerting, you know. The life attention was given to the astonishing was really hard. Indeed, I think I delayed in my journey down, Mr. Oliphant than to the lesson. The I influenza may be regarded as a bless- I thought I would get to work immedi-

The juniors, dumbfounded, watched

went over, raising himself on his hands with great activity, for a man of his size. Then he came down with

He sat and blinked at the juniors. The juniors blinked at him.

It was a knock at the door, and Mr. Oliphant was on his feet in a second. A kaleidoscopic change came over him instantaneously. His manner was calm, polished, grave, as the Form-room door opened and Dr. Chisholm entered.

#### The 5th Chapter. A Startling Suspicion! -

The Head of Rookwood glanced at Mr. Oliphant, taking no heed of the class. He did not, therefore, notice the dazed amazement in the faces of the juniors. His manner was a little

"Mr. Oliphant?" he asked. "Yes, sir," said Mr. Oliphant quietly. "You are Dr. Chisholm, I

presume?" "Quite so. Bulkeley has informed me of your arrival, Mr. Oliphant." said the Head sharply. "I naturally expected, sir, to see you as soon as you arrived. I did not expect you, sir, to take charge of your class in this

"I really beg your pardon, sir," said Mr. Oliphant. "Having been

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm. "Upon my soul! The Mr. Oliphant took a little run, and I telegram stated, sir, that you were sorry you were compelled to postpone your journey to Rookwood, as your pupil, Lord George, had left St. Leger Place, and had not yet been found, and had taken with him a number of papers and other things belonging to you."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Oliphant, with a look of astonishment. "You really received a telegram to that effect, sir?"

"I am more sorry than I can say," said Mr. Oliphant. "Was my name signed to it?"

"Undoubtedly I did."

whether they had dreamed the queer estimable young man in many antics of a few minutes before. respects, was not quite-not quite-to Nothing could have been more grave, | be candid, sir, not perfectly sane," composed, and respectful than Mr. said Mr. Oliphant. "He was in no of playing the most extraordinary The Head compressed his lips. "The young man should certainly

"Certainly it was."

have been more carefully watched," he snapped.

"I agree with you, sir; but my responsibility had ceased, or certainly this would never have happened."

"It is not your fault, Mr. Oliphant, of course," said the Head, more kindly. "I was somewhat puzzled. but the matter is set at rest now, and no harm is done. I shall be obliged if you will come to my study now; I really cannot let you assume your duties here in this informal way. There are many matters to be gone into. I have requested Bulkeley to take charge of the class for the remaining lesson."

"I am entirely at your service, zir."

"Very good!" The Head left the Form-room, and Mr. Oliphant followed him. As soon as they were gone, a buzz of voices broke out in the Form.

"Did you ever-" ejaculated Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Hardly ever!" grinned Mornington.

"Mad as a hatter!" said Peele. "Mad as a March hare!" said Cenroy. "He must be potty; he couldn't act as he did if he wasn't potty. He's caught it from his merry pupil." "Just as that ass Hansom said--"

muttered Newcome. Jimmy Silver looked worried. His brows were wrinkled in thought. There was no doubt that there was something very queer indeed about the new master; and a strange, startling suspicion had come into Jimmy Silver's mind.

Lovell clapped him on the shoulder. "What are you scowling about, Jimmy?" he demanded. "What do you think of the merchant?"

"I-I hardly know what to think!" gasped Jimmy. "He's potty-that's plain enough. Quite harmless, should say—but potty. And—and that telegram—"

"His merry pupil did that for a lark!" grinned Lovell. "Seems to me there's a pair of them!"

"His pupil!" repeated Jimmy slowly. "I don't know. The Head gets a telegram from Oliphant that he's not coming, because the potty chap has bolted, and taken away his papers. Then a potty chap turns up here as Oliphant, and, of course, he's got Oliphant's credentials with him. Looks to me as if the telegram was genuine, and the Form-master isn't!"

"Wha-a-at?" "It's all rot about Oliphant being potty! Lord George's people wouldn't put a potty man in charge of a lunatic. This man can't be Oliphant at all," said Jimmy Silver, with conviction. "It's a potty trick, that's what it is: and my idea is that the genuine Oliphant is still at St. Leger Place looking for his merry pupil, and his merry pupil has come to Rook-

"Great Christopher Columbus!" And then Bulkelev came in to take the Classical Fourth, and the discussion had to cease.

THE END.

(" The Froliesome Form-master" is a grand tale of the chums of Rookwood School appearing in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND.)

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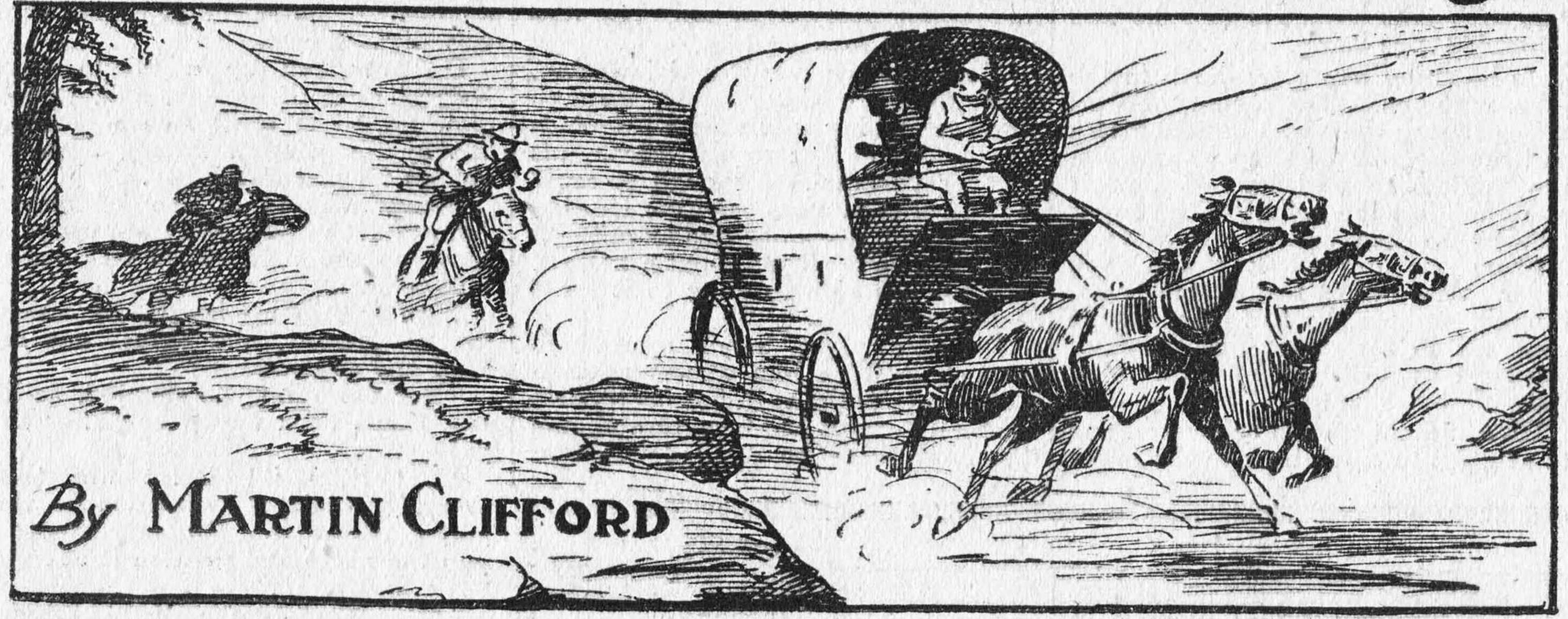
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#### A SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE TALE OF FRANK RICHARDS!

Published

Every Monday

## The Hunted Schoolbou!



#### The 1st Chapter.

The Pursuit!

Frank Richards started and awoke. The sun-rays filtered through the thickets over him; from all sides the chirping and twittering of birds came to his ears.

He sat up in the grass dazedly, blinking round him, not realising where he was for some moments. An opossum eyed him from a low branch close at hand, and scuttled away as he moved.

From the distance came a soundthe sound of galloping horses. It recalled Frank to himself.

Back into his mind came the recollection of the previous day's happenings-of the last scene at Cedar Creek, his last ride home from the backwoods school, his flight from his uncle's ranch in the shadow of night.

He had crept into the thickets of the timber clump to rest, and had slept-how long he did not know. But the sun was high in the heavens now; the spring day was warm on the Canadian prairie. Distant, but coming nearer, was the rythmic beat of hoofs.

Frank rose to his feet.

His long rest had refreshed him; he had awakened hungry. But he l had no food with him; he had not thought of that before leaving the ranch in the dead of night. And he thought little of it now. The sound of hoofs on the plain was an alarm to him.

He knew that he would be pursued. Rancher Lawless, angry as he was with his nephew, was certain not to leave him to his own devices; he would never allow Frank Richards to go out into the wide world alone, if he could help it. As soon as he was missed, it was certain that the rancher would send Billy Cook and the cowboys searching for him. Frank stood in the thickets and listened to the hoof-beats that drew steadily nearer. He gritted his teeth at the thought of being taken back to the ranch. Anything rather than that! Unless his innocence was proved, and he could look all Cedar Creek in the face again, he would never return. He was resolved upon that.

He pushed his way through the thickets, now hursting into the green of spring, and looked out over the plain beyond.

From the northward two galloping figures came into view. They were still distant, but he recognised Billy Cook, the foreman of the ranch, and a Kootenay cattleman. So far from the ranch-house he knew that they could have but one object in view; they were in search of him, and they had hit on his trail. They were riding directly towards the timber island, as if they knew that he was there.

Frank Richards breathed hard. He would not return-he would not be taken back! But resistance was out of the question. Either of the stalwart cattlemen could have tucked him under one arm and carried him obey the rancher's orders to take him | phatic cattleman's words again. back. Flight was impossible—he was "I guess he's lying doggo!" he on foot; and as soon as he quitted said. "We've got to rouse him out. few minutes for the horsemen to ride | trail-rope!"

him down. He turned back into the timber. Lightly as he trod, he knew he left | searching the timber. traces that would not escape the keen eves of the Canadian ranchmen. Where was he to hide? There was only one resource. He caught at a low branch and swung himself into a

In a minute or more he was in the I taken.

high branches, which interlocked in I the timber island.

his way, active as a lynx, till he thickets upward. reached a gigantic cedar in the "Come down, Richards!" bawled telling you you've got to come back?" middle of the "island."

Billy Cook and his companion had Come down!" reached the timber and dismounted. traces of him there, and that they would find them. They would soon be upon the spot where he had slept.

Would they suppose that he had quitted the timber and tramped on across the plain, or would they guess that he had taken to the trees? He waited with beating heart.

He heard the cattlemen tramping

From the tangled thickets the voice of Billy Cook came to his ears. "I guess he was hyer not far back The ground's still warm where he Frank set his lips. They knew that

he was still in the timber, then. "Take a squint round on the Cook. "If he's quit, you'll spot him, reckon."

Frank heard the Kootenay plunging through the thickets.

Evidently he was going to take a survey of the surrounding plain, which would certainly reveal that Frank had not quitted the timber.

Billy Cook waited for the Indian to return, and the scent of his tobacco ascended to Frank Richards as he lighted his pipe.

In ten minutes the Kootenay came

"No see!" he said briefly.

"Then I reckon he's still here. Took to the trees like a pesky monkey!" said Billy Cook "We'll rope him in, and I guess I've a mind to lay my lasso round him for giving us all this trouble."

Billy Cook removed the pipe from his mouth, and shouted:

"Richards! Frank Richards!" High in the cedar overhead, Frank remained silent.

"Richards!" The echo boomed back from the

trees, but it was the only reply that | the ranchman received. Billy Cook swore audibly.

He was a good-natured man, and he had always liked Frank, but he was a busy man, too, and he was wanted that morning on the ranch. He was anxious to get back to his duties, and all the time expended in hunting the fugitive schoolboy was a sheer waste of time, in Mr. Cook's opinion.

"Richards!" he roared. "I guess you can hear me, you young scally-wag. I know you're hyer. You've got to come home-savvy?" Frank did not speak.

"Your uncle's waiting to take you to Vancouver!" shouted Billy Cook. "You've got to get down to Kamloops to take the cars. You hear me yaup? If you don't show up, I reckon I'll lay my rope round you when I start you.

Only the echo replied, and Billy off, and he knew that they would | Cook wreaked his wrath in some em-

the timber, he would be seen, and I I guess we'll spot him soon, and then, then it would be a matter of only a by gosh, I'll give him a taste of the

Frank lay along a thick branch quietly as he heard the cattleman

In summer the foliage would have been an ample cover for him; but it was early spring, and the timber was nearly bare. Sooner or later it was l certain that he would be seen. But it was a long step from that to being

"Me see!" muttered the Kootenay gutturally, ten minutes or so later. From one tree to another he swung | A bronze finger pointed through the

Billy Cook. "I guess I see your boot, | "You can keep on telling me, till The hoof-beats had stopped now. you young varmint-I can see you!

Frank allowed his head to show Frank knew that they were seeking over the thick branch. Billy Cook and the Kootenay were standing twenty feet below him.

Billy waved his hand. "Come down!"

"I'm not coming!" answered Frank coolly.

"You pesky young scallywag! Mr. Lawless has sent up specially after

"You can go back to the ranch and tell Mr. Lawless that I shall not come back!" answered Frank. "So long as he believes that I robbed Miss Meadows at Cedar Creek, I will never see him or speak to him again! You! can tell him that!"

"I guess not!" said Billy Cook. "I've got my orders from the boss, taken back to the ranch like a truant perarer, Doggoo," continued Billy and I reckon you're moseying along with me on the home-trail, some!"

"You shall see!" answered Frank, between his teeth.

"Will you light down?"

"No!"

"If I rope you down, you'll get a mighty bump on the airth!" said Billy Cook threateningly.

'Take the risk, if you like," said Frank. "The fall would kill me, and you know it! Take the risk, if you choose!"

Billy, Cook swore volubly. Certainly he did not intend to take that risk-or, rather, certainty.

He gripped the revolver in the holster in his belt.

"Will you come down, afore I wing you?" he demanded.

Frank laughed.

"Try!" he said. The ranchman jerked out the remarks after him. revolver, and aimed it upward.

"Now, then-" "Fire if you like!" said Frank.

"Come down, you young rascal!"

"Rats!"

"By gum!" said the ranch foreman, in concentrated tones. "You've got a narve on you! I guess I'll larrup you when I get my hands on you!" He thrust the revolver back into his belt; it was evident that the schoolboy was not to be bluffed. "I'm coming up arter you, and you look out for squalls, young Richards, when I git a grip on your neck!"



in this world-famous comic.

And, without wasting further time in words, the ranchman started to climb the tree.

#### The 2nd Chapter. A Clean Pair of Heels!

Frank Richards watched him, his

heart beating fast. Big and muscular as he was, Billy Cook was active enough, and he swung himself up the great trunk without difficulty.

It was likely to take him only a few minutes to reach the branch where Frank clung.

Frank worked his way farther along: the branch, towards the end, sitting astride of it. He was twenty feet away from the trunk, when Billy Cook clambered on the branch where it jutted from the tree.

The cowboy glared at him along the branch.

"Now come along!" he rapped

"Go and eat coke!"

"I guess I'll warm you, some!" gasped the ranch foreman.

"By Jehoshophat!" murmured Billy Cook, crimson with wrath and exertion. "If I had you in reach of my quirt, young Richards, I guess I'd make you squirm. Don't I keep on

you're black in the face, if you like,' answered Frank Richards. "I'm not coming!"

"I guess you'll see, you obstinate young varmint!"

Billy Cook's powerful legs dropped astride of the big branch, and he clutched it and worked his way along.

Stout as the branch was, it drooped

under the ranchman's heavy weight. The end to which Frank was clinging sagged down, into the branches of a tree close at hand. As the cowboy came wriggling along, Frank glanced into the next tree. To glide out to the extremity of the branch, and seize on the neighbouring one, at a height of twenty feet from the ground, was terribly risky. But Frank's blood was up now, and any risk seemed to him better than being schoolboy. He moved farther along the thinning branch, and there was an ominous crack.

Billy Cook ceased his advance, in alarm.

"Stop!" he shouted. "You young fool, you're risking your neck! tell you, stop!"

Frank Richards did not heed.

Whether the slim extremity of the branch would bear his weight or not, he was on it now, and catching at the next tree.

He caught hold, and swung himself

The branch he left jumped, as it was relieved of his weight, and Billy Cook had to clutch hold frantically to avoid being thrown off.

Frank Richards worked his way into the next tree; and the ranchman sat, baffled, and hurled emphatic

What Frank had done, it was quite impossible for the ranchman to do; the end of the branch would certainly have snapped off under Billy Cook's

twelve stone. "Oh, you pesky scallywag!" gasped Billy. "Doggoo, shin up that thundering tree and stop him!"

The Kootenay began to climb the tree in which Frank Richards had taken refuge.

Frank clambered to a lower branch, only ten feet from the ground. There he waited, his eyes gleaming.

A desperate plan had come into his mind. He knew where the cattlemen had left their horses tethered on the edge of the timber; he could catch glimpses of the two animals through the trees. The thought had come into his mind of attempting to reach the horses, and taking up his flight across the plain before his pursuers could stop him.

Billy Cook was still sitting in the big cedar, ready to stop Frank if he climbed back into it to escape the Kootenay. Doggoo was steadily climbing, and he was soon crawling out on the branch where Frank clung. The branch sank under his weight, and Frank, clinging with his hands, saw the ground at a safe distance below him.

Suddenly he let go.

The branch shot up as he dropped, and Doggoo had to lie on his chest, throwing his arms round it, to hold

The instant Frank's feet touched the ground he ran.

He burst through the thickets breathlessly in the direction of the

tethered horses. "Roused out!" chuckled Billy Cook. "I guess we've got him

new." For the moment Frank's intention did not dawn on him.

The ranchman began to climb down the cedar.

In a minute or less Frank Richards reached the horses. They were tethered only by the reins being looped over a branch.

In a second he had jerked the reins loose, and jumped upon Billy Cook's horse. Keeping the reins of the other animal in his hand, he drove the ranchman's horse away from the timber at a gallop.

A roar of wrath burst from Billy Cook, as he came tramping on the track of the escaping schoolboy.

"Stop, you varmint! He's got the critters! Stop!"

Billy Cook rushed out of the trees, waving his hands furiously in the air, and roaring.

Frank Richards did not even look

He urged on the cowboy's horse furiously, with the led horse galloping by his side.

He was already a hundred yards distant when Billy Cook came bursting breathlessly out of the timber.

"Stop!" roared the ranchman. He dashed in frantic pursuit; but it was not much use pursuing a rider on foot over the rough ground.

"Oh Jerusalem!" gasped Billy Cook, at last, in dismay and fury. "What will the boss say? Lettin' a tenderfoot schoolboy git away with the critters, too! Oh, jumpin' Jehoshophat!"

He stopped, pumping in breath, and shook an infuriated fist after the fugitive.

Frank Richards glanced round, at a safe distance. Against the trees of the timber island, he discerned the ranch foreman, almost dancing with rage; the Kootenay looking on, impassive. They were helpless now; Frank Richards was far beyond their

Frank, with a breathless laugh, waved his hand in the air, and then rode on again without looking back.

Before him lay the wide, rolling plain, stretching as far as the eye could reach in the direction of Silver

At Silver Creek, the fugitive schoolboy hoped to get a lift on the postwaggon, as far as the railroad. There he felt that he would be safe from pursuit.

Billy Cook, with feelings too deep for words, set out on a homeward tramp with the Kootenay, on foot; with many a long mile of prairie before him ere he could reach the

Lawless Ranch again. Without giving a thought to him, Frank Richards rode on, elated to feel himself in the saddle again, and he did not slacken speed until the camp of Silver Creek was in sight in the distance ahead.

Half a mile out of the camp he dismounted, and cast both the horses loose. He knew that the animals would find their way home, or would be rounded up by the cattlemen.

On foot, he tramped into Silver Creek.

#### The 3rd Chapter. A Desperate Device!

It was past midday, and the lumber hotel at Silver Creek camp was crewded. Cattlemen from the ranches, and miners from the placer claims along the creek, crowded the long lumber shanty which was called the dining-room. Frank Richards slipped in among the crowd.

He was ravenously hungry, and he was glad to squeeze into a seat at the pinewood table, and get a share of the rough-and-ready fare, of the Silver Creek hotel.

Rough and ready as it was. Frank ate with a good appetite, and he felt much better after his dinner. He recognised the driver of the postwaggon at the table. Yuba Dave, the driver, was laying in supplies on a large scale, and picking his teeth with a big jack-knife every now and then. Outside the lumber hotel the postwaggon was waiting, but the horses had not yet been put in.

There was plenty of time for Frank's dinner. When he had finished, he stopped to speak to Yuba Dave on his way out.

"When are you starting, Dave?" Yuba Dave glanced round, arresting the jack-knife on its way to his

mouth, and nodded cordially. "Hallo, young Richards! Why ain't you at school?"

"I'm on a trip," explained Frank. not at all inclined to enter into details as to why he was not at school. "I've got to get on as soon as I can. When are you going on?"

"Two, sharp!" said Daye. "Room for a passenger?"
"Yep!"

"Good! Count me in, then."

"Sure!" said Yuba. And he turned to his ample dinner

again. Frank Richards left the hotel, and looked down the dusty, unpaved street. That the pursuit would be carried farther he was sure; he knew that his uncle, in spite of his anger, had gained time. Undoubtedly Mr. I Billy arrived—on foot—to report that | That was Yuba Dave's philosophic | comes humpin' up!" the fugitive had escaped. That he | view of the position. He turned his | Frank Richards made no reply. His | bruises, and he turned his back to the | melted away into the air, rancher." was heading for Silver Creek, there would be no doubt, and ere long horsemen would come riding in looking for him. But Frank felt that he had plenty of time to get well ahead.

So he sat on a bench in front of the lumber hotel, and waited quietly. In the excitement of his escape, he had had little time for thought; but now, as he rested, his mind was busy. He was thinking of his chums, Vere Beauclerc and Bob Lawless.

Was he ever to see them again? That they would believe in his innocence, he felt certain. But unless his name was cleared, he could not return to the Thompson Valley.

And whither were his wandering steps to lead him? Even when he had made good his escape, what next? All Canada—all the wide world—was before him.

He was young and strong, and he town on time." had plenty of courage. But his heart sank at the prospect. Every step now carried him farther and farther from his friends-from all the faces he knew. All the old familiar scenes were left behind-for ever? Life was rough in that valley of British Columbia, but Frank had been very happy there; the backwoods school was dear to him, and the ranch, and the familiar faces of the cattlemen. The rugged main street of Thompson, Mr. Isaac's office, Gunten's Store, even the well-known sight of Dry Billy reeling away from the Red Dog saloon-he felt a lump in his throat at the thought that he might never see them again.

He was roused from his gloomy thoughts by Yuba Dave tramping out of the lumber hotel. The stableman was putting the horses to the postwaggon, and Yuba, Dave superintended that operation.

"Jump in, bub!" he called out to

Frank Richards.

Gladly enough, Frank boarded the post-waggon. The vehicle was pretty well piled with baggage, but Frank was the only passenger. He looked back along the rugged street when he sat down. There was no sign yet of horsemen from the Lawless Ranch.

Yuba Dave clambered up, and shook out his reins, and cracked his long whip. The two horses started, with a clatter, down the street.

Frank Richards breathed more freely when the post-waggon was clear of the camp.

He was tired from his exertions of the night and morning, and he sank back against a stack of baggage and closed his eyes as the post-waggon bumped on along the rugged trail.

Under the westering sun Yuba Dave drove on at a good pace. He had to make his next stopping-place, Timbertown, by nightfall. The rattling of hoofs, the cracking of the whip, the jolting on the rough trail, did not awaken Frank Richards. It was an exclamation from Yuba Dave that brought him back to wakeful-

- He started, and rubbed his eyes. The sun-was low in the west now; the shadows of trees lengthened over

the plain. "Hallo! You been snoozing?" exclaimed Yuba Dave, looking back into the post-waggon. "Can't you hear

a galoot yaup?" "Eh? What's the row?" asked

Frank. "What do they want?" said Yuba. "I ask you, bub!"

"They-what-who-"

the trail as an indication, and drove

steadily on. Frank looked back, and caught his breath. Against the red sky, two

galloping hard! One of them was Billy Cook. The other was Mr. Lawless; and even at | rattling and bumping on the rugged | broken.

the distance Frank could make out | trail. Behind it, at a distance that | The post-waggon, already distant, | bronzed face. He was pursued, and the pursuers were close at hand. Frank felt his heart throb.

Billy Cook had not been so long as Frank had expected in getting back to the ranch. Possibly he had met a cowboy on the plain, and borrowed his horse. At all events, here he was uncle. And the two men, well- friend until the black disgrace at I Hardly knowing whether he was I Dave. "I'm sure starting."

mounted, were riding hard after the post-waggon on the southern trail.

Published

Every Monday

That they wanted the post-waggon was perfectly clear to Yuba Dave, though, of course, he could not guess that the rancher was in pursuit of a grinned. runaway nephew. But what they wanted was no concern of Yuba Dave's. His concern was to get the quid of tobacco in his bearded cheek, face was clouded with anxiety. and drove on without a pause.

Frank, wideawake and alert now, watched the riders with beating heart. When Yuba Dave glanced there. back the rancher waved his hand, evidently a signal for the driver to stretch between Silver Creek and Timbertown.

Frank realised that the driver did not intend to halt, as he had feared at first, and he breathed more freely. It was a respite, at least.

"You're not stopping, Yuba?" he asked.

Dave shook his head with emphasis. "I reckon not!" he answered. "I kinder reckon; bub, that this hyer hearse has got to get into Timber- | ing team.

They were gaining on the post- with his hands, and hung on.

Cedar Creek had fallen upon him. What was he to do? Closer and closer came the straining

horses.

mile now. I guess your uncle looks of the post-waggon-empty now of was concerned about him. But he | waggon in at Timbertown by sun- | wrathy, some, young Richards! Have | down. If the horsemen could over- you been playing truant from school, Lawless had relied on Billy Cook to | take it, they were welcome to do so. | bub? Goin' off on a stunt on your bring him home to the ranch; and it I If they couldn't, they were welcome own-hey? I sure reckon you're was likely to be rather late when to ride behind as long as they liked. | goin' to get the rope when uncle

The trail ran now through a wide patch of live oaks and scrub, with a clump or two of larger trees here and

As it wound on, the pursuing horsemen disappeared from sight; but the halt. Yuba affably jerked his whip crash of pursuing hoofs came down in recognition, but he did not halt. | the wind. They were hidden from | He had no time to waste on the long | sight by the scrub, but they were close, and drawing closer. Frank thought he could hear a shout floating faintly from the rear.

> He rose quietly from his seat. Yuba Dave was driving grimly on, intending to keep up the race to the last minute, even if he arrived early at Timbertown as a result. He had no eyes for Frank then. The trail was winding through the scrub, and Yuba needed all his eyes for his tear-

Frank crept to the back of the Frank watched the horsemen again. | covered waggon, slid over, holding

whole or not, the schoolboy staggered out of the trail into the thick scrub.

Yuba Dave looked back, and as if he had been under a blanket. The thunder of hoofs died away up "Closin' up!" he remarked. "I | the trail. Rancher Lawless and Billy sure reckon they'll catch us in half a | Cook were sweeping on, in hot pursuit

him they sought!

the hoof-strokes died away into silence, was in the waggon when we toted out through the scrub. He was still feel- of Silver Creek. I guess I talked to ing the jarring shock of his fall in the him a few times up to a mile or two trail. But he had suffered only back. I kinder calculate that he ain't trail, and tramped. Once more he had escaped pursuit; and the night was at hand, with its friendly mantle of darkness to cover the hunted and harried fugitive.

#### The 4th Chapter.

"Halt!"

The galloping horsemen had drawn level with the post-waggon at last, on the open plain beyond the belt of scrub. Far in the distance, in the red sunset, the cabins and saw-mills

and left as they came up with the waggon, and rode on, one on either side of it. And the rancher shook his

Yuba Dave slackened and drew i his horses, though it was a good hundred yards on that he got them to a standstill. The team stopped at last, sweating and blowing, and the horsemen reined in. The rancher gave

A dozen feet from the trail, he sank down in the scrub, as well hidden

. Gone!

Rancher Lawless shouted the word

of Timbertown could be discerned.

The horsemen separated to right riding-whip at the grinning driver.

Yuba Dave a savage look. "You fool! I've a good mind-"All in the way of business, boss, PURSUIT AMONG THE TREE TOPS! "Stop!" shouted the cowboy. "You'll sure break your neck!" Frank Richards did not heed. Whether the slim branch would bear his weight when he swung on to it he did not know. But, nevertheless, he was determined to risk it rather than let himself be taken prisoner.

were going strong, and the race was on a desperate venture. not likely to be a short one. There was time for the fugitive schoolboy to think.

Yuba Dave curiously. "You forgotten something for your uncle?"

"Oh, no!" "But he's arter you, ain't he?" "Well, he's after the waggon?"

said Frank. "Sorry I can't stop, as he seems in a on it at long last and round him up. fully. "Have a chew, pard?" hurry. But I guess galoots should It was now or never-neck or And the breathless ranchman catch this hyer hearse if they've got | nothing! But he hung on for some | grinned and accepted a "chew" from business with this hyer hearse. Just | minutes. And then luck befriended | Yuba's plug.

waggon, gaining at every stride of | His heart was throbbing, but his | said Yuba Dave, taking advantage of their horses; but Yuba Dave's pair | face was firmly set. He had resolved | the halt to cut a new quid and shove |

away by the impact.

certain to be great. But Frank had a reputation to keep." waggon would be in sight of the pur- my quirt over your silly neck." "Looks like it," smiled Yuba. | suers again, and they would close in | "Come off!" answered Yuba cheer-

Yuba jerked his whip back along | As a matter of fact, Yuba was | and tore along. He made up his | Dave called to him.

more speed than was necessary to get | He was rolling blindly in the rough | I got to be in afore sundown." horses at a gallop, the heavy vehicle | ing whether any of his limbs had been | cover of the waggon.

He could not raise his hand against | the two horsemen might come sweep- | of anger left his lips.

It into his capacious mouth. "I'm He allowed his boots to touch the paid to get this hyer hearse in at trail lightly, and was almost torn schedule time, and I reckon I don't let any grass grow under the wheels. "What's the rumpus, bub?" asked | The vehicle was bumping along at | You keep your nevvy under your eye a terrific speed and it was decidedly | if you want him. Don't ask me to be unsafe to drop behind; the shock was late on time, 'cause I guess I've got

made up his mind. Once the scrub | "You funny jay!" growled Billy belt was past there was no hope; the | Cook. "I've a mind to let you have |

a few. But he'll be up with us in | him, for the waggon slowed a little | Rancher Lawless had ridden round another mile or two. Gee up, there!" as the team faced a rise. to the open back of the waggon with "Use your eyes, sonny!" He cracked his whip. His boots touched the ground again a black frown on his brow. Yuba

rather enjoying the race; it was a mind to it, and let go. "Hustle it, rancher! I guess break in the usual monotony of his It seemed like a thunderbolt that ain't giving you more'n two minutes drive. He was putting on rather | happened to him the next moment. | to yank Mister Nevvy out. I guess

figures loomed up. Two horsemen | into Timbertown "on time." | trail, dazed, half-stunned, gasping for | Mr. Lawless did not heed. He rode The "hearse" swept on, the two | breath. He lay and panted, wonder- | close up and peered under the canvas

"Get out, Frank!" he snapped. There was no answer from the postthe grim lines of the rancher's gradually grew less, the two horse- was speeding on, as Frank rose waggon. The rancher put his head in and stared round the interior of men urged on their steeds in hot dazedly on one knee.

pursuit.

in and stared round the interior of the vehicle. There was plenty of Frank Richards thought rapidly. | Hoof-beats from behind, though the | baggage stacked inside, but there He had escaped Billy Cook once; scrub still hid the riders. Frank was no sign of a passenger. Mr. Lawbut the rancher was not likely to be Richards pulled himself together. He less stared and stared; but it was so easily escaped. If the post-waggon | had made the venture, but there was | only too evident that the passenger was overtaken, he would be captured. | not a minute to lose. At any moment | was no longer there. An exclamation |

"Stop the fool, Billy!" Rancher Lawless rode round the waggon to the driver's side, with a savage face.

"Where's my nephew?" he snapped.

Yuba stared. "Ain't he in the waggon?"

"You're sure joking," said Yuba Frank Richards picked himself up Dave in astonishment. "I reckon he The rancher gritted his teeth.

"Where did you put him down?" "I guess I ain't put him down," said Yuba Dave. "If he ain't in the hearse, he's jumped out behind, and I reckon he must have had a narve on him to do that. I swear I ain't stopped the hearse for one minute since we moseyed out of Silver Creek."

The driver's astonishment was evidently genuine. The anger in Mr. Lawless' face gave way to anxiety.

"The foolish, reckless boy!" he exclaimed. "If he jumped out-Good heavens, what may have happened to him?"

"I guess he landed on his feet, like a monkey, boss," said Billy Cook. "We'd sure have sighted him on the trail if he'd been hurt."

"Waal, he ain't here," said Yuba Dave. "If you'll tell that cowpuncher to let up on my hoss, rancher, I'll get on. This hyer hearse isn't going to be late at Timbertown, not

if this infant knows it." Billy Cook released the leader, and Yuba cracked his whip and started again. He was grinning as he drove on, rather entertained by the trick Frank Richards had played on his pursuers.

Rancher Lawless sat his horse in the trail, with a frowning brow. Where was Frank Richards?

"I guess he got clear and crawled into the scrub, boss," said Billy Cook. 'I reckon we rode past him, the young scallywag. But there was half a mile of that scrub, and where to look for him---"

The burly ranchman shrugged his shoulders hopelessly. Looking for the fugitive in the wide belt of scrub was something like hunting for a needle in a stack of hay.

"We've got to find him," muttered the rancher, gnawing his lip. "Bad as he has turned out, he is my nephew, and I am responsible to his father for him. Alone at night on the prairie-what may not happen to him? We've got to find him."

"I'm with you, boss," said the ranch foreman.

And they rode back along the trail. The sun was dipping below the western hills when they entered the scrub belt again. Black shadows were thickening among the live oaks and sassafras.

At what spot had the fugitive dropped from the waggon? At any spot for half a mile, and the hard, rough trail gave no trace. And in the tough scrub it would have puzzled an Indian tracker to find a trail. Night was falling, and the task of seeking Frank Richards was hopeless. Already, probably, he was several miles distant, hidden in the bush, in what direction they could not even guess. They searched for a sign till the last glimmer of daylight was gone.

"I guess this lets us out, boss," said Billy Cook. "He wasn't hurt in fallin' from the hearse, or we'd see somethin' of him. He's vamoosed, that's what the young scallywag's done. And lookin' for him around hyer, I guess, is jest like lookin' for a mosquito in a field of alfalfa."

"Home!" he said. And they rode on the homeward

The rancher nodded grimly.

The next day a score of riders were seeking for Frank Richards along the valley of the Thompson River. They hunted for him high and low for many a long mile. But they did not find him. The fugitive schoolboy had too long a start, and he had vanished from the vicinity of the Lawless Ranch-vanished, as it seemed, from the Thompson Valley. And after all their hard riding the searchers had to ride home baffled and disappointed.

Frank Richards was gone, and no one could even guess whither. Somewhere in the wide spaces of the Canadian West the schoolboy of Cedar Creek was facing the battle of life. alone, unaided; and those who had known him could only wonder whether they would ever see him again in life.

THE END.

(You must read "Fallen Among Thieves!" A grand, long complete again, and in company with Frank's | his uncle, who had been his kindest | ing down upon him. "Hurry up, boss!" shouted Yuba | yarn of Frank Richards & Co., in next Monday's Boys' FRIEND.)