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THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending April 23rd, 1921.

SPORTSMEN LTD

BY Walter Edwards.

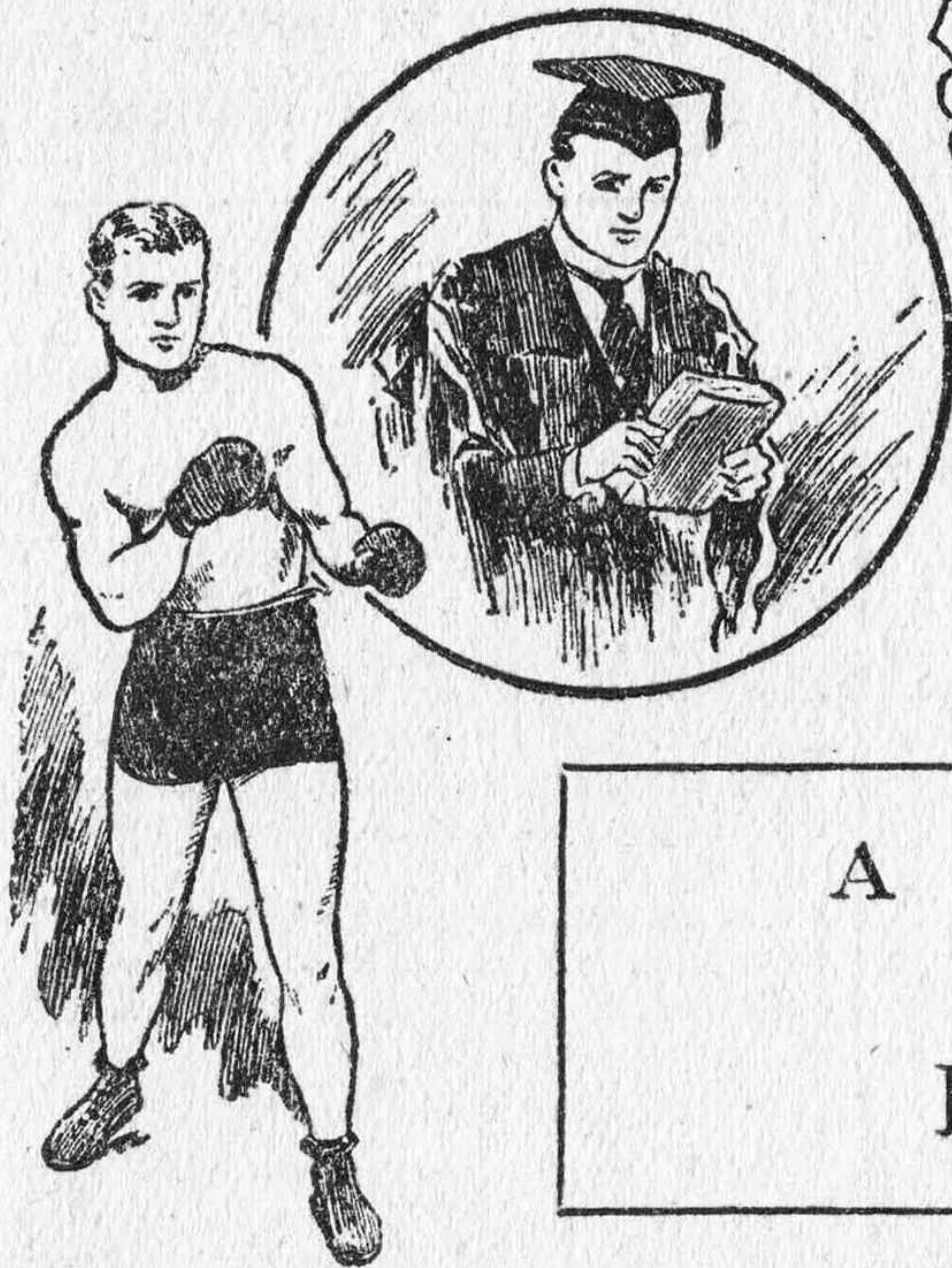


AN UNDERHAND TRICK!

“... Eight, nine!” droned the timekeeper, and Snowy White was on the point of being counted out when he leapt forward and clutched Jack Vernon about the knees, bringing him crashing to the canvas!

HOW 'KID' LEWIS FIGHTS! Special Article on Page 183.

A SPLENDID, LONG COMPLETE YARN OF JIMMY SILVER & CO.



Form-Master & Boxer!

A TALE OF THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Lovell's Idea!

"It's a good twenty miles!" said Raby.

"Quite!" remarked Newcome.

"Every bit!" said Jimmy Silver.

Whereat Arthur Edward Lovell gave a snort.

"I've gone over it on the map!" he said. "It's exactly nineteen and a half miles."

"Nineteen and a half miles," said Jimmy Silver sententiously, "is fairly hefty. You've got to consider that if it's nineteen and a half miles there, it's likewise, nineteen and a half miles back. And twice nineteen and a half miles is—"

"Thirty-nine miles!" said Raby, shaking his head.

"Hilly, too!" said Newcome.

Another snort from Lovell!

The Fistical Four, of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, were holding a discussion in the quadrangle after dinner, but it was evident that one mind in the quartette was already made up.

Jimmy Silver and Raby and Newcome were undecided what they were going to do with the half-holiday. But Lovell wasn't undecided. Arthur Edward Lovell had quite decided; he was only wasting time, now, in bringing his chums round to his way of thinking.

"If you fellows can't cycle thirty-nine miles," said Lovell, "the best thing you can do is to give your jiggers away to chaps who know how to ride them. It's a shame to keep three good jiggers simply as ornaments."

Evidently Lovell was growing sarcastic.

"Thirty-nine miles," repeated Raby.

"Barely that!" said Lovell.

"And hilly—"

"Hills go down as well as up!" suggested Lovell patiently. "What you lose on the swings you bag on the roundabouts, you know."

"And what about tea?" asked Raby.

"We can get some tea at Bunbury, after seeing the show at the Ring."

"I suppose we could. But—"

"Keep on butting!" said Lovell.

"Don't mind me! The afternoon's going, but never mind. At this rate we shall still be standing here at tea-time—butting! Keep it up."

"Keep your wool on, old chap," said Jimmy Silver soothingly. "If we're going to bike thirty-nine miles this afternoon—"

"The sooner we start the better," said Lovell. "Hanging about won't reduce the distance. Talking for an hour won't make it thirty-eight, or thirty-seven and a half."

"Not so much sarc, old chap," urged Newcome. "We can do it, I suppose, but—"

"It's a big show," said Lovell. "I want to see it! So do you fellows, only you're so slack. Smythe & Co. have been talking about it, and they'd go like a shot, only they're not up to the ride. We don't want to slack like those wasters in the Shell. Get out the bikes."

"There's another point," said Jimmy Silver.

Lovell gave a deep groan.

"Keep on!" he said. "The only trouble is, we may take root here if we stand chinning so long."

"What's the point?" asked Raby.

Jimmy Silver looked thoughtful. As captain of the Fourth, and as "Uncle James" of Rookwood, he naturally felt a little more responsibility than his comrades.

"Well, I'm not sure that the Head would want us to go to the Bunbury Ring, to see a fight," he said. "You

"Tain't out of bounds," said Lovell.

"Well, the Head hasn't put any place twenty miles away out of bounds, specially—"

"Nineteen and a half!" said Lovell.

"Well, nineteen and a half, then, fathead. It hasn't occurred to the Head that we might go so far afield on a half-holiday. But seeing a fight between professional boxers—hem!"

"Tain't a prize fight," said Lovell.

"They have gloves on, of course. It's a boxing match—and a good one. The Lamb is a gentleman boxer. I don't know anything about the man he's boxing, but I dare say he's all right. My cousin's seen the Lamb, and he's told me he's no end of a boxer, and a fine-looking fellow. He's advised me to see him if I ever get a chance. And now we've got a chance."

"Ahem! But—"

"The Head couldn't object," said Lovell. "It's a quite decent glove fight—the Bunbury Ring is no end respectable. A chap could take his uncle there. Don't hunt for trouble, Jimmy! For goodness' sake, get out your bike, and let's start."

The Co. exchanged glances.

Lovell was evidently keenly set upon visiting the Bunbury Ring, and beholding the prowess of the Lamb in a boxing match. The Co. were rather interested in boxing, and they liked the idea. There were plenty of objections, such as the distance, and the possible disapproval of the Head. But Lovell, at least, was determined, and his chums decided to go.

"All serene," said Jimmy Silver, at last. "Let's chance it. And if we're going, the sooner we start the better; it's a long way."

"A thundering long way," said Raby. "But I'm game."

"Oh, anything for a quiet life," yawned Newcome.

The Fistical Four reached the bike-shed, and wheeled out their machines. Mornington was there, mending a puncture in his machine.

"Coming along to Bunbury, Morny?" asked Lovell carelessly.

"Eh? It's twenty miles away."

"What's that?" said Lovell, shrugging his shoulders.

"You won't be back for callin' over," said Mornington. "I'm goin' on a rather less hefty spin with Erroll. What the thump are you goin' to Bunbury for?"

"Boxing match."

"Well, you'd better get in to time," said Morny. "The new Form-master arrives this evenin', you know—Bulkeley said he may be here about six or seven. You don't want to be missin' when he's presented to his flock. And I don't suppose he would be specially pleased to know you'd been goin' around seein' prize fights."

"Blow the new Form-master," grunted Lovell. "I'm fed-up on new Form-masters. I wish Mr. Bottles had stayed."

"Same here; but he didn't stay, and Mr. Dalton is turnin' up this evenin'. And if you're missin' there—"

"Oh, rats! Come on, you fellows; we shall never get off if we wait here till Morny's done croakin'."

Jimmy Silver & Co. wheeled off their machines, leaving Mornington grinning. They wheeled them out into the road, where they found Tubby Muffin waiting for them, with a very determined expression on his fat face.

The 2nd Chapter.
Carthew Wants to Know!

"Hold on, Jimmy—"

"Buzz off, Muffin," said Jimmy Silver impatiently. "We're in rather

a hurry. Roll out of the way, fatty."

"I'm coming with you," said Muffin.

"Where's your bike, then?"

"My bike's rather in want of repairs," said Tubby. "But that's all right. I'm not really up to a forty-mile ride. I want one of you fellows to mount me."

"What?" roared the Fistical Four.

"Take it in turns to give me a lift," explained Tubby Muffin. "It's only ten miles each for you!"

"You fat duffer—"

"I can stand on the foot-rests behind," said Tubby. "After all, you'll be sitting down, so you'll have an easier time. I shouldn't mind walking up some of the hills—the steep ones."

"Ass!"

"I want to see the Lamb box at the Bunbury Ring," said Muffin. "I'm keen on boxing, you know. I may pick up some tips. Smythe & Co. are going, and they pressed me to come with them. But I said I wouldn't desert my old pals on a half-holiday."

"Will you get out of the way of the bikes, Muffin?"

"Are you going to give me a lift to Bunbury?"

"No!" roared Lovell.

"Look here," said Tubby Muffin. "This won't do! You know jolly well you oughtn't to be going to see a prize-fight—"

"It's not a prize-fight, you fat idiot!"

Tubby Muffin winked—a fat wink.

"You can't spoof me!" he said. "It's a prize-fight right enough. I'm shocked at you, really. Fancy Rookwood fellows going to see a prize-fight—"

"What's that?"

Carthew of the Sixth came out at the gates while Reginald Muffin was speaking.

He stopped at once.

The Sixth Form bully fixed his eyes on Jimmy Silver & Co., with a glint in them.

"So you're going to see a prize-fight!" he exclaimed. "I'm not surprised at it—not in the least! Only you jolly well won't go! It will be my duty to report this—"

The Fistical Four looked at Carthew as if they could eat him. It was sheer ill-luck that their old enemy of the Sixth should have dropped upon them like this.

"It's nothing of the sort!" bawled Lovell.

"Where are you going, then?" demanded Carthew.

"Find out!"

The Young Forester

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That was not a properly respectful reply to make to a Sixth Form prefect; but Lovell's temper was rising. He turned his back on Mark Carthew, and wheeled his bike on. As Tubby Muffin was standing directly in the way, Tubby received Lovell's front wheel on his fat little legs, and was fairly bowled over.

"Yarocoh!" roared Muffin, as he sat in the dusty road.

"Come on, you fellows!"

"Stop!" shouted Carthew.

Strictly speaking, Jimmy Silver & Co. ought to have stopped at an order from a prefect of the Classical Sixth. But they were in a hurry, and they were fed up with Carthew and his meddling. Heedless of the prefect, they jumped on their machines and careered away down the road.

Carthew made a rush after them, but he was dropped behind at once. He turned back savagely to Muffin, who was scrambling up, crimson with wrath. In a few minutes Carthew had extracted from Tubby a full account of the Bunbury Ring, and the Lamb's pugilistic display there.

And Carthew went on his way towards Coombe with a sour smile on his face. He had never forgotten his old grudge against the Fistical Four, and he felt that his chance had come at last of playing off old scores.

True, it was only a boxing match the juniors were going to see, and there was no harm in it. But it was not strictly within the rules, and by a little judicious exaggeration, Mark Carthew considered that he could make the exploit look much worse than it was. And the new master of the Fourth was to arrive that day.

"It's my duty to report this, of course!" Carthew grinned. "I'll bring 'em before Dalton, and start them in their new master's black books. Nothin' like making a bad impression to begin with. They'll have their Form-master down on them from the start."

And Carthew smiled with satisfaction at that idea.

He was going to do his duty as a prefect thoroughly—perhaps a little too thoroughly. And when he reached Coombe, Carthew turned into the garden of the Bird in Hand Inn, and by a circuitous route reached the billiard-room, where he was soon deep in a hundred up with Mr. Joey Hook, with a "quid" on the game, which certainly was a peculiar proceeding for so very dutiful a prefect!

The 3rd Chapter.
The Fight at Bunbury!

Jimmy Silver & Co. pedalled away cheerily on their long ride.

It was a sunny April afternoon, and merely to be out of doors skimming along the lanes, fresh in the green of spring, was happiness.

The encounter with the bully of the Sixth was unfortunate, and might lead to trouble later, but the Co. dismissed it from their minds for the present. Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof. It was no use meeting trouble half-way.

So the Co. bowled merrily along the lanes, and passed through Latcham; and fairly spread themselves on the wide, white country road beyond.

Three cyclists came into view ahead, past Latcham, and they recognised Smythe and Howard, and Tracy of the Shell. They grinned.

"So Adolphus & Co. are going!" said Jimmy Silver. "If I were a betting chap I'd lay a hundred to one they don't get near Bunbury today."

"Not within ten miles, I fancy!" chuckled Lovell.

There was a hill outside Latcham, and on the hill the Shell cyclists dismounted. The Fistical Four, pedalling on their lowest gears, came up with them, and hailed them cheerily.

"Hallo, Smythey!"

Adolphus Smythe turned a lack-lustre eye upon them. His face was red, his forehead bedewed with perspiration. Howard and Tracy were breathing hard and grunting. The nuts of the Shell had covered about six miles already. They did not look like doing the remaining fourteen.

"Going strong, Smythey?" grinned Raby.

"Oh rats!" said Adolphus.

"You should have left off the smokes, Smythey!" chuckled Newcome. "How much wind have you got left?"

"Don't give me any of your fag cheek!" gasped Smythe. "We'll beat you to Bunbury if you're goin' there."

"Yes, rather!" gasped Howard. Jimmy Silver winked at his comrades.

"Done!" he said. "It's a go!"

The Fistical Four dismounted as the hill grew steeper, and wheeled their machines up. Beyond lay a

long slope for two or three miles. The seven juniors mounted together, and came down the slope with a rush. On the lower level the Shell fellows shot ahead.

Smythe looked back, with a triumphant grin.

"Beatin' them!" he gasped.

"What-ho!" breathed Tracy.

The Fistical Four rode on a dozen yards or so behind the nuts of the Shell.

"Take it easy here for a bit," said Jimmy Silver. "We've got a bigger hill ahead of us after another mile, and we don't want to do too much walking up. Let dear old Adolphus think he's bagged a win."

"Ha, ha!"

The Shell fellows kept ahead, occasionally turning their heads and making mocking gestures at the heroes of the Fourth. They were feeling very pleased with themselves at giving such hefty cyclists as the Fistical Four a lead.

At the foot of the next hill Smythe & Co. dismounted to wheel up. Jimmy Silver & Co. came pedalling on.

"Busted already, Smythey?" grinned Lovell. "Good-bye!"

"Good-bye-ee!" sang Jimmy Silver.

And the Fistical Four shot ahead, pedalling up the acclivity on a low gear. Smythe stared after them, and panted.

"The beasts! They seem as fresh as paint. They were only pullin' our leg, the cads! Oh, dash this hill!"

"Blow it!" groaned Tracy. "And there's two more as bad as this before we get to Bunbury."

Jimmy Silver & Co. disappeared over the crest of the hill. They went down on the further side with a merry rush. On the next hill, winding white over the high downs, they looked back. But there was no sign of Adolphus Smythe and his nutty friends.

"They croaked on the last rise!" chuckled Lovell. "Silly asses to think they could ride to Bunbury!"

The Fistical Four rode on merrily. From each hill-top they looked back, but they saw no more of Adolphus & Co. Those nutty youths, drenched with perspiration and in extremely bad tempers, had turned back, and were slowly and painfully grinding home to Rookwood. Adolphus Smythe had over-estimated his powers, as he often did.

But even the hardy chums of the Fourth were ready for a rest, when they pedalled into Bunbury at last.

The four bikes were put up at the railway-station, and the chums of the Fourth made their way to the Ring.

It was easy enough to find that building, which was in the High Street of Bunbury, and was adorned with flaming posters, giving pictorial representations of the terrific combats that had—or hadn't—taken place in the Ring.

The Saturday afternoon show was evidently popular, for the Fistical Four found a good crowd proceeding in the same direction. Judging by the numbers of the crowd, it was going to be a full house.

As they wedged in the crowd, they heard a good deal of discussion on the subject of the forthcoming encounter.

The young boxer who was known as the Lamb was booked to stand up to the Bunbury Pet, a local celebrity. And the Pet was plainly the favourite. The Lamb, it appeared, was a stranger from afar, and, though known to be a good man was not personally known in Bunbury. And the loyal Bunburians backed up their local champion to a man.

Jimmy Silver & Co. passed in with the crowd, and secured good seats. There was a raised and roped ring, where the glove-fight was to take place, as yet untenanted. Jimmy Silver glanced rather sharply over the crowded audience. Although there was no harm in the show, there was no telling what view the Head might take if he knew the juniors had visited it. But Jimmy saw no face that he knew.

"Too far from Rookwood for anybody to be here that knows us," said Lovell. "And Carthew doesn't know we were bound for Bunbury. Besides, I shouldn't mind anybody knowing we came here."

Jimmy nodded, and dropped back into his seat.

"Least said soonest mended, all the same," he answered. "I only hope Carthew hasn't got it out of Muffin."

"Oh, bother Carthew!" said Lovell carelessly. "Here they come! That big chap is the Pet, I suppose."

"Nearly twice as big as the other fellow!" commented Jimmy. "They're not the same weight, by any means. Blessed if I should like to stand up to those leg-of-mutton paws."

"The Lamb looks game, though," said Lovell, with the air of a connoisseur.

The juniors looked with a good deal of interest at the Lamb.

He was a young man; he did not look over twenty-five at the most. In the scanty attire of the ring, his well-developed limbs showed off well; he was a picture of grace and physical development. His face was handsome, with a frank expression on it that was very pleasing, and it bore no signs whatever of his peculiar profession. The Bunbury Pet was of a larger and coarser mould, and he certainly was not pretty to look at, with his square jaw and a nose that had been broken at some stage in his pugilistic career.

There were evident signs of swank in the manner of the Pet, as he grinned to his friends and enthusiastic backers in the front rows. Evidently the Pet was expecting to knock out his opponent before the stipulated ten rounds were up.

But there was a cool and quiet confidence in the Lamb that impressed some of the more critical of the spectators.

"He looks a good man," was Jimmy Silver's comment. "I shouldn't be surprised if he pulls it off."

"I believe there's a purse of fifty guineas on it," remarked Lovell. "I-I hope there won't be any damage done."

Jimmy Silver grinned. Lovell's misgiving was coming rather late in the day. It was very possible for a glove-fight to degenerate into sheer brutality; and if that happened, certainly the chums of Rookwood did not want to be present. But the clear, frank, handsome face of the Lamb was reassuring. He looked like a man who would play the game straight in any circumstances.

"Seconds out of the ring!"

There was a hush.

"Time!"

And the fight began.

The 4th Chapter.

Something Like a Surprise!

Jimmy Silver & Co. watched with keen interest.

Somehow, they felt their sympathies go out to the handsome young boxer who was called the Lamb, and whose name they did not know. Perhaps it was because the rest of the crowd backed the Bunbury Pet.

In the first few rounds the "gentleman boxer" was holding his own well, and most of the punishment was taken by the Bunburian. The Pet's eyes were gleaming now; he was beginning to look "ugly." In the fifth round he forced the fighting, and there were thudding blows. But for the gloves severe damage would have been done, and even with the gloves the blows told heavily. The Pet was aiming at a knock-out, but he never succeeded in getting his lithe and nimble adversary just where he wanted him. Once, when the Lamb was almost cornered, a light spring saved him, and the Bunbury Pet whirled clumsily after him, gritting his teeth.

But the young boxer was the first to go to grass, in the seventh round. The Pet grinned down at him while the count was taken.

But the Lamb was on his feet at six, and stalling off the fierce attack of the Pet, barely holding his own till the call of time gave him a much-needed respite.

"That was a close thing for our man!" murmured Lovell.

"A miss is as good as a mile," remarked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, rather! Bet you he comes up smiling!"

Lovell was right. The Lamb stepped up briskly from his corner at the call of time, seemingly as fresh as paint.

The eighth round was hammer-and-tongs, and close on the call of time the Lamb went down again under a terrific drive.

Arthur Edward Lovell looked quite grave.

"If he walks on after that he's a good man," he said.

And the Lamb did walk on, for the ninth round, met by a grinning Pet. The Bunbury man was quite confident now, and sure of victory.

For a full minute the young boxer was busy stalling him off, and then of a sudden came a kaleidoscopic change. The Lamb's right got him, crashing right on the mark, and the Bunbury Pet went down as if he had been shot. There was a loud hum in the audience. Anxious eyes fixed on the local champion as the count was taken.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—"

The Bunbury Pet made an effort.

But he sank back again helplessly. That terrific blow had fairly knocked him out, and the Pet was done.

"Eight, nine—"

The Lamb waited quietly.

"Out!"

There was a loud buzz, and some cheers for the winners. The Fistical Four cheered heartily, quite relieved at the victory of the man they had honoured with their allegiance. So vigorous was their cheering, indeed, that it attracted a glance from the Lamb himself, and the young boxer smiled.

"Well, it was a good show," said Lovell, as the juniors struggled out in the crowd. "Worth biking over for—what?"

"Oh, quite!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Only we've got to get home again," said Newcomb. "Twenty miles home—"

"Nineteen and a half."

"Oh, rats!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. returned to the station for their bicycles, and mounted for the ride home to Rookwood.

The ride to Bunbury had been more downhill than up. Consequently the ride home to Rookwood was more uphill than down. Whether the distance was twenty miles, or only nineteen and a half, there was more of it than the chums of the

"There'll be a holy row!" said Raby. "Dashed unlucky that our new Form-master is coming this evening, too."

"Can't be helped!" grunted Lovell.

"I wonder what Dalton's like!" said Jimmy Silver. "May be an awfully decent chap, you know."

"And he mayn't!" growled Raby.

"May be another beast like Cutts."

"My hat! Let's hope not."

"Oh, don't chin so much!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Put your breath into your biking!"

"Rats!"

There was no doubt that the Fistical Four were fatigued, and perhaps tempers were growing a little tart in consequence. And they were very hungry. They left Latham behind, and pedalled through Rookham, and then on to Coombe. They were glad to find themselves in Coome Lane at last, with Rookwood School ahead of them.

"Eight o'clock!" said Jimmy Silver, as they passed through the village. "Great pip!"

"Can't be helped!"

"Only another mile now, thank goodness!"

"Only three-quarters!" said Lovell.

"Bow-wow!"

The chums glided on towards the school, their lamps gleaming out through the spring evening. Lights

For they knew that face!

Only a few hours before they had seen it—when the young man was very differently clad!

"Silver, Raby, Lovell, Newcome!" mumbled old Mack. "These four is in your Form 'ere, Mr. Dalton, sir."

Jimmy Silver & Co. fairly fled. They rushed their bikes away, leaving the young master staring after them. He had been going to speak, but they did not wait for him to speak. What had happened had astonished them so much that they wondered whether they were dreaming.

They did not speak till they reached the bike shed. There, instead of putting up their bikes at once, they blinked at one another.

"It—it—it's not possible!" stammered Lovell.

"You—you saw—"

"Yes, but—"

"Dalton!" said Jimmy Silver

dazedly. "It's the new master, right enough. Old Mack called him Mr. Dalton! And he—he—he's—"

"The Lamb!" breathed Newcome.

"The boxer!" stammered Lovell.

"It ain't possible—we're dreaming!

How—how could he be the Lamb—

and Dalton—"

"It's a giddy resemblance," said Raby.

"One of those mysterious

resemblances you read about, you know."

"It must be!"

Jimmy Silver shook his head. He was amazed, almost dumbfounded, but he knew that his eyes had not deceived him.

"No good blinking the facts, you fellows," he said. "It's the Lamb—the man we saw fighting at Bunbury—and it's Mr. Dalton, the new master of the Fourth at Rookwood. And—and—goodness knows what it all means, but I think that the less we say about it the better. The Head can't know! But he's all right; he looks all right. This is a case, my infants, where silence is golden."

His chums agreed that it was; and in quite a dazed state of mind they put up their machines, and walked away to the School House.

The 5th Chapter.

A Secret to Keep!

The end study in the Fourth Form passage was rather crowded while the Fistical Four had a very late tea—or early supper. Most of the Classical Fourth knew where they had been that afternoon, and wanted to know all about it. Jimmy Silver & Co. were called upon to describe the fight at the Bunbury Ring in full detail. They obliged; but there was one piece of information that they kept very carefully to themselves; and that was the fact that in Mr. Dalton, the new master of the Rookwood Fourth, they had recognised the "gentleman boxer" of Bunbury. Some instinct warned them that that was not a topic to be discussed up and down the school. Mr. Dalton's affairs were no business of theirs, and they did not want to start what would have amounted to a scandal, about a master who had arrived at the school only that day.

Not that Jimmy Silver & Co. thought any the worse of a Form-master who was a boxer, too. They were rather inclined to admire him on that account. They had admired the Lamb for the splendid and plucky fight he had put up at Bunbury. They did not cease to admire him when they found that the same man was their new Form-master. But they realised that Mr. Dalton could not possibly want it to be known at Rookwood.

Doubtless, he had supposed that, at such a distance from the school, his exploits at Bunbury would be quite unknown and unsuspected at Rookwood. So they certainly would have been but for Arthur Edward Lovell's brilliant idea of a forty-mile cycle spin that afternoon. And the Fistical Four were rather sorry now that they had undertaken that spin. They had a secret to keep—and keeping a secret was not a pleasant business.

"By the way, the new master's come," Mornington remarked, in a pause of the talk about the fight at Bunbury.

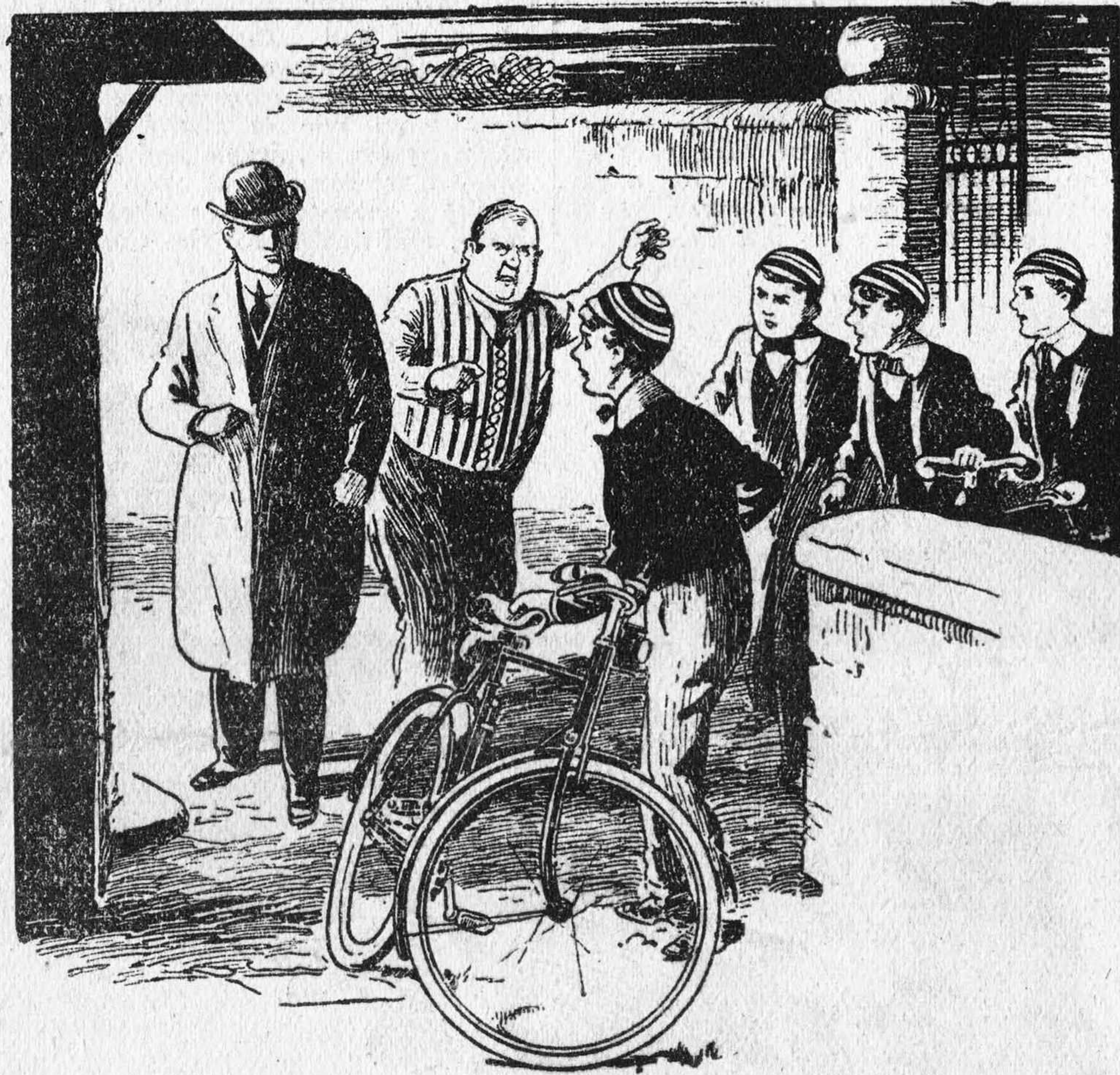
"We've seen him," said Jimmy Silver. "He—he came in just when we did."

"Looks a decent chap," said Morny. "I rather like his looks, in fact. A bit more athletic than old Bootles was."

"Yes, rather!" chuckled Lovell. "Fancy old Bootles standing up to the Pet—!" He checked himself abruptly as Jimmy Silver stamped on his foot under the table.

"What's that?" asked Mornington, staring at Lovell.

"Oh, n-n-nothing!" stammered Arthur Edward.



RECOGNITION! Jimmy Silver & Co. stared. For as the light fell upon their new master's face they recognised him as the victor in the contest they had just witnessed at the Bunbury Ring!

Fourth wanted on the way home. But they pedalled away manfully, up hill and down dale.

"Late for calling-over, anyhow," remarked Newcome.

"We've been late for call-over before," grunted Lovell. "Don't croak!"

"Keep smiling," said Jimmy Silver. "My hat, though, I shall be glad to get in to tea."

The chums of the Fourth had not stopped for tea at Bunbury. Without that it was only too clear that they would be late home. They refreshed themselves with chunks of toffee as they rode; but they thought of tea, and new-laid eggs and ham, in the end study at Rookwood, with a deep yearning. But after the feast came the reckoning. They had had their entertainment, and now it was time to pay the piper. They rode on resolutely as the dusk descended over the downs.

"Might have taken the train," Newcome remarked, when they stopped to light up. "That would have landed us at Coombe by this time."

"Who's got tin to waste on railway fares?" grunted Lovell. "What's the good of bringing a bike, and carting it home by train, anyhow?"

"I'm jolly tired!"

"Oh, stick it out!"

"I am sticking it out, ain't I?" said Newcome, rather tartly. "I'm not asking you to give me a lift, like Tubby Muffin!"

"Easy does it!" murmured Jimmy Silver soothingly. "Keep smiling, you know."

The Fistical Four rode on again, with their lamps burning. They came through Latham at last; already later than the hour for locking the gates at Rookwood.

from a vehicle ahead, which they were overtaking, caught their eyes, as they drew near the school gates.

"That's the station hack," said Jimmy Silver. "Hallo! It's stopping at the school!"

"Somebody from the station for Rookwood—"

"The new master!" exclaimed Raby. "My hat! Ten to one it's Mr. Dalton! We shall hop in along with him."

"I wish to goodness we'd taken the train home!" mumbled Raby.

"Lot of good wishing that now!" grunted Lovell. "Come on! Even if it's the new master, he won't eat us, I suppose!"

They could hear the bell ringing in the porter's lodge within the gates. Old Mack came out to open the gates, and they were wide when the juniors arrived, and jumped off their machines. A young man in an overcoat and bowler hat had stepped from the hack, and was speaking to the porter as the four juniors wheeled their bikes in. They could guess that it was the new Form-master, Mr. Dalton, but they did not want to interview him just then, and they wheeled in rather hastily.

Old Mack looked quickly round.

"Names!" he snapped. "I've got to report yer!"

And Jimmy Silver & Co. had to stop.

The young man in the overcoat glanced at them carelessly as the porter took their names. They looked at him. The juniors were standing in the shadow, but where the new arrival stood, the light from the porter's lodge fell clearly upon him. It showed up a handsome, frank, pleasant face—a face at which Jimmy Silver & Co., after the first glance, stared with a fixed and frozen stare.

"Hallo! Here comes Carthew!"

Carthew of the Sixth came into the end study. He fixed a most unpleasant look on the Fistical Four.

"So you've come back!" he said.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" said Jimmy Silver shortly.

"You've been to Bunbury?"

"No harm in going to Bunbury, I suppose?" snapped Lovell.

"You've been to the prize-fight there."

"There wasn't any prize-fight there, that I've heard of."

"No good prevaricating," said the prefect, with an unpleasant grin.

"Did you go to the Bunbury Ring or not?"

"Yes!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"You saw the fight that's been advertised, between the Lamb and the Bunbury Pet?"

"Just a boxing-match—"

"Did you see it or not?" snapped Carthew.

"Yes."

"I thought so. It's my duty to report this to your Form-master."

"Oh, go ahead!" said Jimmy Silver resignedly.

"You might give the chap a rest on his first evening at Rookwood."

"Follow me!" was Carthew's answer to that.

The Fistical Four followed the prefect from the study. They exchanged rather troubled looks as they went down the staircase. They were being taken to Mr. Dalton, to be reported for their visit to the Bunbury Ring, and Carthew evidently expected to see them condemned and punished.

But Mr. Dalton, their Form-master, was the man who had figured at the Bunbury Ring as a boxer! It was an extraordinary situation. Any other Form-master at Rookwood would probably have been severe upon their escapade. But how could Mr. Dalton be severe, in the circumstances?

That was a hopeful thought. But the situation was full of trouble. Carthew's report would show Mr. Dalton that the juniors had seen him at Bunbury, a circumstance they would have preferred to keep from his knowledge. Possibly, when they were brought specially to his attention, he would recognise them as the school-boys he had glanced at in the Bunbury Ring. He would know that they knew his secret. What would his attitude be then? He might resent their knowledge, he might be angry, he might be uneasy; and what the outcome would be to the unfortunate possessors of his secret could not be foreseen. It was with much uneasiness and trepidation that the juniors followed Carthew to the study that had once belonged to Mr. Bootles, and was now tenanted by Mr. Dalton. Carthew knocked.

"Come in!" came a deep and pleasant voice. Somehow, that voice had an encouraging effect upon the delinquents. There was a very pleasant tone in it that they liked.

Carthew opened the door, and marched in with the juniors at his heels. Mr. Dalton rose at his table. The juniors hardly dared to raise their eyes to the handsome face of the young master.

But though they did not look at him, they were aware that he gave a slight start as they stood before him. He had recognised them as the school-boys he had glanced at at Bunbury that afternoon. The Fistical Four knew it.

What was he going to say? He said nothing, but looked inquiringly at Carthew of the Sixth. That youth had evidently already made the acquaintance of the new master.

"I have brought these juniors to you, sir, as they are in your Form," said Carthew. "I have a rather serious matter to report."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Dalton.

He glanced at the Fistical Four.

"They came in late after lock-up, and missed call-over," said Carthew.

"Ah! Are these the four boys that came in when I did?" said Mr. Dalton.

"Yes, sir," murmured Jimmy Silver.

"Silver, Raby, Newcome, and Lovell!" said Mr. Dalton, who appeared to have a good memory for names as well as for faces.

"Yes, sir," murmured Jimmy.

"That is not all, sir," resumed Carthew, with a glint in his eyes. "It has come to my knowledge, Mr. Dalton, that these juniors have visited a place of very ill-repute this afternoon, nothing less than a den, at Bunbury, where prize-fights take place. They have admitted that they were present at this brutal and degrading fight."

Involuntarily Jimmy Silver smiled, as he wondered how Mr. Dalton would like that description of the contest in which he had been engaged.

"Indeed!" said the new master.

"Are you referring Carthew, to the boxing match at the Bunbury Ring?"

(Continued on page 192, col. 5.)

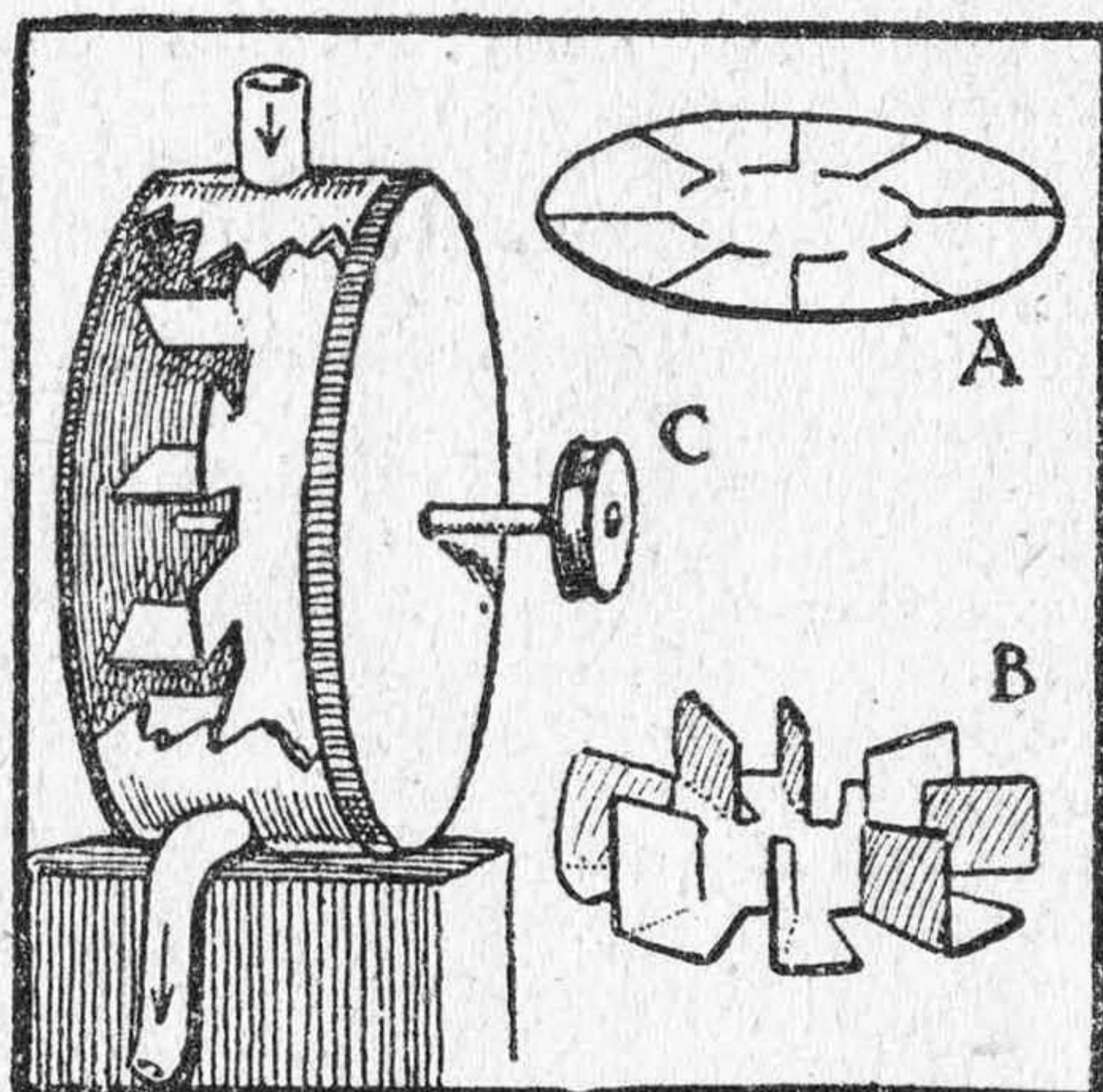


Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

more than a few pence and an hour or so's time, and the uses it may be put to, such as driving models, etc., are without number.

Here is a letter I have received from a Liverpool reader, containing a very useful and explicit little article on the manufacture of puzzles:

"Dear Editor,—I have now been reading the BOYS' FRIEND for about



How a water-motor is made. (See accompanying article.)

eight years, and have greatly appreciated it. During the last few weeks I have been greatly interested in the paragraphs sent in by readers, and this week I am sending one myself on

JIG-SAW PUZZLES.

"Nowadays hundreds of these interesting puzzles are being sold. They are very amusing and entertaining, and can be made by anybody handy with a fretsaw at a very small cost.

The best kind of material is a piece of three-ply wood, which can be bought fairly cheaply. Now get the picture which you are going to use, and glue it on to the wood. When it is quite dry it must be fixed in a

vice—be careful to see that the vice-clamps do not mark the picture—and then, taking the saw, cut the pieces out carefully. These pieces may be made in any shape. At first it is as well to mark out the various shapes lightly in pencil on the picture, and to follow these guide-lines with the saw. Care must be taken to keep the saw cutting square, or the pieces will only fit together from underneath. Do not make the pieces too small or intricate in outline, for, although they make the puzzle harder to put together, they are liable to break very easily. It takes a long time to cut these puzzles out—one of about a hundred pieces takes an hour to do—but when finished they are well worth the time spent upon them."

Sent in by H. Friend, 25, Stoneville Road, Stoneycroft, Liverpool, to whom I am awarding a cash prize of 5s.

THE CUP FINAL.

The teams playing in Saturday's great Cup-Final Tie at Chelsea are the talk of the hour. Do you know them? Would you like their portraits? If so, purchase this week's wonderful Cup-Final number of "Football Favourite," with which is presented a fine photogravure art plate of the rival elevens, size 11ins. by 8½ins., suitable for framing. A more suitable memento of the great tussle cannot be purchased anywhere. Be sure you get this wonderful free gift.

Fretwork is, I know, also a very popular hobby among my chums, and I think the following tip on

FRETWORK

will be hailed with much joy. The broken edges are thinly coated with glue, and held in position by strong thread. Bind very tightly, as with a cricket-bat, and moisten thread with water. This will cause it to shrink and hold the joint tighter. Keep thread damp until the glue has set, and then when the wood is firmly cemented together once more cut away the thread. If, however, the wood is inclined to be soft, this method is rather risky.

The above is sent me from a reader in the provinces, C. Bethwaite, 18, Bertram Street, South Shields, to whom I have sent a cash prize of 5s.

YOUR EDITOR.

"FORM-MASTER AND BOXER!"

(Continued from page 185.)

"Yes, sir; a brutal—"
"You do not seem to be well-informed," said Mr. Dalton calmly. "There is nothing brutal in the matter, Carthew."

The prefect started. This was not the view he had expected the master of the Fourth to take.

"You—you know about the place, sir?" he stammered.

"Quite well. I do not wholly approve of juniors visiting the Bunbury Ring, but no great harm has been done. I am sure they were not conscious of any harm in the matter."

Carthew gritted his teeth. His little scheme for landing the Fistical Four into trouble with their new master at the start was crumbling down about him.

"But—but, sir—" he stammered. "You may leave this matter in my hands, Carthew!" said Mr. Dalton, in a very decided tone.

"Very well, sir!" gasped Carthew. And he quitted the study in so great a rage that he could not trust himself to speak further.

"I shall pass over your late return," said Mr. Dalton. "But it must not occur again. You may go."

"Thank you, sir! G-g-g-good-night, sir!" stammered the Fistical Four.

"Good-night, my boys!" said Mr. Dalton, in his hearty voice.

The Fistical Four left the study. In the passage they looked at one another.

"He knows we know!" murmured Lovell.

"And he wouldn't ask us to keep it dark!" said Raby. "He trusts to our honour. He's a brick!"

"A real brick!" said Newcome.

"Not a giddy syllable about Bunbury!" said Jimmy Silver. "Blessed if I can make it all out. But he's a brick, and we're going to back him up, what?"

To which the Co. responded cheerily:

"Hear, hear!"

THE END.

("Carthew—Detective" is a fine complete yarn in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

NEXT MONDAY'S ISSUE

is something not to be missed on any account. It will be simply packed from cover to cover with serials, completes, articles, etc. To give you some idea of next Monday's budget, here is a list of the chief features:

Grand, long instalments of

"SPORTSMEN, Ltd!"

A great boxing yarn,

By Walter Edwards;

"THE SCHOOLBOY MULTI-MILLIONAIRE!"

A great tale of schoolboy adventure,

By Victor Nelson;

and

"THE ADVENTURES OF JIM HANDYMAN!"

A ripping tale of adventure all over the world,

By Duncan Storm.

Two grand, long, complete yarns, entitled:

"CARTHEW—DETECTIVE!"

A splendid Rookwood tale of Jimmy Silver & Co.,

By Owen Conquest;

and

"FRANK RICHARDS' PARTNER!"

A fine tale of the great North-West,

By Martin Clifford.

The feature entitled, "CHOOSING A CAREER!" will give all those interested full particulars on how to enter

THE MERCANTILE MARINE.

Much useful information on how to make good will be contained in the new series of articles entitled:

"SECRETS OF SUCCESS!"

and there will be heaps of valuable advice in the column devoted to

"HEALTH AND EXERCISE!"

READERS' PARS.

I publish below an interesting little model, the details of manufacture of which have been sent to me by a reader, D. Smith, 7, Palmerston Street, Montrose, Scotland, and to whom I have awarded a cash prize of 5s.

A WATER MOTOR.

Procure a circle of tin about 3in. in diameter, and mark it off in sections, as in sketch "a." Cut with a fretsaw down these lines, and bend sections as shown in sketch "b." In the centre of the tin disc bore a hole to take a spindle, about ½-in. gauge and about 3in. in length. Solder or clamp the disc in the middle of this; see also "b." Now obtain a water-tight tin, some 3½in. in diameter and about 2in. deep. In the lid and bottom of this bore a hole for use as a bearing for the spindle. Bore still two more holes, about a ¼in. diameter, one in the top side of the tin and the other in the bottom. These holes are to take a pipe from a water-tap and another for the waste water to escape by, respectively. Now assemble the various parts. All that is now required to be done is to attach a pulley wheel to one or both ends of the spindle, and to make the whole thing watertight. The water entering by the top pipe and falling on the bent-up sections, turns the disc round, the water escaping by means of the exhaust-pipe at the bottom. The model should be mounted on a wood base, to make it steady when in action, and to give it a finished appearance. The total cost of this little model is probably not

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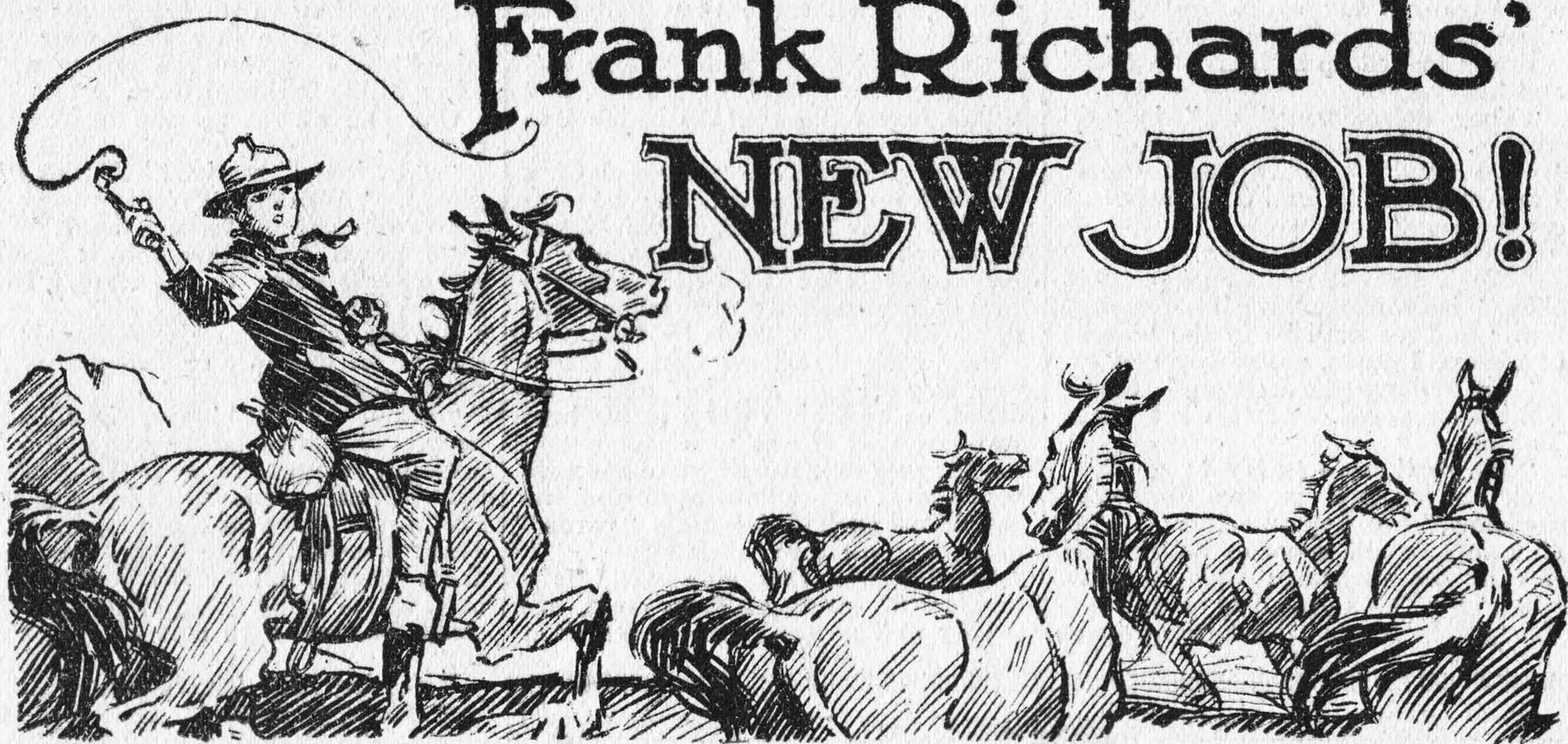
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A SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE YARN OF FRANK RICHARDS.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



Frank Richards' NEW JOB!

The 1st Chapter.

At the Horse Ranch!

"Get down! We're home!" Frank Richards dismounted. A glimmer of moonlight showed up a long building of pipe-logs laid flat, surrounded by a wooden veranda painted green. Outbuildings and corrals loomed dimly out of the shadows, backed by clumps of firs and pines.

Black Pequod, the horse-dealer of Kicking Mule, crashed his riding-whip on the door of the ranch-house. Crash, crash!

A light glimmered through the shutters of a window, and there was a sound of footsteps within.

The horse-dealer crashed his whip again impatiently as the bolts were withdrawn inside.

The pinewood door opened, and a lantern gleamed out into the spring night.

Frank Richards was tired—so tired and sleepy that he found difficulty in keeping his eyes open. His long tramp on the prairies that day had thoroughly fatigued him. He hardly looked at the fellow who opened the door—a squat, burly Indian half-breed.

The latter came out and took Black Pequod's horse, to lead it away to the corral, and the horse-dealer strode into the house, followed by Frank Richards.

He found himself in a room which was evidently the living-room of the horse ranch. An uncovered pinewood table of planks laid on rough trestles stood in the centre, and the chairs were formed simply of up-ended boxes. At one end of the room was a black iron stove. Supper was laid on the table, evidently in readiness for the return of the master of the house.

"I guess you can sit down!" grunted the horse-dealer.

Frank Richards sat on one of the boxes at the table.

"Hungry?"

"Yes."

"Set to, then."

Black Pequod was a man of few words. But Frank was too tired to want to talk or to listen. He started on the bread and cold meat with a keen appetite, following the example of his new employer. The half-breed came back into the room, and bolted the door again.

"Anything more, master?" he asked, looking at the horse-dealer, and taking no notice of Frank Richards.

"No; you can vamoose."

The half-breed disappeared.

Black Pequod ate in grim silence with the appetite of a wolf. Then he lifted a large black bottle from a box, and half-filled a tumbler with potent spirit.

Frank laid down his knife and fork.

"Finished?"

"Yes, thanks!"

"Then get to your bunk. You'll have to turn out at sun-up!"

"I shall be ready." Frank rose to his feet and glanced about him.

"Where shall I sleep, sir?" Black Pequod jerked a stubby thumb in the direction taken by the half-breed.

"You'll find a bunk in the next room, with Pete. You'll bunk down there."

"Good-night, Mr. Pequod!"

The taciturn horse-dealer gave a grunt which might have meant good-night. Frank Richards passed into the next room, which was quite in darkness. He was rather startled to find two luminous eyes fixed upon him from the gloom. Pete, the half-breed, was looking at him over the edge of a bunk.

"You stay here?" he asked.

But Frank Richards was tired. He turned into the bunk in his clothes, and drew the blanket over him. The night was cold. Rough as his quarters were, they were better than the open hillside where he had expected to spend the night.

The half-breed spoke again, but Frank did not answer. He hardly heard him. He was too tired for talk. In a couple of minutes he was deep in slumber, and his eyes did not open again until the morning sun was gleaming down upon the horse ranch of Kicking Mule.

The 2nd Chapter.

Frank Richards' New Job!

"Turn out!"

A sharp, rough voice broke in on Frank Richards' slumbers.

He sat up in the bunk a little confusedly, and blinked round him. The early sun rays glimmered in at a little window. Pete's bunk was empty; the half-breed was already out.

Black Pequod, looking blacker and grimmer than ever by daylight, stood by Frank's bunk, with his Stetson hat on his head and a heavy quirt, or cowboy whip, under his arm. Frank Richards blinked at him, and rubbed his eyes.

"It's daylight!" grunted Gaston Pequod. "No slackers on this ranch, Richards. Turn out!"

"I don't want to slack, sir," answered Frank. "I'm ready to turn out."

"Get a move on, then! You'll have to ride in a quarter of an hour."

"Very well."

The horse-dealer tramped out in his heavy boots, and Frank jumped lightly from the bunk.

A sound sleep had refreshed him, and though he was still feeling the effects of the previous day's fatigue, he was ready for the new day and its work.

Frank did not want to slack, and it was pretty clear that life was strenuous on the Pequod Ranch.

Of washing facilities there appeared to be none, and Frank emerged from the bed-room, and found Pete, the half-breed, in the living-room, grabbing at food on the table and eating a good deal like a hungry coyote. Pete grinned at him.

"Anywhere to wash here?" asked Frank.

"You wash in the creek if you want," answered the half-breed.

"Is that where you wash?"

"No wash."

"Oh!" said Frank.

"You tenderfoot," grinned Pete, "you no waste time, or Black Pequod after you with his stockwhip. Work hard here, you bet. Black Pequod no good temper dis morning; tanglefoot last night."

Pete jerked a brown thumb towards an empty bottle lying among straw and rubbish on the floor.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Frank.

He was half sorry that he had accepted Gaston Pequod's offer of employment on the horse-ranch. But he had accepted it now, and he was determined to see it through. It was not Frank's way to give in because there were difficulties or hardships. And he had to fend for himself now, and earning one's bread in the Canadian West was no sinecure at the best of times.

Mr. Pequod had told him he was to ride in a quarter of an hour, so there was no time to waste.

But Frank was accustomed to his morning tub, and during his tramp on the prairie he had had to miss it, and he missed it very much. So he looked for a towel to take down to the creek. There was no towel to be found in

the bunk-room; but he annexed a strip of rough canvas, and, with it on his arm, hurried out of the house.

The sun was coming up over the Rocky Mountains in the east, and the scene that burst on Frank Richards' view was one of glorious beauty.

During his ride to the ranch with Black Pequod it had been dark, and he had been too fatigued to note his surroundings very keenly. Now in the sunrise he saw them clearly, with a catch of the breath at the beauty of the scene.

Eastward rose range on range of hills, far away towards the snow-capped summits of the Rockies. Belts of firs and pines glimmered in the sun. Here and there a sheet of water or a creek caught the sun, and flashed back the light in waves of gold.

Westward, in front of the ranch-house, the hills fell away to the plains, thick woods interspersed with huge, barren rocks, with here and there a leaping torrent.

Away in a valley he caught a glimpse of the clustered roofs of the camp of Kicking Mule.

The thick grass and saskatoon grew right up to the house, and he was knee-deep in it as he strode out.

Behind the buildings the creek flowed, the bank trampled and muddy from the hoofs of many animals. Two or three savage-looking dogs snarled at him as he passed. A ranch hand, in leather trousers, red shirt, and a Stetson hat, came lurching by, and stared at him, and gave a grunt in response to Frank's cheery "Good-morning!"

He stripped by the creek under a clump of trees, and plunged into the water. It was cold and sharp, but it was delightful to the schoolboy, who had not changed his clothes for several days.

But he did not stay long in the water. He jumped out, rubbed himself dry on the rough canvas, and donned his clothes rapidly. Feeling much better for "tubber," he hurried back to the house, hoping that there was time to snatch breakfast before his duties commenced.

Pete was gone; but there was cold meat and corn-bread on the table, and Frank hurriedly made a meal. The stove was unlighted, and there was no sign of tea or coffee; but luxuries of that kind the schoolboy of Cedar Creek had already learned to do without. He was munching bread and meat as fast as he could, when Black Pequod's voice was heard outside:

"Jonas!"

"Hollo!"

"Where's that boy?"

"Durned if I know!"

"Rouse him out!"

The rough ranch-hand looked into the room. Evidently this was Jonas.

"You're wanted!" he snapped.

"Hustle about, can't you?"

"Right-ho!" answered Frank.

He shoved the remainder of a sandwich into his pocket, and hurried out of the house.

Black Pequod greeted him with a scowl.

"I guess I'm waiting for you!" he snapped.

"I'm quite ready, sir."

"Saddle up, then!"

"Where is my horse?"

"In the corral, you fool!"

"Oh!"

Frank ran into the corral. There were six or seven horses there, running loose. Frank caught one of them easily enough, and he found the necessary trappings in a shed. In record time he had saddled and bridled the horse, mounted, and joined the horse-rancher outside. There was no word of commendation from Black Pequod for his rapidity.

As he came riding up, the rancher started, and Frank rode with him.

The track they followed slanted down towards the valley where Frank had seen the roofs of the camp.

Frank, as he looked about him, wondered at finding a ranch in so hilly and broken a country. It was very different from his uncle's cattle-ranch in the Thompson Valley, where the horses and steers wandered over rolling prairie.

Here the ground was broken and rugged, and rough acclivities were numerous, and the track wound through patches of timber, sometimes blocked by a fallen trunk. In a short time Frank found that they were ascending, and so far as he could see, they were following no track at all.

But it was not his business to ask questions; he followed his employer, without a word.

It was Black Pequod who broke the silence, after an hour's riding.

"Keep your eyes open for the horses."

"The horses?" repeated Frank.

"Yep."

"Very well," said Frank, without clearly understanding.

"We've a dozen to round up," explained Pequod. "They've got to be roused out and driven down to the corral. They're wild and skittish, and you'll have to use your senses—if you've got any! Keep your eyes on the likely places, and don't go to sleep!"

"Very well, sir."

How loose horses were to be roused out of that tangled wilderness was a mystery to Frank Richards. But he soon found that the task, though difficult, was not impossible. He understood that the horses were turned out to feed and wander at will until wanted, and then they had to be tracked and rounded up. The rancher and his companion had ridden ten miles in, what seemed to Frank, a trackless wilderness, when Black Pequod stopped at last, in a patch of swamp, and pointed with his riding-whip. In the soft mud of the swamp horse-tracks, unshod, were clearly visible.

"I guess you know a horse-track when you see it?" he grunted.

"Yes, sir."

"Now look for the critters."

He waved Frank away in a different direction, and in a few minutes he was out of sight.

Frank lost no time.

He had learned a good deal of tracking from his cousin Bob, on the Lawless Ranch; and his knowledge came in useful now. In a short time he came on a bunch of horses feeding by a spring, and he tried his hand at driving them.

He cracked his long whip as he started towards them, and the horses galloped, with Frank behind them.

Two of them broke away and bolted; but with luck, he kept five of them in a bunch, heading them off as they tried to escape, and drove them down the hill.

He had only the vaguest idea of the way he had come from the ranch; but Black Pequod had left him to his own devices, and Frank could only do his best.

He was surprised himself at his success in keeping the five half wild animals together. He drove them before him in a bunch. He found himself following a hoof-marked track that led down through belts of timber and shrub; and he was greatly relieved when Black Pequod emerged into the trail, driving a bunch of horses before him.

It was long past noon now, and the sun was hot, and Frank's face was wet with perspiration. The rancher gave him a glance, and a grunt of approval.

"You're no fool!" he remarked. "Keep the hosses together until I come back!"

"Right!"

Frank had a dozen horses in his charge now, every one of whom was looking for a chance to bolt, so his task was not easy. He had to keep constantly on the alert, riding round the bunch, cracking his whip, and heading them along the trail.

He lunched on the remains of his breakfast, which he was glad he had placed in his pocket; the keen, mountain air made him very hungry.

It was an hour later that Black Pequod rejoined him, with four or five more horses.

What had seemed so difficult to the schoolboy of Cedar Creek was easy enough for the experienced rancher. Black Pequod drove the horses on, and Frank had little to do after that. The sun was sinking in the west when they arrived at the ranch.

"Get the critters into the corral!" grunted Pequod.

"Yes, sir."

The rancher strode into the house, leaving Frank to dispose of the horses.

Jonas came to his help, and the animals were driven into the corral, and the pinewood bars dropped into place. The ranchman grinned at him.

"Tired—hay?" he asked.

"A little!" gasped Frank.

As a matter of fact, he was stumbling with fatigue, after a heavy day's work from sunrise to sunset.

"I guess you'll get used to it," grinned Jonas. "Black Pequod is a hard case, I reckon."

"Is it like this every day here?" asked Frank.

"More or less, I calculate."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What's Mr. Pequod giving you?" asked Jonas.

"He hasn't mentioned wages yet."

"Waal, whatever it is, you'll earn it," said the ranchman. "Black Pequod will see to that. Keep clear of him when he's been at the tangle-foot kid. You'd better."

"Oh!"

Frank Richards stumbled away to the ranch-house. As he came in at the door he was greeted by a loud howl of anguish.

The 3rd Chapter.

Frank Richards—Chore-Boy!

Crack, crack, crack! It was the rancher's stockwhip that was cracking, and it was cracking on the shoulders of Pete, the half-breed.

The wretched chore-boy was dodging round the living-room, yelling, as the horse-dealer whipped him.

Frank Richards stood in the doorway and stared.

"Fast asleep—hay?" roared Gaston Pequod. "Stove out—hay? Where's my supper, you lazy thief?"

Pete yelled dismally by way of reply.

He made a dart for the door, with the angry rancher just behind him, still lashing out with the stockwhip.

Frank had a sickening feeling. He had seen already that his new employer was a hard case, but he had not expected brutality like this. The half-breed stumbled in the doorway and fell, and the heavy lash of the whip smote him as he lay.

"Mr. Pequod, stop!" shouted Frank.

"What?"

"Let him alone."

"Why, you pesky young fool," roared Black Pequod, in surprise and anger, "do you want some yourself?"

Frank's eyes blazed.

Pete stumbled to his feet, and Black Pequod seized him by the shoulders and swung him outside. Then he kicked him furiously.

"Git!" he roared. "Let me see the last of you! Vamoose the ranch, you copper-coloured thief! Git!"

A powerful kick sent the half-breed flying.

He dropped on his hands and knees several yards away, picked himself up, howled, and fled.

Black Pequod turned back into the house with a curse.

His eyes glinted at Frank.

"That pesky scallywag's sacked," he said. "You'll take his place, Richards, and if you don't do better, look out!"

Frank breathed hard.

The horse-dealer was evidently accustomed to laying his stockwhip about the half-breed, when he felt so disposed; but Frank was not quite prepared to stand such treatment as that. Fortunately, Black Pequod threw his whip aside, and dropped into a seat.

"You're doing the chores now," he said. "Get moving! Don't stand there like a stuck pig! You know how to cook, I suppose?"

"I—I'll try."

"Get a move on then, you fool!"

Frank Richards restrained the hot reply that rose to his lips, and set about his new duties. He was fatigued, but it was no time for fatigue. He made his way into the kitchen and started.

Pete had done the "chores" in a very rough-and-ready manner. Frank found everything dirty, and nothing in its place. However, he contrived to turn out a supper at which Mr. Pequod did not grumble. After that, he took a broom and swept up, and washed up in the kitchen. It was ten o'clock when he got to bed at last, tired out.

When Frank turned out in the morning nothing was to be seen of Pete.

That wretched youth was evidently gone for good, possibly not much afflicted at the loss of such a job. Frank Richards had to take on his duties, being now the "chore-boy" of Pequod Ranch. But Frank was no slacker, and he was clearly in his ways, and he turned out a breakfast for the rancher in a style very different from Pete's. After breakfast

he washed and swept, and fetched water from the spring, and set his kitchen in order. He was called out to help with the horses during the morning; but in the afternoon there were no duties for him to perform on the ranch, and he turned out the kitchen, and cleaned everything from beginning to end.

Two or three days passed in like manner, Frank Richards doing his best to settle down to his new job. But he found it difficult enough. A chore-boy's life was not an easy one, but Frank would not have minded that; he was not lazy. But the continual round of hard work from sunrise to sunset was wearing, and the black looks and grunting of the surly horse-dealer did not make the place a cheerful one.

Frank realised that the Pequod Ranch was not likely to be his home for long; but he "stuck it out" courageously, doing his duty with a stout heart. He was learning a good deal, and preparing himself for a better job, at least. And at least he hoped to save a few weeks' wages, to give him a start when he left, and went farther afield to seek his fortune. On Saturday Mr. Pequod handed him six dollars, his pay, and it was agreeable enough to receive cash of his own earning. Late that afternoon Mr. Pequod mounted his horse, and rode away down the valley trail to Kicking Mule.

Jonas, the ranchman, led his horse out of the corral a little later, and stopped at the door to speak to Frank Richards.

"I guess I'm off," he remarked. "You keep the doors and winders bolted, young Richards. I sha'n't be back till Monday; but the boss will be home to-night; and when you let him in you'd better hike off and sleep in the corral-shed."

"What for?" asked Frank.

Jonas grinned. "The boss fills up on Saturday nights," he explained.

"Fills up?" said Frank. "Tanglefoot!" said Jonas. "He will hang on at the Mule Saloon till they close, and then he'll come up the trail seeing red. If you don't want his stock-whip around you, you'd better keep clear of him till to-morrow. You savvy?"

Frank's eyes glinted. "You mean, he will come home drunk?" he asked.

"That's about the size of it; and when he's drunk and ugly, Black Pequod is a galoot to keep away from," said Jonas. "I'm giving you the cinch for your own good. Keep clear of him till he's slept it off, and don't answer a word to anything he says. So-long!"

And, with a nod, the ranchman rode away down the trail, evidently bent on a week-end "bender" in camp.

Frank Richards was left alone.

He was not in a very happy mood. His first job since leaving his home in the Thompson Valley was not a promising one. The thought of the burly, savage-tempered rancher returning late at night, drunk and violent, was dismaying. Frank was strongly tempted to give himself the "sack," and turn his back on the horse ranch there and then.

But a sense of duty to his employer restrained him from taking that step. He made a round of the corrals and enclosures in the red sunset, seeing that the animals were safe; and as darkness came on he went into the house and lighted the lamps. He bolted doors and fastened windows, and then hunted out an old coverless magazine, and sat down by the stove to read until his master came home. As he had to let Mr. Pequod in when he returned, he could not go to bed.

Midnight came and passed, and Frank was asleep in his chair by that time, leaning on the table, his head on his arm.

He was awakened suddenly by a thundering uproar at the door. The butt of a stock-whip was crashing there.

He started up from slumber, and rubbed his eyes.

"Crash, crash!" "Asleep-hay?" roared the voice of Black Pequod outside. "Let me in, you slacking scallywag! Open this door, you pesky vermin!"

Crash, crash!

Frank hurried to the door.

He jerked back the bolts and opened the door, and the rancher was revealed in the lamplight, standing there unsteadily, with a crimson face and ruffled beard, his Stetson hat on the back of his tousled head. His look showed that undoubtedly he had "filled up" at the Mule Saloon.

He gave Frank a savage glare. "Sleeping, hay?" he grunted, as he strode in.

"I fell asleep, Mr. Pequod," answered Frank. "It's very late."

"You'll keep awake next time. Take that!"

"That" was a savage lash of the stock-whip.

The heavy thong struck Frank Richards across the shoulders, and he started back with a cry.

"I guess I'll learn you!" said Black Pequod, and he followed the chore-boy as he retreated, lashing out with the whip.

This was evidently the treatment Mr. Pequod had been accustomed to mete out to Pete, the half-breed, when he was "drunk and ugly." But he had very different material to deal with in this case. Frank Richards darted round the table, his eyes blazing.

"Keep off, you drunken fool!" he shouted.

"What?"

"Stand back!"

With an oath, the horse-dealer lurched round the table after him, lashing out with the stock-whip.

Another and another lash caught the chore-boy of Pequod Ranch. Frank Richards caught up a heavy wooden stool.

"Hands off!" he shouted.

Lash!

Frank hesitated no longer. He hurled the heavy stool fairly at the ruffian. It struck Black Pequod on his broad chest, and the rancher went with a crash to the floor.

The 4th Chapter. A Lesson for Mr. Pequod!

Black Pequod crashed down, the stock-whip falling from his hand. He

savage lashes of the stock-whip. And he realised that this was the end of his job at the Pequod Ranch. Hardships and hard work he did not mind, but this was the limit. He quitted the corral fence at last, and approached the house. Black Pequod had left the door wide open, and Frank could see into the living-room, where the lamp still burned.

There was a gurgling of liquor, and then the crash of a falling bottle. Then he heard the rancher roll over on the floor to sleep.

He stepped into the house. Black Pequod, stretched on a bearskin on the floor, was fast asleep, and he did not move as Frank entered.

Frank watched him for some time in silence.

The sight of a man overcome by liquor was revolting enough. How long the brute would remain asleep Frank did not know; but he knew that when the horse-dealer awakened he would awaken in a savage temper, and ready for any brutal violence. Frank had determined to quit the ranch, but he could not take the trail until the morning. He was not disposed to plunge into the wilderness in the middle of the night.

He went into the kitchen and found a coil of rope, and came back to the living-room.

Then he bent over the rancher, and proceeded to secure him. Pete, the half-breed, certainly would never have ventured to lay hands upon his savage master, but Frank had no hesitation in doing so. He intended to teach Black Pequod a lesson before he left.

He knotted the rope to the rancher's ankles and wrists, and secured it to the legs of the heavy table.

"Will you be quiet, Mr. Pequod?" asked Frank Richards. "I'm going to take the trail in the morning, and I want some sleep."

"Come and loose me!"

"Shut up!"

"I'll skin you! I'll smash you! I'll—I'll—" The horse-dealer spluttered with rage.

"Will you be quiet?"

A torrent of savage oaths answered. Frank Richards slipped from his bunk, took a stock-whip, and went into the living-room, with a grim look on his face. The fastened man on the floor met him with a glare of ferocious rage.

"You're going to keep quiet, Mr. Pequod," said Frank Richards coolly. "Another yell from you, and you get some of your own medicine! Savvy?"

"I—I'll smash you! I'll cut you in pieces! I'll— Yaroooooh!" roared the rancher, as the stock-whip came down on his broad shoulders.

Frank put his beef into that lash, and it hurt. It was some of the horse-dealer's own "medicine," but he did not seem to like it. He struggled with the rope and roared like a buffalo.

"Will you be quiet now?" asked the chore-boy.

Black Pequod was very far from quiet. He roared and struggled, and so great was his strength that he dragged over the heavy table to which he was secured. There was a crash of crockery round him on the planks.

"Very well," said Frank, setting his lips. "You've asked for it, Mr. Pequod, and you're going to get it. You've handed out the stock-whip pretty freely yourself. Perhaps some

Frank Richards laughed. "Do you think I'm duffer enough to trust you?" he said. "You're going to stay like that till morning?"

Frank Richards was soon asleep again, and he slept soundly till the morning sun glimmered in. Whether the horse-dealer slept or not he did not know, and cared little.

In the sunny morning Frank turned out and went down to the creek to bathe, taking no notice of the horse-dealer. He came in and cooked his breakfast in the kitchen, and after disposing of it he brought in breakfast for the rancher, placing it within his reach.

Black Pequod did not touch it. It was Frank he wanted to touch—hard! But the chore-boy was out of his power now.

"There's your rations," said Frank Richards. "I'm going now, Mr. Pequod. I hope you'll treat your next chore-boy a bit more decently. I've done my best to give you a lesson."

Black Pequod gritted his teeth.

"Let me loose, then!" he muttered. "So that you can handle me before I go," said Frank. "Not likely."

"You can't leave me like this!" panted the horse-dealer. "Jonas won't be back till to-morrow."

Frank nodded.

"I'll loosen one of the ropes," he said. "Just enough for you to work one hand free in about an hour. Then you can untie yourself. It will take time. I've put in plenty of knots. It will keep you busy till about noon, Mr. Pequod. While you're busy you can think what a surly brute you are, and make some new resolutions for the future. Savvy?"

A curse was the only reply.

Frank finished his preparations for departure. He had little to carry, and his preparations were few. Then he came back into the living-room and loosened the rope round one of the rancher's wrists. He was very careful not to loosen it too far. He did not want Black Pequod galloping on his trail when he left.

"That will do," said Frank, rising. "You can get that paw loose in about an hour, Mr. Pequod."

"A thousand curses—"

"Hold your tongue! I'm jolly well inclined to give you some more of the stock-whip before I go, anyhow."

The horse-dealer contented himself with a savage glare, and Frank left him.

It was high noon when, at last, the savage horse-dealer was free and able to tramp out of the ranch. By that time Frank Richards was many a long mile away, free as air, and glad enough that he was no longer the chore-boy of Pequod Ranch.

THE END.

("Frank Richards' Partner" is a fine long, complete tale of Frank Richards in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)

"BOYS' FRIEND" and "HERALD" Boys' Heroes Competition No. 12.

In this competition one competitor succeeded in sending in a correct solution of the pictures, and the first prize of £5 has, therefore, been awarded to:

H. W. Bisher, The Nursery, Wickford, Essex.

The three prizes of a Tuck hamper each have been awarded to the following three competitors who each sent in a solution nearest to correct:

Fred Love, 20, New Buildings, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury; A. Royall, 8, Stanley Road, Gellie, Rhondda Glam, Dorset; Jean Wilson, 1, Balgray Terrace, Springburn, Glasgow.

The eight prizes of 5s. each have been awarded to the following, each of whom sent in a solution containing two errors:

Miss Bailey, The Nursery, Wickford, Essex; Stanley Love, 20, New Buildings, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; Mrs. Gibson, 53, Danes Drive, Scotstown, Glasgow; W. Litchfield, 73, Duke Street, Luton, Beds; Vida Love, 20, New Buildings, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; Ada Atthews, 10, Knight Street, Wellingborough; Arthur W. Diver, 55, Rutland Road, South Hackney, E. 9; Mrs. C. Love, 20, New Buildings, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

The following is the correct solution:

The London fireman is admired by both old and young, and belongs to one of the grandest bodies of men to be found anywhere. He is always ready, like the lifeboat man, to answer the call of duty, and his feats of valour have always thrilled the globe.



FRANK RICHARDS INTERVENES! "Mr. Pequod—stop!" shouted Frank, his eyes ablaze with anger. The heavy stock-whip was instantly checked in its downward career, and the hapless Pete staggered back groaning!

sprawled on the pine planks at the chore-boy's feet.

Frank caught up the whip, and tossed it out of the open doorway into the darkness.

Black Pequod sat up unsteadily. The crash of the stool on his chest had hurt him, and he seemed dazed. There was something very like murder in his black eyes as he scrambled up.

Fortunately for Frank, the liquor the horse-dealer had consumed was too much for him. He rolled over again, helplessly, stuttering curses in mixed English and French.

Frank did not linger.

He backed out of the room, his eyes on the ruffian, and stepped out of the ranch-house into the night.

As he went he heard Black Pequod raising himself by clinging to the table. The horse-dealer was on his feet at last, muttering savagely. He lurched out of the house, evidently looking for his rebellious chore-boy; and if his powerful hands had fallen upon Frank Richards then, the chore-boy of Pequod Ranch would have suffered severely. But Frank was safe in the darkness. He crouched by the corral fence, hidden in the shadows, while the intoxicated ruffian lurched and stumbled to and fro in search of him.

The horse-dealer gave it up at last, and stumbled back into the ranch. Frank remained where he was, not in an enviable mood.

His limbs were aching from the

He left a loose length of rope to allow the man free movement; but Black Pequod was securely fastened to the table, and when he came to his senses he would be unable to get on his feet.

Satisfied that he was secure from mischief, Frank Richards went to the bunk-room after locking up, and turned in.

In a few minutes he was fast asleep in his bunk.

It was a couple of hours later that he was awakened by movements in the adjoining room.

He sat up in the bunk, and listened. Black Pequod had come to himself, and was probably astonished to find himself secured like a recalcitrant horse. He struggled and stumbled for some time, and then shouted to the chore-boy.

"Richards!"

"Hallo!" called back Frank.

"Did you tie me up like this, you young scallywag?"

"Yes."

"I guess I'll lambaste you till you can't crawl!" roared the enraged rancher.

"I guess not," answered Frank coolly.

"Come and let me loose!"

"Rats!"

"Wh-a-a-at?"

"You're going to stay like that till morning," answered Frank Richards, "and don't make a row. You're keeping me awake."

A yell of rage was the answer.

of it will do you good. A thrashing may bring you to your senses."

And with that the chore-boy laid on the whip.

The hapless ruffian roared and howled and struggled, dragging the heavy table after him round the room as he strove to escape the lashes. Chairs and boxes and crockery went flying right and left. If the ruffian could have got loose then, the chore-boy of Pequod Ranch would probably have been murdered on the spot. But Frank had done his work well with the ropes, and Black Pequod was quite secure.

So long as the torrent of curses lasted Frank laid on the whip, and the horse-dealer was silent at last, gasping, spluttering, and eyeing the chore-boy with wolfish rage and hate in his eyes.

"That's better," said Frank cheerfully. "Now keep quiet, Mr. Pequod, and I'll leave you alone."

The rancher opened his mouth to hurl out a fresh torrent of curses, but as Frank raised the stock-whip he forbore. Black Pequod was already learning the very necessary lesson of self-control.

Frank Richards returned to the bunk-room, and turned in. A few minutes later he heard the rancher's voice, very subdued now.

"Richards!"

"Well?"

"Come and let me loose, boy! I guess I'll look over what you've done."