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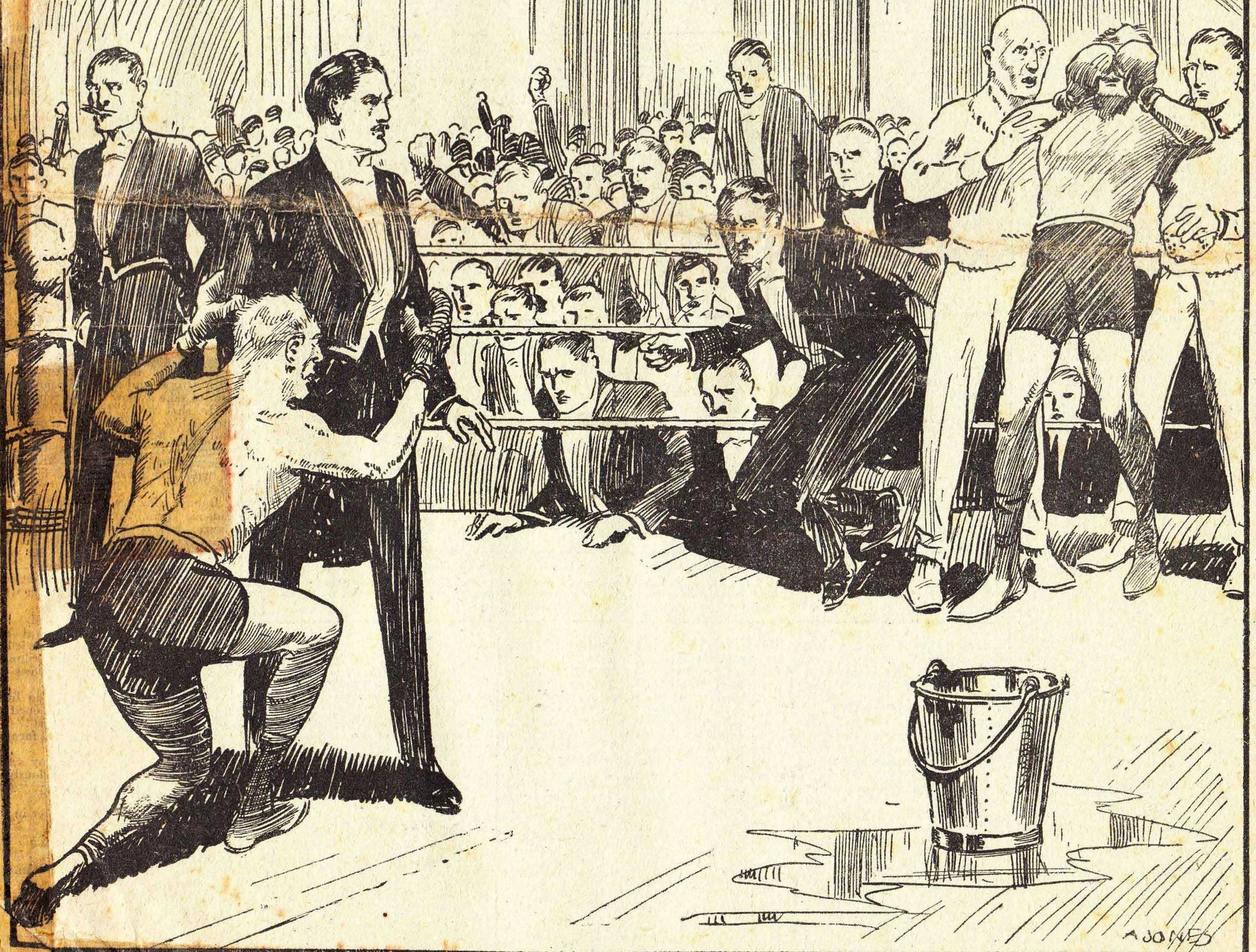
No. 1,039. Vol. XXI. New Series.]

THREE HALFPENCE.

[Week Ending May 7th, 1921.

SPORTSMEN LTD

BY Walter Edwards



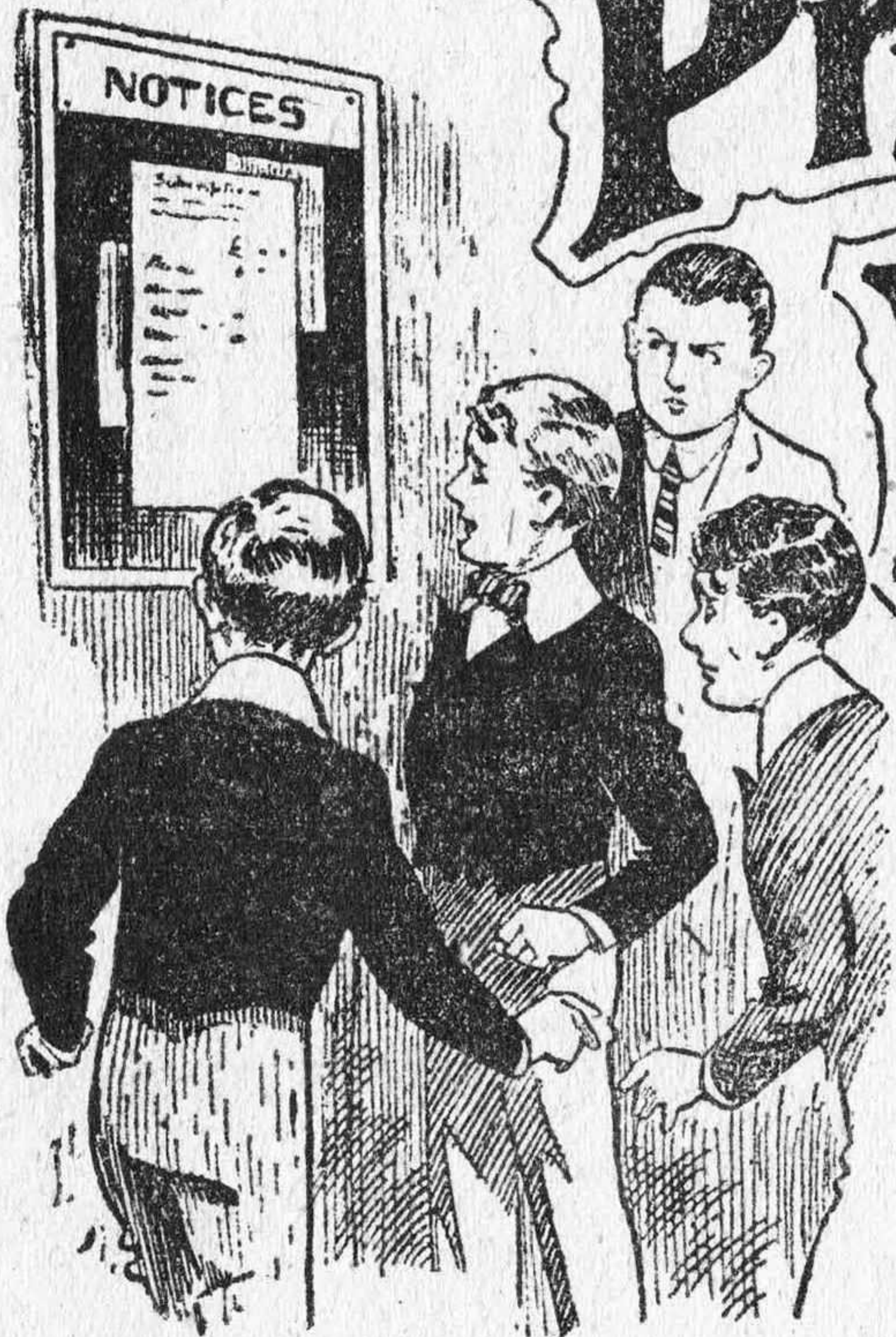
RUSHING THE RING!

When Bunny Scrutton's mysterious attack of blindness became known to the ringside spectators, some dozen of them made a concerted rush for the roped square. Having made his faltering confession, the American cringed back behind the M.C., whining for a mercy which the crowd did not seem likely to dispense. Never before had there been such a scene in all the annals of the exclusive Imperial Sporting Club.

LEE OF MIDDLESEX WRITES FOR YOU NEXT MONDAY!

A SPLENDID LONG TALE OF THE CHUMS OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

Prefect versus Form-Master!



A FINE JIMMY SILVER
.. YARN ..
By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

Very Handsome of Dicky!

"Fifty guineas!"
"Yes!"
"Rats!" said Jimmy Silver & Co., all together.
Tubby Muffin looked indignant. Tubby always was indignant when his statements were doubted. His statements, as a rule, were not worthy of much credence. But Tubby was indignant all the same.
"If you fellows don't believe me—" he said warmly.
"Of course we don't!" said Jimmy Silver, with a look of surprise. "Does anybody—ever?"
The statement was too steep for them.

Certainly, Mr. Dalton, the new master of the Fourth, was just the man to make the biggest contribution he could afford to a fund for a man disabled in the war—an old Rookwood man. But fifty guineas was a subscription far beyond the means of the average Form-master. Masters' salaries at Rookwood were on a generous scale; but they did not allow of the disbursement of sums like that for charitable objects.

Valentine Mornington of the Classical Fourth, lounged into the study.

"Heard the latest about Dicky?" asked Morny.
"Tubby's got a yarn about him," said Jimmy Silver. "He's dreamed that Dicky has put up fifty guineas for Captain Smith."

"It's true!"
"What?" exclaimed the Fistical Four, in chorus.

"Right as rain!" said Mornington. "I've seen it in the list. Isn't it simply ripping of Dalton? Must make a thumpin' big hole in his quarter's salary!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared.
"Dalton's really put up fifty guineas!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.
"He has. And all the fellows think it's rippin', and so it is! Somebody says that Dalton was out in Flanders with Smith, and was with him when he was knocked out," said Mornington. "He's standin' by an old comrade-in-arms, it seems. But it's rippin' of him to do it to a tune like that—what?"

"Splendid!" said Jimmy. "I'm jolly well going to see the list!"
The Fistical Four left their tea half-finished, in their eagerness to confirm this new circumstance to the credit of Dicky. They crossed the quadrangle, and turned into Little Quad, upon which the school library opened. Carthew of the Sixth was crossing Little Quad in the same direction.

They followed the prefect into the library.
Evidently Carthew had heard the news of Mr. Dalton's munificent subscription to the fund, and was curious to see whether it was true.

It was true enough. The list was open for all to see. And there was the name of Richard Dalton, with the sum of £52 10s. attached.

"There it is as large as life!" said Lovell. "Tubby was telling the truth for once! Good old Dicky!"

"Isn't it ripping?" exclaimed Raby.
"Isn't he a brick?"

Carthew scowled. His feelings towards the new master of the Fourth were bitter enough; he had had trouble more than once already with Mr. Dalton, though the latter had been only a week or so at Rookwood. Mr. Dalton was very severely down

upon Carthew's bullying proclivities, and the bully of the Sixth had been brought up sharp on several occasions. Jimmy Silver & Co. piled on their enthusiasm a little, for the especial benefit of Carthew.

The prefect looked at them sourly.
"Isn't it topping of him, Carthew?" asked Jimmy Silver affably.

And his chums grinned.
"Jolly queer for a new master to whack out a sum like that!" said Carthew, with a sneer. "I wonder where he got it?"

And he lounged away, with a dark brow. Anything that added to the popularity of Richard Dalton was like gall and wormwood to his enemy, the bully of the Sixth.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.
"The sneering rotter!" he muttered. "Does he think that Dicky picked it out of a pocket, the rotter?"
"It is a bit queer, though," said Lovell. "I fancy everybody will be surprised at Dalton whacking out such a sum. I haven't heard that he's a wealthy man."

"He isn't!" said Jimmy.
"Fifty guineas is a lot of money!" Jimmy Silver gave a start, as a new thought flashed into his mind.
"Fifty guineas!" he ejaculated. "I've got it!"

"You've got it?" exclaimed Raby.
"Yes, I think so."
"Whack it out among your pals, then!" grinned Raby. "It will see us through the rest of the term!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fathead!" said Jimmy Silver. "I mean I've thought it out. I know where Dicky got fifty guineas—at least, I think I do."

"Where?" demanded his three chums, together.

"At the Bunbury Ring!" said Jimmy. "Don't you remember—the fight between the Lamb and the Bunbury Pet was for a purse of fifty guineas, and Mr. Dalton won. He bagged the purse, of course. That's where it came from. And he's stood the whole of it to this giddy fund."

"Great Scott!"
"You've hit it, Jimmy!"

"Isn't he a corker?" said Jimmy Silver. "By Jove! I'd like to tell it to all Rookwood! By Jove, I would! But we've got to keep it dark about Dicky boxing at Bunbury. But isn't he a real white man?"
"Hear, hear!"

The Fistical Four strolled out of the library much elated with their discovery. They had no further doubt on the subject. They had seen Mr. Dalton knock out the Bunbury Pet in the boxing-ring at Bunbury, and they knew he must have received the winner's purse of fifty guineas. The sum was the same—it was clear that the fighting Form-master had handed out the whole of it in a subscription for the benefit of an old comrade "crooked" in the war.

And if anything had been needed to add to the Fistical Four's great admiration of their new master, that would have done it. They passed Mr. Dalton on their way back to the School House, and "capped" him with deep respect. Mr. Dalton gave them a nod and a kind smile—probably quite unconscious of the fact that he had assumed heroic proportions in the eyes of the enthusiastic juniors.

"He's a real white man, and no mistake!" Jimmy Silver remarked, as he sat down to finish his tea in the

end study. "And if that cad Carthew tries any more of his tricks against him we'll jolly well drop on him like a ton of bricks!"

To which the Co. responded heartily:

"Hear, hear!"

The 2nd Chapter.

Carthew Scores!

On Saturday afternoon Jimmy Silver & Co. were "keeping an eye" on Mark Carthew, prefect of the Sixth Form. The Fistical Four ought really to have been attending to cricket practice, but on that especial half-holiday they were more interested in Mark Carthew.

Not that Carthew, in himself, was an interesting object. Generally, the less the juniors saw of him the better they liked it.

But they suspected Carthew. They were aware that he was against their hero, Dicky Dalton. They knew that he had started for Bunbury the previous Wednesday in the hope of discovering something there to Dicky's discredit. They had stopped him on that occasion. They were quite prepared to stop him again, even if it led to another licking for handling a prefect.

Carthew did not know that Mr. Dalton had figured in the Bunbury Ring as a boxer. He only knew that the Form-master had been present on the occasion of the fight. But he had vague suspicions of something more.

He had found out so much by eaves-dropping. And he knew the Fistical Four were keeping something back, and he was keenly desirous to know what it was, having no doubt that it was something to Mr. Dalton's discredit. It was at Bunbury that Carthew hoped to find out the whole of the facts, whatever they were. And, once he began inquiries in the spot, it was only too probable that he would be able to identify Mr. Dalton with the "Lamb" who had knocked out the Bunbury Pet. That was what Jimmy Silver feared.

The Fistical Four admired Mr. Dalton for his boxing abilities. But they realised that the Head of Rookwood was certain to take quite a different view.
Indeed, they rather shuddered to think of what the Head might say and do if he learned that one of his Form-masters had appeared in a ring as a pugilist.

True, it had happened before Mr. Dalton's arrival at Rookwood, but only a few hours before. Dr. Chisholm's view of the matter was likely to be a very severe one. It might even lead to Mr. Dalton's departure from Rookwood—a prospect that dismayed the chums of the Fourth.

So, at any risk, they were ready to "handle" Carthew if he started on the track of investigation again.
After dinner that day, when Carthew strolled into the quadrangle, four juniors strolled after him.

When he went round to the bike-shed, four juniors also went round to the bike-shed.
When Carthew wheeled out his machine, four juniors wheeled out their machines, sticking to him like shadows.

Carthew wheeled his bicycle into the road, apparently unconscious of this faithful following. Four juniors wheeled bicycles into the road also. And when he stopped, they stopped.

Then Carthew of the Sixth looked at them, with a bitter smile.

"Following me again—what?" he said.

"Oh, we're going for a spin," said Jimmy Silver.

"On the road to Bunbury, I suppose?"

"Possibly."

"With the idea of bagging my bicycle and leaving me stranded, as you did before?" said Carthew.

"When a fellow goes spying—" began Lovell hotly.

Jimmy Silver made a sign to his chum to be silent.

"I quite get on to the idea," said Carthew, with a smile. "But I fancy you will be nipped in the bud this time! Mack!" He called to the porter. "Mack, will you ask Mr. Dalton to step here? He's in the quad."

"Suttlingly, sir!" said Mack.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at one another with rather startled glances. They had not expected this move on the part of the enemy.

For once the chums of the end study were rather nonplussed.

Certainly they could not tell Mr. Dalton that they were "looking after him"—and certainly he would be wrathful, at least, at the idea of being taken under the protection of Fourth Form juniors if he knew it. The Fistical Four were at a loss, and they were feeling very uncomfortable when Mr. Dalton appeared in the gateway.

"Excuse my troubling you, sir?" said Carthew politely.

"Certainly!" said Mr. Dalton, glancing at the prefect and then at the juniors. "What is the matter, Carthew?"

"Last Wednesday, sir, I reported these juniors for collaring my bike and leaving me to walk home. I have reason to believe that they intend to play the same trick this afternoon," said Carthew calmly. "They have started following me."

Mr. Dalton frowned.

"Silver, is it possible—"

"We—we—" stammered Jimmy.

"Are you following Carthew?" demanded the master of the Fourth.

"Ye-es, sir!"

"How dare you, Silver? I caned you on the previous occasion! Have you no respect for a prefect of the Sixth Form, or for your Form-master?" exclaimed Mr. Dalton sternly.

"A fellow shouldn't go spying—" blurted out Lovell.

"What?"

"He's going to Bunbury—"

"Shurrup!" whispered Jimmy Silver.

A slight change came over Mr. Dalton's face. He fixed a very penetrating glance upon Mark Carthew.

"You are going to Bunbury, Carthew?" he asked.

"I may go in that direction, sir," answered Carthew coolly. "I suppose it does not concern these boys of the Fourth Form?"

"Quite so," said Mr. Dalton quietly. "Silver, and the rest, you will immediately go in, and remain within gates for two hours."

"Oh, sir!"

"If there is any interference with Carthew, I shall punish you with the greatest severity."

Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged hopeless looks, and quietly wheeled in their machines. The pursuit of Carthew that afternoon was nipped in the bud. The scheming prefect had completely checkmated Dicky's protectors!

"You are going for a rather long spin, Carthew," Mr. Dalton remarked, his eyes on the prefect.

"Yes, sir," said Carthew calmly.

"I may drop in at Bunbury. There's a show to-day at the Bunbury Ring."

"I am not sure that the Head would approve of your visiting the Bunbury Ring, Carthew."

"Why not, sir?" said Carthew, with a smile. "Silver and his friends visited the place last week, and you did not punish them when I reported it. And, according to Silver, you yourself were there at the same time. I do not set up to be more particular than a Form-master, sir."

Mr. Dalton compressed his lips hard.

"I have forbidden the juniors to visit the place again," he said. "I shall not interfere, however, with a prefect."

He turned on his heel and walked away.

Carthew grinned as he mounted his bicycle. He felt that he had scored this time over the man he chose to regard as his enemy. It was in quite a cheery mood that Carthew of the Sixth pedalled away on the long road to Bunbury.

The 3rd Chapter.

Carthew's Triumph!

"You slackers coming down to cricket?"

Conroy, the Australian, asked the question as he came on the Fistical Four in the quadrangle.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had put up their bicycles; they had no use for them now. The ride to Bunbury was off—very much so. An hour had passed since Carthew had started, and following him now was out of the question. They could not disobey the direct orders of Mr. Dalton, even for his own sake.

The chums of the Fourth were not feeling happy or comfortable. Conroy eyed them with a grin.

"You look like a set of merry moulting fowls!" he remarked. "Anything happened?"

"Lots of things," grunted Jimmy Silver. "But we may as well come down to the cricket. We've got to lick you kids into shape for beating the Moderns next week."

And the Fistical Four repaired to Little Side. They could do nothing for "Dicky," and there was no use in wasting time. And the Co. soon forgot their disappointment in the keen interest of cricket.

But when the cricket was over and they came in to tea, they thought of Carthew again, and his ride to Bunbury.

"After all," remarked Lovell, as he cracked his egg in the end study—"after all, it's a week since the fight at the Bunbury Ring, and Carthew mayn't find anything out about Dicky. He was a stranger in the town. He came down from London for the fight."

"And came on here afterwards," said Raby. "My hat! Fancy going in for a fight only a few hours before he was due to turn up at Rookwood as the new Form-master!"

"Well, the date of the fight was arranged, most likely, a good way in advance," remarked Jimmy Silver.

"If Dicky was booked for it he couldn't help it; and I suppose he bagged the appointment at Rookwood as soon as he had a chance, and so the dates coincided. But the Head would jump if he knew; I can't help thinking that. It would be awfully unpleasant for Dicky. The Head might call it a prize-fight, the same as Carthew does."

"It might mean the boot for Dicky!" Raby observed.

"It might easily."

"And that cad's over there this afternoon nosing it all out!" said Newcome. "And Dicky himself called us off from stopping him. I—I suppose he really had no choice, though."

"But he mayn't spot anything about the fight," said Lovell. "He only knows that Dicky was at the Ring the same time that we were there. So were a thousand other people."

"He suspects more, though," said Jimmy Silver. "He doesn't know what the secret is, but he knows there's a secret; and when he hears that the fight was for fifty guineas, he may jump to the truth, knowing that Dicky has put up fifty guineas for Captain Smith's benefit."

"Rotten!" growled Raby.

"We can't do anything now," said Lovell. "Pass the jam."

"We'll see Carthew when he comes in, though," said Jimmy Silver. "We'll find out whether he's made a discovery, anyhow."

But it was a long time before Carthew of the Sixth came in.

He did not turn up at evening call-over, as the juniors noticed. Prefects had the right to cut call-over, so Carthew's absence was not specially remarked upon, excepting by the Fistical Four. Evidently the slacker of the Sixth had found the long ride a laborious one.

After call-over, Jimmy Silver & Co. hung about downstairs, keeping an eye open for Carthew. He came in at last, looking rather dusty and extremely tired. But there was a satisfied expression on his face, in spite of his fatigue, and Jimmy Silver's heart sank as he noted it.

The cad of the Sixth had made a discovery. His eyes fell on the Fistical Four, and he smiled—a smile that was full of malicious triumph.

"Hallo! You're late, Carthew!" remarked Bulkeley of the Sixth, coming along. "Had a long spin?"

"Yes, as far as Bunbury," said Carthew, with an eye on the Fistical Four. "Jolly long ride, but I've had quite a good time."

"Anything special on in Bunbury, then?"

"Yes. I've heard a lot about a big fight that took place there last week—the Lamb and the Bunbury Pet," said Carthew.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath. Carthew could see that the juniors were drinking in every word.

their varying expressions afforded him a keen satisfaction.

Bulkeley, who did not notice that by-play at all, was puzzled.

"Not much interest in a fight that took place a week ago, is there?" he asked.

"In this instance, yes," answered Carthew, with a smile. "The fight was between a local champion and a visiting boxer from London for a purse of fifty guineas. The Lamb, from London, won the trick. Nobody seemed to know what the Lamb's name was, but I was lucky enough to bag a copy of the local paper with a photograph in it."

"Oh!" breathed Jimmy Silver.

"An enterprising local photographer snapped the Lamb," continued Carthew. "It was put in the 'Bunbury Record,' along with that of the Pet. Rather lucky, wasn't it?"

"I don't quite see it," answered the Rookwood captain, more and more perplexed. "You're not specially interested in the Lamb, are you?"

"No end!" answered Carthew. And he walked on to his study, leaving Bulkeley staring.

Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged sickly looks as Bulkeley went on his way, and Carthew disappeared into his study.

The worst had happened; or, rather, worse than the worst the Fistical Four had anticipated.

Carthew had not only found out the truth, but he had brought proof of it home to Rookwood, in the shape of the photograph published in the Bunbury paper.

"What awful luck!" muttered Jimmy Silver. "I—I never even thought of anything of that kind."

"We could have stopped him," muttered Lovell. "But—but Dalton did—"

"The game's up!" said Raby miserably. "That rotten cad will show the picture all over Rookwood. No one could mistake Dicky's face. There ain't a lot of faces like Dicky's."

Jimmy Silver set his teeth.

"He was just rubbing it in because we could hear him," he said. "But—but the cad isn't going to have it his own way. He hasn't shown the paper yet, and he's not going to. We'll stop him—"

"He could get another copy," said Raby, shaking his head. "He's done us, Jimmy."

Tubby Muffin rolled along the passage.

"Jimmy!"

"Oh, don't bother!" snapped the captain of the Fourth.

He was in no humour for being bothered by Reginald Muffin.

"Carthew wants you!" grinned Tubby. "You're to go at once—all four of you."

"What the thump for?" growled Lovell.

Tubby chuckled.

"I didn't stop to ask," he said. "But Carthew had his cane on the table. He, he! You're in for it!"

Lovell lunged out with his boot, and the fat Classical yelped and dodged, and the Fistical Four made their way to Carthew's study, in the very lowest of spirits. The bully of the Sixth had scored, and they realised it. Carthew had won all along the line, and Mr. Dalton—their idolised Dicky—was pow at his mercy.

The 4th Chapter. The Whip-hand!

Mark Carthew smiled as the Fistical Four presented themselves in his study. He was still dusty and tired, but apparently his triumph could not wait. He had the whip-hand now—or he believed he had—and he longed to show his power.

"Come on, you young scoundrels!" was his polite greeting.

The juniors came in.

"You started following me to-day," said Carthew. "The other day you bagged my bike. I'm going to cane you severely!"

"Are you?" said Jimmy Silver between his teeth.

"I am. And I don't think your cheery Form-master will chip in to protect you this time!" sneered Carthew. "I happen to hold that dear young gentleman in the hollow of my hand."

"You mean, you've been spying!" granted Lovell contemptuously.

"I'll make you smart for that along with the rest!" smiled Carthew. "So that was the secret you young scoundrels were keeping. Last Saturday you saw Mr. Dalton fighting in the ring, like a common prize-fighter, and you thought you were going to keep it dark. I knew there was something, but I never guessed that, by gad! A Rookwood Form-master boxing a

pug, in the ring for money! Sounds well, doesn't it?"

The juniors did not speak. The gloating tone of the bully of the Sixth showed how much he enjoyed the situation. Jimmy Silver & Co. were very far from enjoying it.

Carthew had succeeded far beyond his hopes. He seemed hardly able to contain his triumph.

"I shouldn't have guessed it," he went on. "I couldn't find out the Lamb's real name, and I got the paper hoping to find out something about the affair—something or anything. And then there was Dalton's chivvy staring me in the face. Bless that merry photographer! I fancy Dalton doesn't know his photograph was printed there. He would hardly carry his head so high if he knew. I'll lower it for him, fast enough!"

Carthew laughed. "I've only to show this copy of the 'Bunbury Record' to the Head. And I will it he doesn't toe the line! Ha, ha!"

Jimmy breathed hard.

He understood now that Carthew did not intend to make his knowledge immediately public. He was going to hold it over Mr. Dalton's head. The Form-master would be under his thumb!

Jimmy felt a sickening sensation. He had tried to save Dicky, and he had failed. It was bitter that the blackest sheep at Rookwood should triumph in this way.

"Why did you young rascals keep it dark?" demanded Carthew. "I

"Order him!" said Jimmy, between his teeth.

"That's what it amounts to. Mr. Dalton won't get his ears up with me again in a hurry, I assure you," said Carthew. "I'm master now, and I'm beginning with you cheeky young cads. I'll put Dalton in his place, too, never fear. Now hold out your hand!"

Jimmy Silver held out his hand.

He would have resisted, but he thought of Mr. Dalton and how the young master would face a demand from Carthew, a demand which would have the force of an order behind it, based on Carthew's knowledge of the affair at the Bunbury Ring. For Dicky's sake Jimmy Silver repressed his feelings and resolved to submit quietly. Carthew measured the distance with his eyes, and brought down the cane with a terrific lash.

That lash would have hurt Jimmy Silver a good deal if it had struck his palm. But by instinct, without thinking, Jimmy jerked his hand back from the savage blow.

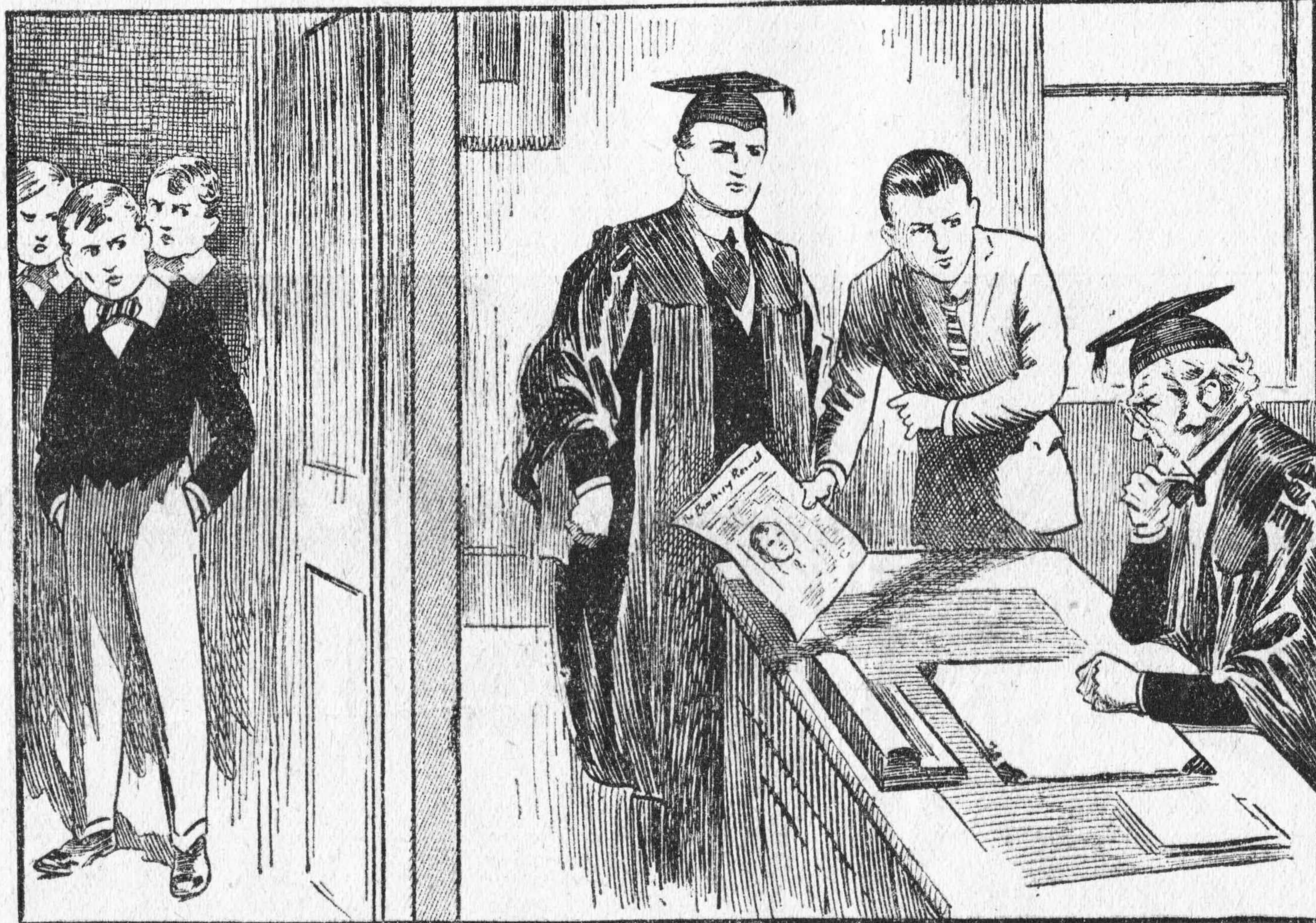
Crash!

As nothing stopped the cane it swept on, and landed on Carthew's own leg. The prefect gave a fearful yell as it landed, doubtless wishing that he had not put quite so much savage force into the slash.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha!" gasped Lovell breathlessly.

"Ow! ow! oh! You young demon!" roared Carthew.



UPON A GRAVE CHARGE! The Head was looking very serious. The case before him had no precedent. Could he allow a master to remain at Rookwood who had so recently been a pugilist in the prize ring? There seemed no hope for Dicky as the Fistical Four had christened their new master.

should have expected you to babble it all over the school."

"You would!" said Newcome scornfully.

"You're getting an easy time in the Fourth, I suppose, as the price of silence—what?" jeered Carthew.

"I suppose you'd think so," said Jimmy Silver. "We kept the secret because it wasn't our business. And Dicky—I mean, Mr. Dalton—is a splendid fellow. You'd keep it, too, if you were decent. Look here, Carthew, you know what he's done with the money. He's put it up for a man who was crippled in the war—"

"I ought to have guessed when I saw that," grinned Carthew, "but I never did. But I know now. I think I've got the upper hand now, my pippins. I'm going to make you smart for your cheek, and if you give me any more of it I'm going to have you flogged."

"And how are you going to do that?" said Jimmy, eyeing him.

"I shall ask Mr. Dalton to see to it."

"And do you think he will?"

Carthew nodded smilingly.

"Yes, I think so, rather than be given away to the Head. I don't think Dr. Chisholm would let a prize-fighter stop here as a master."

"Oh, you cad!" burst out Lovell.

"That will do!" said Carthew, taking up his cane. "Hold out your hand, Silver! You first!"

Jimmy Silver hesitated.

"You hear me?" said Carthew menacingly. "If you don't obey me I shall take you to Mr. Dalton and order him to have you flogged."

Beside himself with rage, the bully rushed at Jimmy Silver, lashing out recklessly with the cane.

Jimmy caught one blow on his shoulder and one on his arm, and one on his head. And then the four juniors, reckless of all else, rushed on Carthew and collared him.

Bump! Carthew came heavily to the carpet, with the Fistical Four clinging to him and sprawling over him.

The juniors' blood was up now. Lovell snatched the cane from the prefect's hand.

"Hold him!" he roared.

Slash! Slash! Slash!

The cane descended on Carthew's back and legs with terrific swipes. Arthur Edward Lovell, in his excitement, seemed to be under the impression that he was beating a carpet.

Carthew roared and struggled frantically. But the four sturdy juniors were too much for him.

His yells rang through the study and through the corridor beyond. The door was suddenly flung open.

"What—what is this?"

It was Mr. Dalton!

The 4th Chapter. To Go or Not to Go?

Carthew struggled to his feet. He was panting with rage and pain, and almost beside himself.

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Dalton. "Are you boys aware that this uproar can be heard as far as my study?"

"They have attacked me!" howled Carthew.

"I can see that! Silver—"

"Look at that mark on Jimmy's face!" hooted Lovell. "We had to stop the brute!"

A lash of the cane was visible, glowing crimson, on Jimmy Silver's face. Mr. Dalton's expression altered as he glanced at it.

"Carthew, you have done this—"

"He refused to be caned," shouted Carthew.

"That is no excuse for a brutal attack worthy only of a hooligan," said the Form-master sternly. "Carthew, I am ashamed of you! You are not fit to be a prefect of Rookwood!"

"I tell you—"

"The juniors, apparently, were only defending themselves from brutality," thundered Mr. Dalton. "Why were you punishing them in the first place? I am not satisfied that there was good cause."

"Because I chose!" snarled Carthew.

"What?"

"Is that plain enough? Now they've laid hands on me they're going to be flogged!" hooted Carthew. "I expect you to see to it, Mr. Dalton. You needn't worry about the rights and wrongs of the matter. That's for me to settle. I want you to report these juniors to the Head for a flogging."

Mr. Dalton stared at him.

"Are you out of your senses, Carthew?" he exclaimed blankly.

"No, I'm not; but I mean to have

a prize-fight, but a properly conducted boxing match."

"You can tell that to the Head," said Carthew derisively. "You'll have to, Mr. Dalton, if we do not come to terms."

"What do you mean exactly by coming to terms, Carthew?"

Carthew pointed at the juniors. "Those four young rascals are to be flogged!" he said. "That's for a beginning."

"Those four juniors will not even be caned," said Mr. Dalton. "I do not blame them for defending themselves against brutality, and consequently they will not be punished at all!"

Carthew's eyes glinted.

"You'd prefer me to go to the Head?" he snapped.

"Undoubtedly!"

"And tell him you're a prize-fighter!" jeered Carthew. "You know you daren't face it!"

"I think you are mistaken once more, Carthew," said Mr. Dalton tranquilly. "So far from requesting you to keep the matter secret, I shall insist upon your accompanying me to the Head this very moment, and acquainting him with the matter."

"You juniors may go!" said Mr. Dalton. "Carthew, come with me at once to the Head's study. I shall take you by the collar if you do not come quietly!"

"Oh, I'll come fast enough," said Carthew, livid with rage. "You won't be a master here much longer, when the Head knows what I can tell him."

"That is for the Head to decide, not you!" said Mr. Dalton calmly. "Come!"

The Fistical Four, feeling miserable enough, hung about near Dr. Chisholm's study, when the door of that august apartment had closed upon Mr. Dalton and Carthew. They would have given a great deal to know what was happening within the closed door. Carthew was making his report—and showing the photograph in the paper, doubtless, as a proof. What would the Head say? What would he do?

The door reopened at last. Mark Carthew came out grinning. He glanced at the Fistical Four.

"You—you've told the Head?" breathed Jimmy Silver.

"Every word!" hissed Carthew. "And if it isn't the sack for your merry Form-master, I don't know Dr. Chisholm!"

And he walked on. The Fistical Four exchanged despondent glances, and lingered. The study door opened again. Mr. Dalton and the Head appeared there together. Dr. Chisholm's face was very set.

"I must consider!" His voice reached the juniors "In the circumstances, Mr. Dalton—really—"

"I could do no more than explain," said the young master quietly. "The account you have heard was exaggerated. It was a boxing-match, not a prize fight—"

"I see little distinction," said the Head drily. "And for a master of Rookwood—you surely comprehend that—"

"I do. But the occasion was a peculiar one, I think I may say. I have done a great deal of amateur boxing, but have never boxed for a purse before, and never intend to do so again. My object was to raise a substantial contribution, if possible, for my old comrade, Captain Smith—now disabled and helpless. I succeeded; and I cannot say I am sorry."

"A very worthy object, Mr. Dalton—but—there is a certain fitness of things—"

The Head coughed. "I am aware of it, sir! I shall be sorry to leave Rookwood, but if you consider it necessary, I shall go without repining. I only ask you to let me know your decision as soon as possible."

"I must consider," said the Head. "I have had a high opinion of you, Mr. Dalton—this news is a great shock to me. I will consider!"

"Very good, sir!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. had judiciously backed away out of sight. Mr. Dalton walked away; and the Head stood looking after him for some moments, with a thoughtful, frowning brow. Then he shook his head, and turned back into his study.

That evening—chiefly owing to Carthew—all Rookwood knew that Mr. Dalton and the Lamb who had knocked out the Bunbury Pet were one and the same person. And the question of burning interest was: Did it mean "the boot" for the master of the Fourth? And the general opinion was that it did!

THE END.

("The Fighting Form-master" is the title of next Monday's grand complete Rookwood School yarn in next week's BOYS' FRIEND.)

A GRAND LONG COMPLETE YARN OF FRANK RICHARDS. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Frank Richards

ROLLING
STONE!A FINE NEW
... SERIES ...
EACH STORY
COMPLETE
IN ITSELFThe 1st Chapter.
Partners!

Click, click!

Frank Richards was busy. The May sun was shining down on Siskoo lake and river. Out on the lake the Indian fishermen glided in their canoes, and on the river the lumbermen were busy. Frank Richards, seated on an upturned box at a pinewood table, clicked on the typewriter at a great rate in the little cabin beside the Siskoo trail.

Mr. Penrose, his partner, stood at the bench in the same room, setting type. Frank was looking very cheery over his work; his partner, on the other hand, had a saddened and discouraged expression. Mr. Penrose liked to stimulate himself at the Golden West Hotel before he started work, with the result that often he did not start work at all. But the Golden West Hotel was barred now that he was Frank Richards' partner. Frank was the custodian of the cash, and Frank had made it a rigid rule that not a cent should be expended on fire-water. And as all the cash in the firm, so far, belonged to Frank Richards, his partner had to acquiesce in that arrangement.

Siskoo Camp was not a big place, and its population was not large: It had never rejoiced in a local newspaper before. Now it was going to rejoice in one, provided by Frank Richards and Mr. Penrose. The first number had nearly paid the cost of its production. The second number had quite paid its cost, which was an improvement. The third number, upon which the partners were now busy, was going to show a profit—at least, the proprietors hoped so.

Frank Richards had not forgotten Cedar Creek School and his old home at the Lawless Ranch. He had not forgotten Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclere, his old chums. But he was happy in his new work, and in the prospect of "getting on." His partner was rather a worry; but there was a good prospect of making a success of the "Siskoo Gazette," and the schoolboy author put all his energies into it.

Mr. Penrose was only too willing to leave all the writing to him—and anything else in the shape of work. Frank turned it out at a great rate on the battered old typewriter. He had had some experience on the "Thompson Press" when he was a schoolboy at Cedar Creek. And the Siskoo public was not very critical.

Frank turned round on the box at last and glanced at his partner, and smiled as he met Mr. Penrose's despondent eye.

"Finished?" asked the latter gentleman.

"Yes; I think this will do. I've done a lumberman story to fill two pages," said Frank. "That will fill up, with the news and the ads."

"I guess there isn't much in the way of advertisements," said Mr. Penrose, shaking his head. "Only five dollars in all, and that ain't paid down yet."

"Every little helps!" said Frank.

"Yep."

Mr. Penrose sat on the bench to rest. He was always glad of a rest. Also he was in an argumentative mood.

"Who's the senior partner in this concern?" he asked.

"I am!" answered Frank coolly.

"That was settled when I found the capital for the business. Don't let's go over that again."

"This ain't what I figured out," said Mr. Penrose. "I have to get in the noos. A galoot can't do that without talking to galoots, and standing a drink occasionally, and wetting his whistle. You see that, Richards?"

"Not at all. You must manage without that," answered Frank. "Don't be an ass, Mr. Penrose. We've precious little cash in hand now, and not a cent of it is going over the bar at the hotel. When you've earned some money you can waste it as fast as you like. You can't waste mine."

Mr. Penrose grunted. The "Siskoo Gazette" had been his idea, and Frank's hundred dollars had set it going. But it was not going as Mr. Penrose had hoped. That gentleman lived more in the present than in the future, and was afflicted with a thirst that required constant quenching. He would willingly have risked the whole future prospects of the "Siskoo Gazette" for the sake of one glorious "bender."

"About a hoss!" he said, changing the subject. "Siskoo Camp can't support the paper on its lonesome. We've got to get in touch with all the settlements along the river and round the lake. Hiring a hoss, same as we've done, is waste of money. We ought to buy a hoss, Richards."

"Can't afford it," said the senior partner. "The Chink at the store has a hoss to sell cheap," said Mr. Penrose. "He got it off a Injun who got it very cheap—rushed it. I reckon; but that's neither here nor there. It's the Chink's hoss now, and he's willing to part for twenty dollars."

Frank shook his head. "It's a good hoss, and worth seventy dollars any day," said Mr. Penrose. "We can't work in a section like this without a hoss. Better bag that critter while we've got the chance, Richards."

Frank Richards wrinkled his brows in thought. Mr. Penrose was right, so far as that went; but twenty dollars would make a very large hole in the small remaining capital of the firm.

"We could sell the horse at a profit, if we liked," said Mr. Penrose eagerly. "It's only a way of putting money by."

"Well, there's something in that," said Frank.

"Take the chance while it's going!" said Mr. Penrose, brightening wonderfully at the signs of yielding in the senior partner. "I guarantee to get thirty dollars for that horse, if you want, selling it down by the railroad!"

Frank Richards rose from the box.

"It's a go, then," he said.

Mr. Penrose made a jump for his coat and his Stetson hat.

"Then I reckon I'll mosey down into Siskoo, and see the Chink at once!" he said. "No good letting the grass grow under our feet. Hand over the dust, Richards!"

Frank smiled.

"I'll come!" he said.

"Eh?"

The brightness faded out of Mr. Penrose's face.

"We'll go together," said Frank, "and if the horse is worth the money we'll buy it."

He left the cabin, and Mr. Penrose followed him, with a dismal expression on his countenance. He continued to look dismal as they walked up the trail into Siskoo. As they passed the open door of the shanty hotel there came a musical clink to their ears of the Chinese bar-

keeper washing glasses in the bar. Mr. Penrose heaved a sigh.

"Say, Richards," he murmured. "Couldn't you lend your old pardner a dollar?"

"No."

"I guess I'd better drop in at the store, and get some groceries," said Mr. Penrose. "I'll do that while you look at the hoss."

"Good—do it!" said Frank.

"I shall want two dollars—"

"I'll pay for the goods before I go."

"Look here, young Richards!" hooted Mr. Penrose. "You can't treat a pardner in this style, and don't you calculate that you can. Savvy?"

"Here's the store," said Frank, unheeding. "Come in!"

Mr. Penrose heaved a sigh and followed him in. Undoubtedly, his life as Frank Richards' partner was not the happy career of whisky and rum that he had "figured out."

The 2nd Chapter.

Partnership Under Difficulties!

"Finished!" said Frank Richards, with great satisfaction.

The work was done for the day.

In the "office" of the "Siskoo Gazette," the two partners had been working late, by lamplight; and the third number of the "Gazette" was done. Both of them were tired; and one of them was thirsty.

In the shed attached to the cabin, was the horse Frank Richards had bought in Siskoo that morning. In the cabin cupboard were the groceries. No cash had been entrusted into Mr. Penrose's unreliable hands. Frank Richards was standing the rations for the two partners; but the only drink in the cabin was water—and Mr. Penrose partook of that very sparingly at any time. If he had had his way, the limited capital of the company would have gone across the bar at the Golden West on the first day.

The incessant devices and stunts thought out by Mr. Penrose for getting hold of the cash, worried Frank Richards sometimes, and at other times amused him. He had to keep the cash in his belt, and he slept at night with the belt buckled on, or certainly the cash would have disappeared before morning.

During the two or three weeks that the partnership had lasted, Mr. Penrose had not tasted strong drink, excepting occasionally, when some hospitable cowboy or lumberman had "stood" him a cocktail. Frank hoped that he was getting over the craving for it; but, as a matter of fact, Mr. Penrose was getting desperate.

Success in the new venture seemed probable enough, with steady work and attention to business. But success of a "dry" nature did not appeal to Mr. Penrose. If "benders" and "jamborees" were going to be barred, he did not see what there was to be successful for.

"I guess I'm tired," said Mr. Penrose, sinking on a box.

"Same here," said Frank. "Let's get supper and turn in. We've got to be up early."

"I guess I'd like to drop in and have a chat with some of the pilgrims in camp after a hard day's work."

"Go ahead, then; I'm going to bed!"

"If you liked to spring a dollar or two—"

"Rats!"

"Now, look heer, young Richards, I—"

"Come and grub," said Frank, going into the adjoining room. "We've got to turn out early. You've got to ride round the lake with a bundle, while I see to our subscribers in Siskoo. Do think a bit of business, and not so much of booze!"

Mr. Penrose ate his supper mournfully. His thoughts were with the clinking glasses in the bar-room in camp.

He sighed deeply as he turned into his bunk.

Frank Richards slept peacefully, and rose when the morning sun came glimmering in at the cracked shutters.

After a bathe in the creek, he dressed, and cooked breakfast; and when it was ready, Mr. Penrose turned wearily out of his bunk. It fell to the schoolboy author to do most of the "chores." But Frank had a great deal of consideration for his partner—excepting on one point. When the question of Mr. Penrose's uncharitable thirst arose, Frank was as hard as a rock.

After breakfast, Mr. Penrose mounted the horse, and took up his big bundle of papers, and started on his round. The distribution of the "Siskoo Gazette" was rather in a primitive style. Bundles of the papers were left in the various stores and shanty hotels in the section, and copies dropped in at the cabins of regular subscribers. Frank Richards started on foot with another bundle, to "do" Siskoo and the vicinity, while his partner, on the horse, went farther afield.

Some day the round was to be done in a smart buggy, with a driver whose cap should bear in gilt letters, "The Siskoo Gazette." But that time had not yet come; though Mr. Penrose, at first, had talked much of it. But it was noticeable that the editorial gentleman's rosy dreams did not fill so much of his conversation now. Most of his remarks were confined to the subject of an advance of cash from his partner, to be expended in liquid stimulation. That was a subject of which Mr. Penrose seemed never to tire. He was the same Mr. Penrose that Frank had known in the Thompson Valley—only a little more so!

Frank Richards was home to mid-day dinner, but he did not expect his partner till later. But when the sun went down, Mr. Penrose had not appeared. Frank was not feeling quite easy in his mind about him. Mr. Penrose had some money to collect, and money was not safe in his hands. The agreement was for the profits to be divided after the week's expenses were paid; Mr. Penrose had concurred heartily, but Frank had his doubts. Money, when he had it, burned a hole in Mr. Penrose's pocket. But in this instance Frank had no choice but to trust his partner. On his round Mr. Penrose had to collect the cash, and Frank could only hope for the best.

Darkness fell, and Mr. Penrose had not come back. By that time Frank had given up the hope of seeing him sober. Evidently what money he had collected had gone in liquid refreshment; it was Mr. Penrose's first chance after many dry days, and he had not been able to resist it.

At bed-time Frank Richards barred the door, and fastened the shutters on the windows.

He had made it a rule not to admit his partner to the cabin when he returned the worse for drink; it had happened twice already, and Frank was quite inflexible on the point. He would not share the cabin with a man breathing a thick aroma of liquor, and grunting and groaning in his sleep.

As he expected, he was awakened about midnight by Mr. Penrose hammering on the door.

He did not even reply to the husky shouts from outside; but turned over and went to sleep again.

He rose on the following morning at the usual time, and opened the door of the cabin. A heavy body fell into the doorway as he did so. Mr. Penrose had spent the night propped against the door in a sitting posture, his head on his chest. He rolled over at his partner's feet, and awoke with a gasp.

"Grooch-hoo! Wharrer marrer?" he stammered.

"Topsy again!" said Frank scornfully.

Mr. Penrose sat up and blinked.

"Jest a drop!" he said.

"How much tin did you collect yesterday?"

"Eight dollars."

"How much have you got left?"

"Nixey!"

"Is that how you think a business can be run?" demanded Frank Richards.

"Grooch!"

"We've got to order a new supply of paper. How are we going to pay for it?" demanded Frank.

"Don't ask me conundrums early in the morning!" moaned his partner. "Gimme something to drink. Look hyer, now we're making money we can afford to keep a bottle of whisky in the cabin."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Frank crossly.

Mr. Penrose staggered up and tottered out to the creek, where he swamped his face and head in cold water. He came in towelling, and looking a little refreshed. But there was a sheepish and hangdog expression about him, and he avoided meeting his partner's eye. Frank Richards went round to the shed to ascertain that the horse was in safety—and he came back into the cabin at a run.

"Where's the horse?" he exclaimed.

"The—the hoss?" stammered Mr. Penrose.

"It's not in the shed."

"Ain't it?" said Mr. Penrose feebly. "Now, I wonder where in thunder that there hoss can have got to?"

"You did not bring it back last night," said Frank. "I can see it hasn't been in the shed. What have you done with it?"

Mr. Penrose took up the frying-pan, and cut sausages into it mechanically. Apparently he found it difficult to explain what he had done with the firm's horse.

"Well?" exclaimed Frank.

The sausages sizzled on the stove.

"Where's the horse?" shouted Frank Richards angrily.

Mr. Penrose turned on him at last, with a goaded look.

"It's gone!" he snapped.

"Gone?"

"Sure! I got into a game of poker last night at the Golden West, and the hoss went. A man has to settle a debt of honour, I suppose," added Mr. Penrose, with a great deal of dignity.

"A debt of honour!" repeated Frank. "You've stolen the horse—"

"I've sold it."

"You awful rotter!"

"You can call me names," said Mr. Penrose resignedly. "I expected that. I've done a lot for you, Richards, but I guess I never expected gratitude. Call me names. I don't mind."

Frank Richards did not call him any more names. It was only too evidently a useless expenditure of breath. The horse was gone, and any amount of slanging would not bring it back. Mr. Penrose sat down to breakfast with a headache and a dogged, defiant look, and Frank with a worried and thoughtful brow. He had hoped to make something of his peculiar partner, and to succeed in working with him, but it began to look as if that hope was vain. Business could scarcely be done on these lines.

The 3rd Chapter.

Sold Up!

"I guess," said Mr. Penrose, after breakfast, "that you and me have got to have a settlement, Richards."

"Are you going to settle for the horse?" asked Frank sarcastically.

"Never mind the hoss. That's gone. If you come to that, I gave Wall-eyed Jake twenty dollars for this shack when he legged it for the railroad," said Mr. Penrose warmly.

"I guess I've put this hyer cabin into the business."

"I haven't sold it to pay a gambling debt," said Frank tartly.

"By gosh, you'd better not!" ejaculated Mr. Penrose, evidently startled at the idea.

"It would be only the same as selling the horse."

"Don't keep harping on that!" urged Mr. Penrose. "Let bygones be bygones, Richards. Jawing won't bring the hoss back, will it? Now, we can't go on as we've been going. A galoot's got to have some dust in his sack. Savvy?"

"Oh, rats!"

"What's the amount of cash left?"

"Fifteen dollars."

"Halves, then," said Mr. Penrose firmly. "As partners we're going to share alike. And I've promised to see that poker galoot again this morning, and a man must keep his word."

"You won't have any of my cash for poker," snapped Frank. "It's all I have left of my hundred, with the six I collected yesterday on the papers."

"We've got a matter of fifteen dollars or so to come on the papers this week," said Mr. Penrose. "You hand me the fifteen, and take the money when it comes in. I'll collect it for you."

Frank Richards laughed; he could not help it.

"I'm old enough to be your father," said Mr. Penrose indignantly. "I've worked in newspaper offices in New York and Chicago, and you're a schoolboy. Yet you want to take the upper hand. There's such a thing as a man's dignity, Frank Richards."

"Precious little dignity in boozing and reeling home at midnight and stealing a horse!" said Frank.

"Let up! I'm tired of that tune. Now, if this firm is going on, I'm going to take over the direction," said Mr. Penrose firmly. "I want you to understand that, Richards. What have you got to say?"

"Rats!" answered Frank. And he walked out of the cabin. His partner shouted after him, but Frank did not return. He did not want to quarrel with Mr. Penrose, and he was quite fed up with his company that morning.

Frank Richards borrowed an Indian canoe and went out on the lake to fish for dinner. He came back at noon with a bag of trout, and found the cabin unoccupied. He looked into the office for Mr. Penrose, but that gentleman was not there, and Frank noticed that the typewriter was not there either. It was late in the afternoon when Mr. Penrose appeared, with a flushed face and an unsteady step.

"Where's the typer?" Frank asked grimly.

"I guess I've sold it to the Chink at the store," answered his partner. "I told you I had to have some cash. I got three dollars for it, and if you like to give the Chink six, he'll sell it back to you."

"What about the copy for the next 'Gazette'?"

"Can't you handle a pen?" demanded Mr. Penrose. "I guess it was my machine, and a galoot can sell his own property if he likes, can't he?"

And Mr. Penrose rolled into his bunk and preserved a dignified silence after that.

The hapless senior partner had plenty of food for thought that evening.

Mr. Penrose's feeble effort at reform was plainly quite at an end. He had broken out worse than ever. It looked as if the "Siskoo Gazette" which had started so well, would die a sudden death after the third number.

But Frank was naturally loth to give up a scheme upon which he had expended almost his whole capital. The next day he was at work with pen and paper, preparing for the fourth number of the "Gazette." Mr. Penrose ambled round the office uneasily while he wrote. Finally he spoke.

"You're working too hard, Richards."

"Eh?" said Frank, looking up. He was not accustomed to so much consideration from his partner.

Mr. Penrose nodded gravely. "Much too hard," he said. "Don't overdo it. The best thing you can do is to go on the lake for the day. It's splendid weather, and it will do you good."

"But the copy's got to be turned out," said Frank, "and it's much slower work with the pen."

"I guess I'm real sorry about that typer," said Mr. Penrose remorsefully. "Look hyer, you've got your watch back from the Chink you sold it to the day you came to Siskoo—"

"Yes."

"Sell it again, and get the typer back," said Mr. Penrose. "I'll run into camp and do it for you. There!"

"Oh, cheese it!" grunted Frank Richards.

"You don't trust your pardner?"

"Don't be an ass!" was Frank's reply.

Mr. Penrose ambled round the cabin again. He went out on the trail and looked away towards Siskoo, as if in expectation of seeing someone arrive. He seemed relieved to find the trail deserted, and he went back into the office. Frank Richards, at the bench, was bent over his task again.

"Richards—"

"Don't worry!"

"What are we going to have for dinner?"

"You can go fishing if you like," said Frank. "There's lots of fish in the lake."

"I ain't a good hand at it," said Mr. Penrose. "Richards, I own up I ain't acted well; but don't send a galoot without his dinner. You go fishing, like a good boy, and arter dinner we'll settle down to work."

Frank Richards yielded at last. He had his own dinner to think of as well as his partner's, and the fresh, sunny morning called him out of

doors. He laid down his pen and put away his manuscript.

"Right-ho!" he said. Mr. Penrose brightened up very much as his youthful partner left the cabin. It seemed to Frank that the editorial gentleman was somewhat anxious to get him off the premises that morning, though he could not guess the reason. On the trail he passed the storekeeper's waggon, southward bound to the railroad, and, looking back, he saw it stop at the cabin. Mr. Penrose came out and spoke to the driver. Frank went on his way, wondering whether his partner intended to get a lift to the railroad town, but not concerning himself much about the matter.

But when he came back to the cabin he had reason to concern himself. The "office" was empty; the hand-press upon which the "Siskoo Gazette" was printed was gone, as well as the case of type and other appurtenances. Most of Frank Richards' capital had been expended in the purchase of those goods, second-hand, in the railroad town. Now they were gone. He understood now why Mr. Penrose had been anxious to get rid of him that morning. His partner had evidently arranged with the storekeeper to give him a lift with the property to carry it off to the town where it had been purchased, to be sold for what it would fetch.

Frank Richards sank down on a box, gasping.

Frank Richards remained at the cabin, making his preparations for journeying to the gold mines, where he had determined to try his fortune next. But he wanted to see Mr. Penrose again before he started. He had some emphatic remarks to make to that gentleman. He spent most of his time on the lake, while he waited.

It was towards evening one day that a shabby, tired figure came limping up the trail from the south.

Frank Richards was frying fish for his supper at the stove, over a fire of pine chips, when a shadow fell across the open doorway.

He looked round.

It was Mr. Penrose. The dilapidated gentleman looked more dilapidated than ever. His dark-ringed eyes showed that he had been on a "bender" at the railroad town; but he had had plenty of time to "sober" up on the long trail to Siskoo. He was shabby and dirty, and dusty and disordered, and extremely sheepish. Frank fixed a grim eye on him.

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

"Sure!" said Mr. Penrose feebly.

"You—you didn't think I was goin' to desert my pardner, did you?"

"You've sold the outfit?"

"Yep."

"Anything left?"

"Nope."

"And now, what do you want?" asked Frank.

Mr. Penrose leaned on the door-post.

"Yow-ow-ow! Let up! Yooop!"

Smack, smack! Mr. Penrose bounded to his feet as the frying-pan smote him again and again. All the wrath and indignation that Frank Richards had bottled up for so long came out in those smites.

His partner dodged away on the trail.

"Let up!" he roared. "I guess I'll smash you, young Richards! I guess I'll make shavings of you! Yaroooop!"

Smack, smack, smack!

"Oh Jerusalem! Oh crumbs! Ow, ow! Wooop!"

Mr. Penrose dodged the frying-pan frantically, and fled up the trail, with the schoolboy author after him, still letting out with the frying-pan.

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yow-ow! Woooop! Help! Yooop!"

The hapless gentleman escaped at last, dodging into the larches by the trail, and fleeing away breathlessly through the timber. Frank Richards, a little breathless himself, returned to the cabin and to his interrupted supper.

He finished his supper and was preparing for bed, when the cabin door was pushed open, and an alarmed face peered cautiously in.

"I say, young Richards—"

"You again!" exclaimed Frank, reaching for the frying-pan.

Mr. Penrose held up a deprecating hand.



MR. PENROSE HITS THE TRAIL! Frank Richards caught up the frying-pan and advanced upon his former business partner. Mr. Penrose, whose forte was not courage, took a flying leap for the shanty door.

This was the end of the "Siskoo Gazette"—with a vengeance.

The schoolboy author caught sight of a note pinned on the pine-bench with a jack-knife. He picked it up and read:

"Dear Richards,—You've treated me very badly after all I've done for you. I told you a galoot couldn't go on without cash. I hope to get twenty dollars for the printing outfit. I know it cost more, but that's not my fault. I've done my best for you; and I mean to bring you half what I get.
J. PENROSE."

Frank Richards crumpled that precious epistle in his hand.

If Mr. Penrose had been present just then, there would certainly have been assault and battery in the office of the "Siskoo Gazette."

But he was not present; and Frank Richards could only wait for his return from the railroad town, and bottle up his wrath until he came.

The 4th Chapter. Taking the Trail!

It was two days before Mr. Penrose returned.

Frank Richards spent those two days pleasantly enough, while he waited for his partner. The newspaper enterprise, of course, was given up—he did not think of producing any more numbers of the "Siskoo Gazette." Mr. Penrose had completely wrecked what might have been a good business in the long run.

"I guess I want some supper," he said.

"If you want any supper," said Frank, "you can go an' fish for it on the lake, as I've done. Look here, Mr. Penrose. You got me into this business, and my hundred dollars went on it. We could have made a success of it. You've boozed away everything now, and left me stranded."

"I guess—"

"And now you've got the cheek to come back," continued Frank.

"I guess this hyer is my shack," protested Mr. Penrose. "I gave Wall-Eyed Jake twenty dollars for it."

"And you've done me out of more than a hundred dollars," said Frank.

"Now you're getting out!"

"I guess—"

"I give you one minute to clear!"

Frank turned the fish out of the frying-pan, and took a businesslike grip on the handle.

His partner eyed him uneasily.

"Look hyer, young Richards—"

"Are you going?"

"Nope. I—"

Frank Richards wasted no more words on his partner. He started for him with the frying-pan.

Mr. Penrose jumped out of the doorway.

"Look hyer!" he roared.

Smack!

The frying-pan bonneted Mr. Penrose, and he gave a yell and sat down in the trail.

"Yow-ow-wooop!"

"Have some more?" demanded Frank.

"Let up!" he said. "I'm your pardner, ain't I? I ain't coming in, Richards. I own up I ain't acted square. But if you'll lend me a couple of dollars—"

Frank made a stride towards him. Mr. Penrose backed out into the shadowy trail.

"Just one dollar, Richards!" he gasped. "I've got a thirst on me—"

Smack!

"Yaroooooo!"

Frank Richards' partner fled, and this time he did not return.

Frank barred the door and window, and turned in for the night. He half expected to be awakened by Mr. Penrose at the door during the hours of darkness, and he kept the frying-pan handy in case it was wanted. But his partner had apparently had enough of that culinary implement, for he did not come back.

The morning sun was streaming in at the shutter when Frank Richards turned out. He looked along the trail, but there was no sign of Mr. Penrose.

He cooked his breakfast on the stove, and considered what he should do. During the past two days he had earned a couple of dollars by selling his catch of fish from the lake at the Golden West Hotel. Now that he was rid of his troublesome partner, he decided to keep on as a fisherman for a few weeks, and save up as much as he could of his earnings, to start him afresh when he took the trail to the gold-mines.

He came to that decision by the time he had finished his breakfast, and as he rose from the bench a shadow fell in at the door. He glanced round, expecting to see Mr. Penrose. But it was not that gentleman. A big, broad-shouldered lumberman in red shirt and leather trousers and heavy boots tramped noisily in.

"Morning!" he said cheerily. "Good-morning!" said Frank, wondering what his visitor wanted.

"You young Richards?"

"Yes."

"I'm Hank Hichens."

"Glad to see you," said Frank politely.

Hank Hichens glanced round the cabin with an appraising eye. He seemed to be taking stock of the place and its contents.

"A pesky poor show!" he commented, at last. "But I guess it will suit me. Can't say it was dear at fifteen dollars the whole caboodle."

"Eh?"

"It's a shelter, anyhow," said the lumberman, "and I ain't no time to run up a cabin. Too busy jest now. That bunk's a bit small for me, but I reckon I can make it do."

Frank Richards stared at him.

"I don't quite catch on," he said. "I'm living here at present, Mr. Hichens."

The lumberman nodded and grinned.

"I guess Penrose mentioned you," he said. "He opined you was a cheeky young scallywag, and asked me, as a special favour, to kick you out! But I guess I'll let you walk it if you go quick!"

"Look here—"

"This hyer is my shack now!"

Mr. Hichens condescended to explain. "I've bought it of Penrose for fifteen dollars. And the sooner you hop it, sonny, the better I shall like it! Catch on?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Frank.

"Get me?" said Mr. Hichens.

"That's all very well!" said Frank warmly. "Mr. Penrose has done me out of a hundred dollars, and I'm sticking to the cabin for the present."

"I guess not!" said Mr. Hichens. He lifted a gigantic boot and displayed it to Frank Richards. "Penrose has sold me the cabin fair and square, and I guess I'm hyer to take possession. If you want to argue with this hyer boot, jest mention it! I warn you that if I get in one kick you'll hardly know what's happened to you!"

Frank Richards eyed him, and considered.

Certainly the shack was Mr. Penrose's property, and apparently he had sold it to this gigantic individual. Mr. Hank Hichens was only claiming his legal rights.

"Staying or going?" asked Mr. Hichens agreeably. "I don't mind booting you as far as Siskoo, if you ask me."

Frank laughed.

"If it's your shack, I'm going," he said. "Bother the shack, and bother Penrose, and bother you, too! I sha'n't be sorry to see the last of Siskoo. I'll be clear in five minutes."

Mr. Hichens nodded.

"I guess that will suit me," he said. "Don't take anything with you—I calculate I've bought the whole caboodle. I give you five minutes to hit the trail!"

Within five minutes Frank Richards, with his wallet on his back, had "hit" the trail, Mr. Hichens grinning after him from the doorway of the cabin. In the fresh, sunny morning of Cedar Creek tramped away cheerily enough, once more on the trail to seek his fortune.

As he came through the rugged street of Siskoo a dilapidated figure emerged from the Golden West Hotel. Mr. Penrose gave him a bleary blink.

"Hallo, young Richards! Hitting the trail? I say, can you lend an old pardner a dollar afore you go?"

Frank Richards looked at him. Then he unhitched his wallet, which contained most of his worldly goods. Mr. Penrose eyed him hopefully. But Frank did not open the wallet. He swung it round by the strap, and it caught Mr. Penrose with a heavy bump. Mr. Penrose sat down in the doorway of the shanty hotel with a howl.

Frank Richards swung the wallet on his shoulder again and started. He left Mr. Penrose sitting in the doorway blinking after him. That was the last the schoolboy of Cedar Creek saw of his late partner. He tramped out of Siskoo, and "legged" it under a sunny sky for the gold-diggings.

THE END.

"At the Gold Diggings!" is the title of the next great Frank Richards' yarn in next Monday's BOYS' FRIEND.)