

FREE REAL PHOTO OF BERMONDSEY BILLY WELLS

(The Famous Welter-weight Boxer) Given Away with This Issue!

The BOYS' FRIEND 1^{1d}/₂

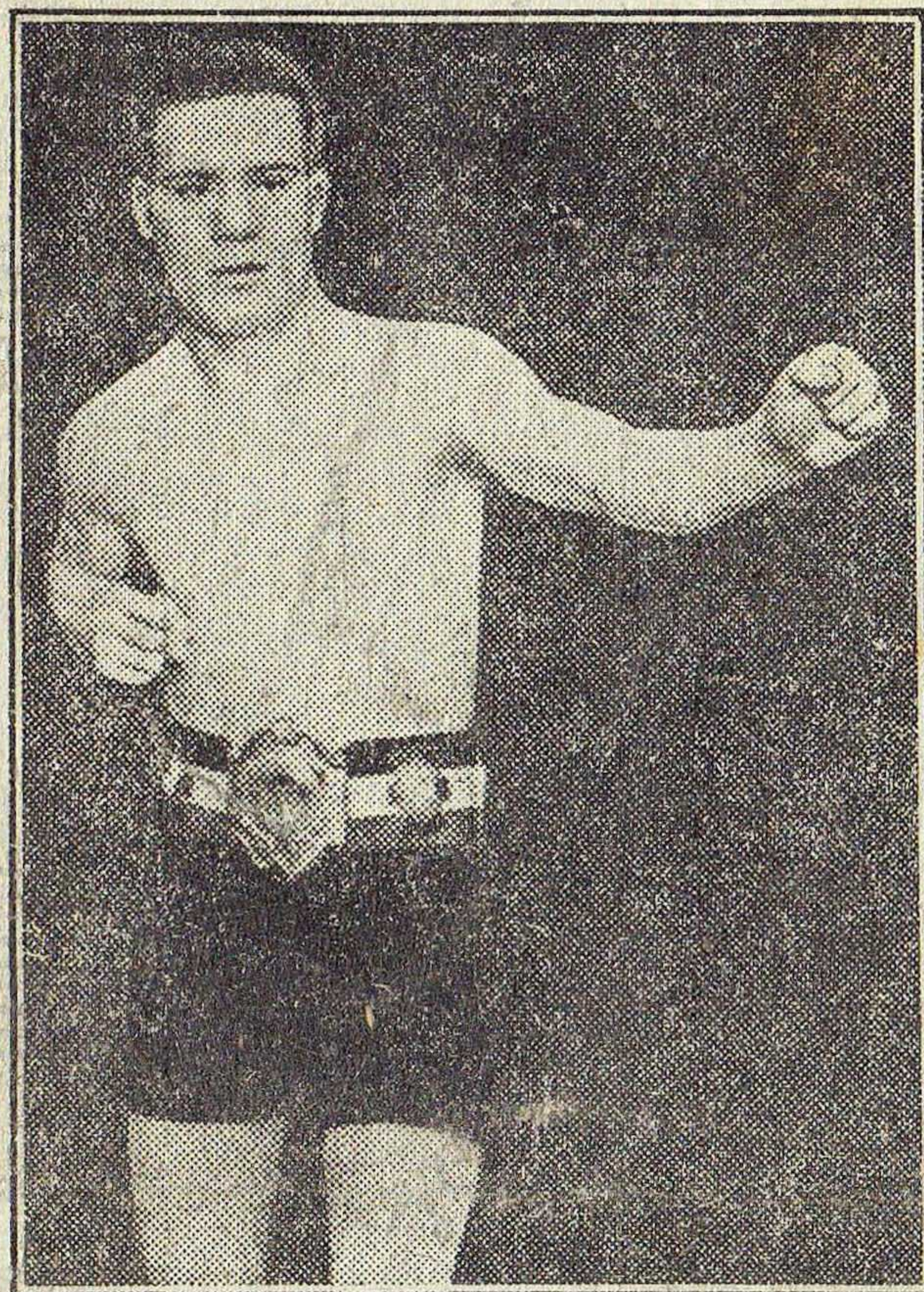
ON SALE

EVERY MONDAY.

No. 1,105.
Vol. XXIII. (New Series).

THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD.

[Week Ending August 12th, 1922.]



Bermondsey Billy Wells.



THE SIDE-STEPPER! by Walter Edwards

THE UNPOPULAR CHAMPION!

The air became black with flying missiles as the crowd opened its bombardment of the champion. From all sides of the ring heavy clods of turf rained upon Joe Blackman, striking his face and his body, and filling his ears, eyes, and mouth with earth! (A thrilling incident from the magnificent boxing story contained in this issue.)

JIMMY SILVER & CO. HAVE SOME THRILLING ADVENTURES IN—

Fortune Favours the Brave!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Tales of Rookwood appearing in the "Popular.")



The 1st Chapter.

Trouble on the Road!

"It's a giddy block in the traffic!" said Jimmy Silver.

The Rookwooders grinned. There was not much "traffic" in that narrow, sunken lane on the borders of Sussex and Kent—in fact, Jimmy Silver & Co. had not had the slightest expectation of meeting any vehicle there.

The lane was not only narrow, but the earth was banked up on either side to a height of several feet, with hedges at the top of the steep slopes up to the fields.

Along the lane the Rookwood holiday tramps were cheerfully wending their way when the farm-cart came in sight ahead.

Jimmy Silver was leading Trotsky, the pony, with the little baggage-cart thumping over the ruts behind Trotsky's whisking tail. Arthur Edward Lovell walked on the other side of Trotsky. Raby and Newcome and Putty Grace strolled along beside the cart.

Narrow as the lane was, there was plenty of room for the Rookwood outfit. But the farm wagon ahead, coming towards them, filled the lane from side to side, the hubs of the wheels brushing against the ferns and nettles on the banks.

The wagon had turned suddenly out of a field gate—the fat, ruddy man who was driving it calmly taking possession of the whole road, without a glance ahead to see whether the way was clear.

A few minutes more and the Rookwood outfit would have passed the gate, leaving a free road for the wagon. Now the road was completely blocked for them, and also for the farmer, for there was no room for either party to pass the other.

"Halt!" said Lovell. Jimmy drew Trotsky to a stop. Trotsky was always very obedient at such moments. It was in moments of starting that Trotsky revealed the fact that he had a will of his own.

But the wagon did not stop. It came rumbling on, as if it would overwhelm the little baggage-cart with its bulk.

Jimmy waved his hand to the ruddy-faced man.

"Hold on!" he shouted.

"Gerrout of the way!"

"What?"

"Clear the road there!"

"Why, the cheeky ass!" exclaimed Lovell indignantly.

The man in the wagon was not a pleasant-looking gentleman. Perhaps the hot weather affected his temper. He had bulldog features and bushy red whiskers, and a very cross countenance. He cracked his whip and waved it at the juniors. He did not stop the wagon until his horse's nose was nearly touching Trotsky's—the gigantic farm-horse looming over the little pony like an elephant.

"Don't you hear me?" roared the big man with the whiskers. "Get that thing out of the road."

"It's for you to get out of the road," retorted Jimmy Silver. "Back into the gate again."

"Likely!" said the gentleman with the whiskers.

"We should have to back a mile or more," said Jimmy Silver. "That's the nearest where you could pass on."

"Well, do it!"

"Go and eat coke!" roared Lovell, in great indignation. "Don't you know the rules of the road? You've only a dozen yards to back."

"Clear the road, I tell you!"

"You oughtn't to have turned out of the gate before we'd passed," said Jimmy Silver. "You should have looked first."

The big man cracked his whip again.

"I've no time to waste talking," he said. "If you don't shift, I'll run you down."

The five juniors simply glared at him. Having matters in his own hands, the big man was carrying it off high-handedly, without the slightest regard for fair play or the rules of the road.

"Look here, Whiskers—" shouted Raby. "Oh, my hat!" George Raby jumped back just in time to escape a flick of the long whip from the wagon.

"You confounded rotter!" roared Lovell.

"Are you shifting?" inquired the big man. "I'm driving on, anyhow. You can take your chance if you don't shift."

And he set the gigantic horse in motion.

Jimmy Silver grabbed at Trotsky and backed him hastily. He suspected that the red-faced man had been drinking; anyhow, it was evident that Whiskers did not mean to listen to reason. And as the Rookwood outfit had been lent to the juniors by a kind friend for the holidays, they certainly couldn't have it run down—apart from other considerations.

There was no room in the narrow lane for even the pony and the little

The 2nd Chapter.

Rough on Whiskers!

"Line up!" shouted Jimmy Silver. The five Rookwood juniors lined up promptly to meet the rush of the big gentleman with the whiskers.

In the wagon, Whiskers had had all the advantage over the little two-wheeled baggage-cart, but hand to hand, the Fourth-Formers of Rookwood had no doubt that they could give a good account of themselves—no doubt whatever.

With his red face redder than ever with wrath, the big man rushed down on them, his whip lashing through the air. Putty Grace just dodged the lash, and before the big man's arm could go up again, the Fistical Four had closed in on him.

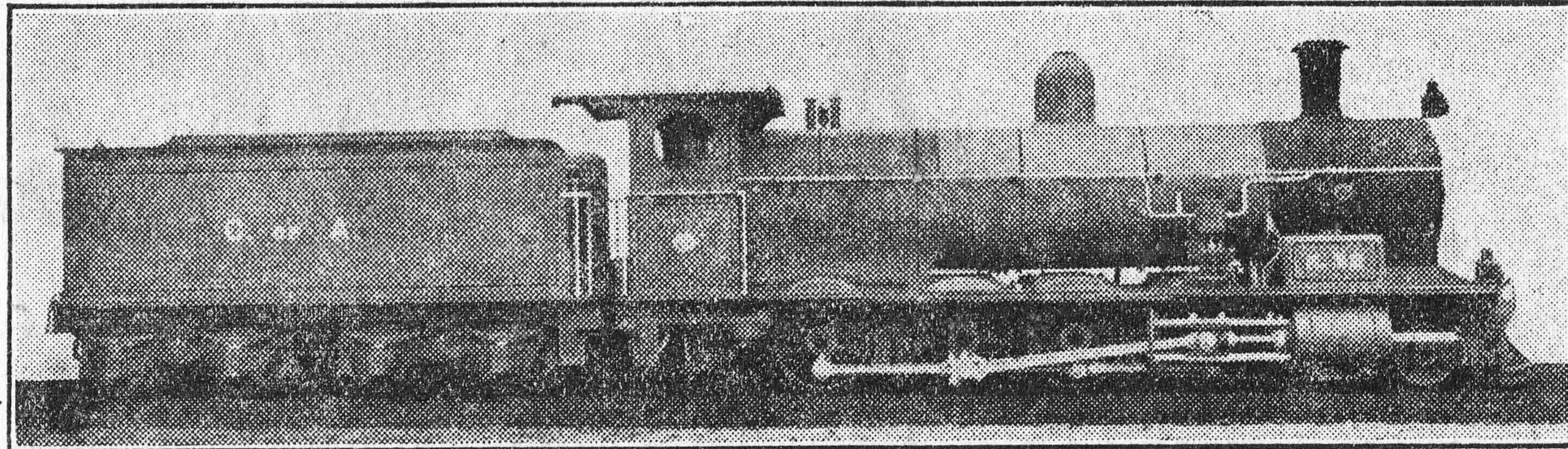
Four pairs of hands grasped him at once, and he came over with a crash in the grasp of the four.

He gave a loud, breathless grunt as he landed in the lane. What happened next Whiskers probably never knew clearly.

But he found himself lying on his back, half in the lane, half in the nettles, on the sloping bank, with a couple of juniors standing on his legs and one sitting on each of his arms, and another gripping him by the collar.

He struggled terrifically, and he was a powerful man, but he was not quite good enough for five sturdy

Grand Coloured Plate Given Free in This Week's "Popular"!



This splendid plate of a Famous Giant Locomotive of the Commonwealth of Australia Railways, beautifully printed in correct colours, is presented free with the "POPULAR." On Sale Tuesday!

baggage-cart to turn. It had to back; and it backed, first of all, into the bank, and when it was steered off that bank, it promptly backed into the other. Trotsky was a useful pony, but he was not accustomed to back-peddalling, as it were.

Five excited and wrathful juniors clung round the baggage-cart and guided the wheels, and backed the pony; and all the time the big farm-horse and the wagon loomed over them, and the big-whiskered man grinned down at them in a most exasperating way.

For a quarter of a mile the Rookwood outfit backed, in hot haste and hot sunshine, with tempers reaching boiling-point.

Fortunately, there they reached one of the little "bays" which are arranged in narrow country lanes for carts to draw into when other vehicles have to pass.

Trotsky and the baggage-cart were successfully backed into that little space, leaving the road clear for the farmer.

He cracked his whip and grinned as he drove by.

The Fistical Four glared at him in speechless wrath; but Putty Grace, with great presence of mind, jerked a pea-shooter out of the cart. Putty was a good shot. In an instant he was ready with his weapon of offence, and as the grinning farmer drove by, the first pea flew almost like a bullet, and it caught the big man under the ear.

"Yow!" ejaculated Whiskers, suddenly.

"Go it, Putty!" gasped Lovell, in great delight.

Whiz, whiz, whiz! Putty was going it! The tiny but stinging missiles fairly rained over the fat, red-whiskered face. The big man did not grin any more, the humour of the situation was now lost on him. He drew the wagon to a halt, jumped down, and rushed at the Rookwood juniors, brandishing his long whip.

fellows who were quite as resolute as himself.

"Let go!" bawled Whiskers, crimson with fury. "Gerrup! Lerrup! Gerroff!"

"Keep smiling, old bean!" said Jimmy Silver, rather breathlessly.

"I—I—I'll—"

"You're a road-hog, old nut," said Putty Grace severely, "and you're bad-tempered! In these sweet and pastoral surroundings you ought to be calm, placid, and good-tempered. You see that?"

Whiskers did not look as if he saw it. He looked as if he saw red. His next remark was more than emphatic; indeed, it contained words that were not good for youthful ears to hear.

Putty released one hand from the big gentleman's collar, caught up a handful of nettles, and crammed them into the open mouth that was about to deliver another volley of words such as were used of old by the Army in Flanders.

Whereupon Whiskers, instead of swearing, only said:

"Grooogh! Grugg! Gug-gug!"

"That's better!" said Putty.

"Now, going to be a good boy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooooooogh!"

"Give him a dozen with his own whip!" suggested Lovell.

"I—I—I'll—" spluttered Whiskers.

"Looks as if he would be violent if we let him up!" remarked Jimmy Silver. "Farmers are generally good-tempered chaps, but this merchant seems a regular Hun!"

"Let me up!" roared Whiskers, struggling furiously. "I'll smash you! I'll wallop you! Lemme up!"

What an inducement to us to let him up!" murmured Putty.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—groogh!—young scoundrels—ooch—"

The enraged man struggled and heaved beneath the juniors, but they held him fast. Putty looped the long lash of the whip, and Lovell and Raby dragged the big hands together.

The loop was slipped over the wrists and drawn tight. Putty knotted it scientifically in the best style of a first-class Boy Scout.

"Now the dear gent won't do any harm," said Putty. "Can't waste any more time teaching him manners!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Rookwooders rolled the big man into the nettles and left him. He rolled and struggled and sat up, jerking savagely at the bonds on his wrists. But for the fact that his hands were tied, most certainly there would have been a terrific affray on the spot.

Jimmy Silver & Co. returned to Trotsky, who was cheerfully cropping the grass.

"Good-bye, Gilbert!" called out Putty Grace, waving his hand.

"Farewell, Freddy!" chuckled Lovell.

The farmer struggled to his feet.

"Take this here off!" he roared.

"How am I to drive my hoss with my hands like this here?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Putty.

"You young rips—"

"You'll work it loose in time," said Jimmy Silver consolingly. "Say half an hour. That will give you time to reflect on the trouble caused by bad temper, dear man!"

"You—you—you—"

"Ta-ta, Whiskers!"

The chums of Rookwood wended their way onward again with Trotsky, leaving Whiskers struggling with the whiplash.

He disappeared behind a bend of the lane, though his voice could be heard for quite a long time across the intervening fields.

Jimmy Silver & Co. passed the gate of the field whence the wagon had emerged, having lost a good hour's time owing to the obstinacy of Mr. Whiskers. But they were comforted by the knowledge that Whiskers had probably lost as much.

"That would be a jolly good field

"You see, there's a bridge. The lane runs over a little wooden bridge yonder," said Putty patiently and kindly. "Bridges often mean water under them—not always, of course."

"Oh, so there is!" said Lovell, making out the rustic bridge through the trees. "Well, a bridge means a stream always."

"Not always. Often!" murmured Putty.

"Always," asserted Lovell, "unless it's a railway cutting, and you can see it isn't that."

"My dear chap, there's another bridge here that hasn't anything under it but a huge gap," said Putty.

"I don't see it!" said Lovell, staring round him.

"I do!"

"Well, where is it?" demanded Arthur Edward warmly.

Putty tapped him gently and unexpectedly on the nose.

"There!" he explained.

It took Lovell, whose intellect did not work rapidly, about a minute to realise that it was the bridge of his nose that Putty was alluding to. By that time Putty was well along the lane, going ahead so as to lose Lovell's further remarks, which were emphatic and personal.

Trotsky and the juniors followed on behind Putty, who reached the little wooden bridge well ahead of them.

He stopped and sat on the low parapet to wait for them, looking down at the stream that ran beneath between steep, rushy, and reedy banks.

Then all of a sudden, to the amazement of his comrades, Putty jumped on the parapet, threw his hands together, and dived off, and vanished from sight.

The 3rd Chapter.

Rookwooders to the Rescue!

"What the thump—"

"Putty!"

"What the dickens—"

In their amazement, Jimmy Silver

& Co. stood and stared at the empty bridge ahead from which Putty had so suddenly vanished.

Why a fellow should dive into a stream with his clothes on was a deep mystery to the Fistical Four.

"He's potty!" growled Lovell.

"There's something up!" said Jimmy Silver quickly.

And, leaving the outfit, the captain of the Rookwood Fourth raced forward to the bridge, reaching it in a few seconds.

He stared over the low wooden parapet into the stream.

"Good heavens!" gasped Jimmy.

He could see now why Putty had dived from the bridge. Down the stream a little girl's hat was floating on the current, and Putty, swimming strongly, had just reached its owner and dragged her to the surface. It was a child of five or six. And a number of red poppies, scattered on the steep bank and floating on the current, showed that the little girl had been gathering flowers, when she had lost her footing and fallen in. The stream was not deep, but it was swift, and Putty was only just in time to save the child from being swept away under the bridge to certain death.

"Hold on, Putty!" shouted Jimmy.

"What's up?" bawled Lovell, from the road.

Jimmy Silver did not heed that question if he heard it. He could see that Putty was in difficulties, and he stayed only to throw off his hat and his jacket, and then he dived.

He came up a yard or two from Putty, who was swimming with one hand, and supporting the child with the other.

Jimmy was with him in a twinkling, and relieved him of his burden. But there was no hold on the banks, and they were swept under the bridge together, the child between them, quite unconscious.

Lovell reached the bridge, and stared over in bewilderment.

"Well, of all the potty duffers!" ejaculated Lovell. "Fancy fellows

"Dear man!" said Putty.

"Well, how do you know?" demanded Lovell.

jumping into the water with their clobber on! I'd jolly well like a swim after that dashed dust, but—"

"Help!"

Raby and Newcome ran to the other side of the bridge. Then, seeing what was on, they scrambled down to the bank.

"Come on, Lovell!" yelled Raby. "What about the pony?" howled back Lovell. "Are you going to leave the pony to wander away?"

"Come on!" bawled Newcome. "Rot! The pony will clear off if I do. What's on, anyway?"

Raby and Newcome did not answer that. They were wading waist-deep in the water, holding on to long branches of willows, to help Jimmy Silver and Putty of the Fourth. The current was swift and strong, but with a determined effort the two swimmers reached them, and Raby and Newcome clutched hold of them—anyhow, anywhere, so long as they got hold. Jimmy was captured by his collar, and Putty by his hair. But they were secured.

"All serene now!" gasped Raby, dragging at Putty.

"Yaroooh!"

"You're all right!" panted Raby, dragging Putty into the willows.

"Ow! Wow! Yow!" shrieked Putty. "Leggo my hair! You're pulling it out by the roots! Yoooop!"

Putty got his head away from Raby's helping hand at last. Jimmy Silver, with Newcome's help, scrambled up the steep bank with the little girl in his strong grasp. The whole party, drenched to the skin and dripping, clambered back to the bridge, where they found Arthur Edward Lovell holding the pony, still in sublime unconsciousness of all that had been going on.

"Well, of all the idiots—" began Lovell. Then he caught sight of the little girl, and stopped suddenly. "Why—why—what—what—" He left Trotsky to his own devices, and blinked at the child.

"Nice for our clobber—what!" said Jimmy Silver. "But thank goodness you got hold of the kid in time, Putty!"

Putty rubbed his head.

"I've been nearly scalped!" he groaned. "Ow!"

"Did—did—did you go in for that kid, Putty?" stammered Lovell.

"Oh, no!" answered Putty, with deep sarcasm. "I went in to wash my clothes. Still, I thought I'd pick up the kid while I was there."

"Oh!" gasped Lovell. "I—I thought—"

"Don't exaggerate, old chap," urged Putty. "Your mental processes can't really be described as thinking, you know."

For once Arthur Edward Lovell made no rejoinder. The juniors gathered round the little girl, and Jimmy wrapped her in a ground sheet from the cart, the best thing he could think of in the circumstances. Her eyes opened, wide and blue and frightened, and she began to cry, with a force of lung that quite surprised the juniors.

"She must belong to somebody near here," said Jimmy. "Too little to have walked very far. If we could find the show—"

"Hark!"

A woman's voice was heard calling: "Poppy! Poppy! Pops! Where are you, Popsy darling?"

Jimmy grinned faintly.

"This'll be Poppy, and that'll be Poppy's mater," he remarked.

The voice came from the bank above the bridge. A woman came through the trees and out on the bank, and as she saw the scattered flowers on the slope, and the child's hat on the rushes on the water's edge, she gave a loud, piercing cry.

"Poppy!"

Jimmy darted from the bridge.

"It's all right, ma'am!" he shouted. "She's safe!"

The woman, a buxom, plump dame, evidently a farmer's wife, looked up at him. Putty hurried after Jimmy, with the child in his arms, wrapped in the ground sheet. The plump dame gave another cry as she clutched the little girl.

"Poppy darling!"

"Mummy!" howled Poppy.

For several minutes Poppy's relieved parent was fully occupied in hugging Poppy and smothering her with kisses. The Fistical Four stood looking rather sheepish in that interval, while Putty fielded the hat from the rushes, and brought it up the bank in triumph.

"How did it happen?" gasped the good dame, at last.

"I fell in!" wailed Poppy. "Woo-woo-woo-boo-wooooh!"

"We got her out of the water, ma'am," said Jimmy Silver. "Or, rather, this chap did, and we helped."

"Heaven bless you!" exclaimed

Poppy's mother, while Poppy still howled resolutely. "You have saved my little girl's life. She wandered away from me in the plantation."

"Better get her home and dried, ma'am," suggested Jimmy Silver. "Like to borrow the ground sheet?"

The woman smiled faintly.

"No, thank you. But thank you again and again for saving my little girl. You are all wet!"

"Oh, we'll soon get dry in this sun," said Jimmy cheerfully. "Good-afternoon, ma'am! Jolly glad we came by in time to be of use!"

The farmer's wife nodded, and hurried away with Poppy, evidently very grateful to the schoolboys, but also in a great hurry to get Poppy home.

"Well, even that ass Putty is some use in the world!" remarked Lovell. "I say, you fellows are wet. We shall have to camp at once now, and you can rub down."

"That's so," agreed Jimmy Silver. And the Rookwood tramps lost no time in looking for a camp.

The 4th Chapter.

Awful Luck!

Jimmy Silver & Co. were in camp ten minutes later. They had found a quiet, ideal spot by the purling stream, some distance below the bridge. It was shaded by trees, and green fields stretched on all sides. That it was some farmer's land was certain, and private property, though the footpath by the stream crossed it. But in the circumstances the heroes of Rookwood felt that they could

when they might be here! Give me old England!"

"Yes, rather!" said Lovell emphatically. "My people hiked me off to Zermatt one summer vac. Nothing like this here! Stones and smells, if you like. Beastly streams with colourless stones in them, and hardly a bit of green anywhere. Expensive, if you like; nothing else in it! Merry England for me!"

"Why, this is a spot for a giddy poet to poetise in," said Raby. "I could write poetry here myself."

"Don't, old chap!" murmured Newcome.

"Hallo, here comes one of the giddy natives!" yawned Jimmy Silver, as there was a heavy step on the footpath by the stream. "Hallo! My only summer chapeau! It's giddy Whiskers!"

"His nibs, and no mistake!" said Lovell.

The big man of the wagon was tramping along the path, evidently heading for the camp. His red face was more ill-tempered than ever in expression. Indeed, he seemed to be in a spasm of rage. A savage-looking bulldog followed at his heels, and the animal gave a deep, menacing growl at the juniors.

Jimmy Silver & Co. rose to their feet. The big man looked as if he meant trouble, and the dog was decidedly dangerous-looking. But they faced the situation coolly. So far as they could see, Whiskers had no right to interfere with them, and they were not going to stand any nonsense, dog or no dog.

The big farmer came to a halt on

"We're ready to pay for camping here," said Lovell.

"Do I want your money?" roared the big man.

"You see, we were in rather a hurry to camp, or we'd certainly have found out the owner and asked permission," explained Jimmy Silver.

"We—"

"That's enough!"

"Let me explain, Mr. Pudsey."

"I don't want to hear you. Saw your smoke from my very winder!" roared the angry man. "Never reckoned it was you again. I came here to set my dog on a gang of gipsies! And it's you, is it? I'll make you smart."

"Oh, bother your old land!" snapped Lovell. "We'll get off it just as quick as we can pack our cart."

"Will you?" said Mr. Pudsey grimly. "You won't! You're trespassers 'ere, and you're going to smart for it. I'm going to lock you up in my barn for the night, and hand you over to the police in the morning."

"What?" yelled the Rookwooders.

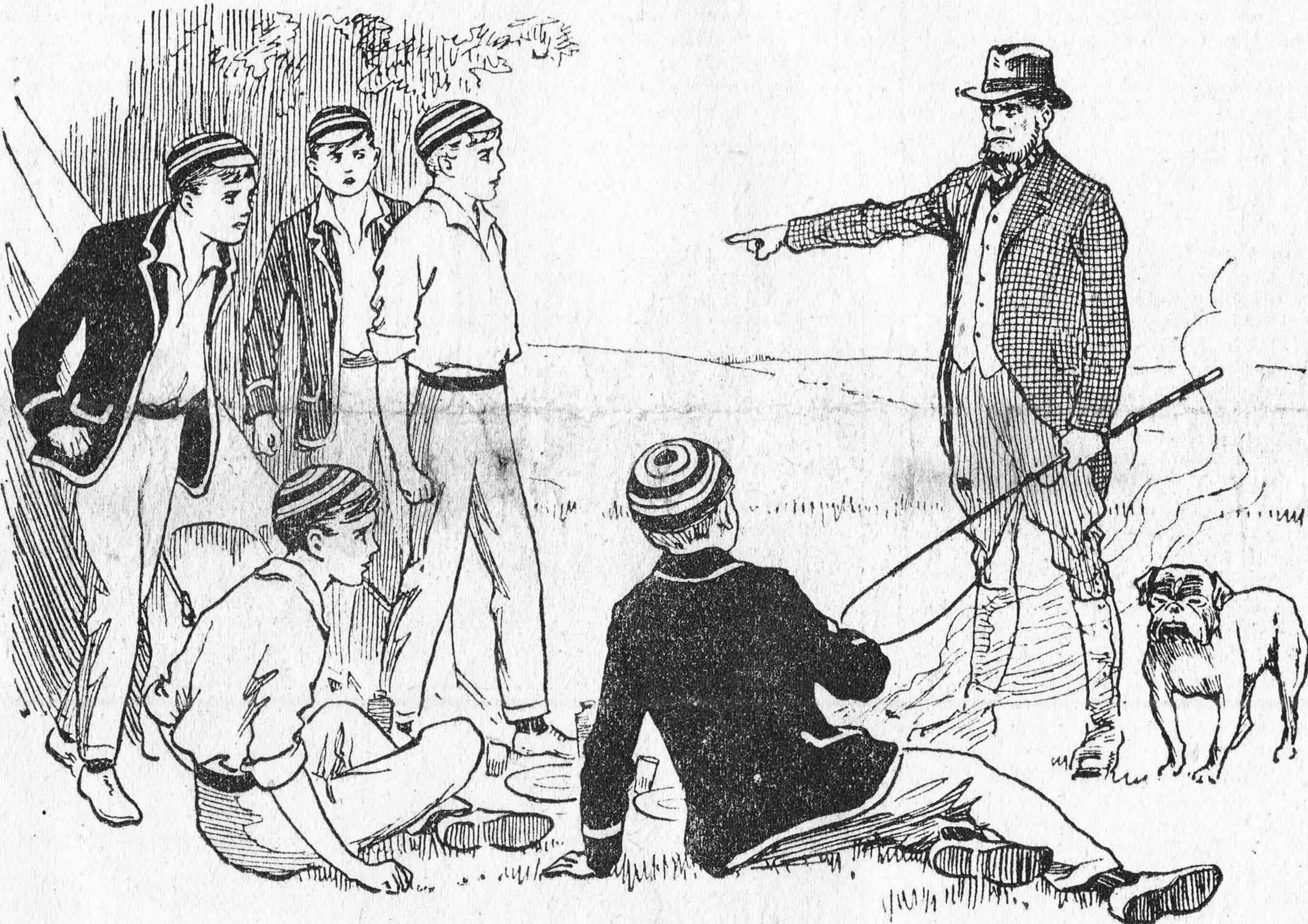
"That's the programme," said the big man. "Now pack up your traps sharp, and get along where I tell you."

"We shall do nothing of the sort," said Jimmy Silver coolly, though his heart was beating. "We'll move on if you like—"

"You'll move into my barn, and you'll be locked in there!"

"Rats!" retorted Jimmy Silver.

"Here, Toothy!" roared the big man. "Toothy! Mark 'em, boy!"



TROUBLE FOR THE ROOKWOOD TRAMPS! The big farmer came striding up with a bulldog at his heels. "So you're camping on my land!" he roared. Jimmy Silver jumped. "Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated. "It's old Whiskers!"

chance it. Four soaked and dripping juniors simply had to get their clothes changed. They were prepared to pay for the privilege of camping, as they had done before, and they had generally found farmers of a reasonable and accommodating frame of mind. The gentleman with the red whiskers, with whom they had had trouble on the road, was an exception.

Four fellows felt ever so much more comfortable after a rub down and a change of clothes. The wet garments were hung on branches to dry in the sun, and it looked, as Lovell remarked, like washing-day. Lovell, for once not argumentative, started the camp fire and boiled eggs and made tea while his comrades were otherwise occupied.

Supper and rest were very welcome to the Rookwooders after their long tramp on dusty roads and the adventure that had followed. There were eggs and cheese and milk galore in the baggage-cart, as well as other supplies, and the hungry schoolboy tramps exerted themselves at supper in a way that was almost worthy of Tubby Muffin.

After a tremendous supper they sat in the grass by the dying fire and watched the golden sunset, and chatted contentedly.

"Topping place," said Jimmy Silver, looking away across the stream and the glowing fields to the blue Downs beyond in the distance. "Some silly asses waste time buzzing off to Switzerland in the summer,

the other side of the expiring camp-fire, from which a column of smoke was rising. He glared at the juniors across the embers.

"You!" he spluttered.

"Little us!" assented Jimmy Silver.

"Camping on my land!" roared the farmer.

Jimmy gave a jump.

"Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated. "Is—is this your land?"

"My dear man, we've never even heard the giddy name of Pudsey before," said Jimmy Silver. "How should we know?"

"Think you've a right to camp out and light fires wherever you like?" roared Mr. Pudsey. "Without even saying, 'By your leave,' by gad!"

The juniors looked serious enough now. They realised that they had put their foot in it. If this whiskered gentleman was the owner of the land where they had camped without asking permission, the complexion of the whole matter was altered. In their previous encounter the big man had been utterly in the wrong. Now they realised very uncomfortably that they were in the wrong.

"Lighting fires, burning up my timber, scorching up my grass!" roared Mr. Pudsey. "I never did!"

The great bulldog growled deeply, and made a movement towards the juniors, showing a terrific set of teeth. Jimmy Silver & Co. drew together, rather alarmed. The savage brute evidently only awaited a signal from his master to fly at them, and a struggle with a ferocious bulldog was a decidedly serious matter.

"Like him to start on you?" hooted Mr. Pudsey. "If I give the word he'll begin, and he won't let go in a hurry, you mark my words! Now, are you going to march, or are you not?"

He turned and looked along the path.

"Here, Bill—Harry!" he roared.

Two farm hands came hurrying into sight.

"See those young tramps locked up in the big barn!" said Mr. Pudsey. "Give 'em the hiding of their lives if they raise a hand!"

"You rotten bully!" roared Lovell.

"That'll do! Are you going to obey orders?" demanded Whiskers. "I'll teach you to camp on my land without asking leave! I'll teach you to 'andle a man and pepper him with a pea-shooter! Take them along, there!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged looks of utter dismay.

They had handled Mr. Pudsey once, and got the better of him, though it had been a struggle. But it was obvious that they could not handle Mr. Pudsey and his two men, with the savage bulldog thrown in.

There was nothing for it but surrender, bitter pill as that was to swallow.

Jimmy Silver compressed his lips. "Nothing doing!" he said quietly to his comrades. "We've got to toe the line for the present."

"And the sooner the better for you!" sneered Mr. Pudsey. "You'll get a hiding all round if you don't look sharp! I 'ope to see you in prison to-morrow."

"That's all silly rot, and you know it!" said Jimmy Silver coolly. "But you can lock us in your barn, if you're ruffian and bully enough! We'll make you smart for it somehow!"

"Enough cheek!" roared Mr. Pudsey. "Another minute, and I'll set the dog on you!"

With furious looks, but feeling that there was nothing else to be done, Jimmy Silver & Co. struck the tent, and hurriedly packed their belongings in the baggage cart. Trotsky, as if realising the seriousness of the moment, made no objection to being harnessed again.

"Now foller me!" snorted Mr. Pudsey.

And with heavy hearts and angry faces, the Rookwooders set Trotsky in motion, and followed Whiskers, the two grinning farm-hands bringing up the rear.

The 5th Chapter.

A Change for the Better.

Mr. Pudsey led the way up the stream, and over the little bridge, the scene of Putty's adventure. On the other side of the water, evidently, was Mr. Pudsey's farmhouse, though the trees had hidden it from the sight of the Rookwooders.

They followed the lane for a hundred yards or so, and then turned into a rutty path up to the farm gates.

Mr. Pudsey hurled a wide wooden gate open, and Jimmy Silver & Co. led Trotsky onward into the yard, past several up-ended carts and a wagon. Ahead of them was the farmhouse, an old building massed with ivy, and on the right a range of barns. In the porch of the farmhouse a woman stood, with a little girl clinging to her skirts, both of them apparently interested in the tramps who had been caught camping on Mr. Pudsey's land.

The Rookwood juniors glanced at them carelessly, and then they started and exchanged glances. They knew that buxom dame again, and the little girl, too!

"Poppy!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"And Poppy's mater!" said Putty. "My only hat! Do they belong to that ferocious old Hun with the whiskers, then?"

"Looks as if they live here," said Lovell.

"Get across to that there barn!" shouted Mr. Pudsey. "Hear me! Get right in, and don't waste time."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Dispiritedly the Rookwooders tramped in the direction indicated by Mr. Pudsey's whip, the farm-hands and Toothy still bringing up the rear and watching them.

But, suddenly, from the farmhouse porch, the buxom dame came running. Evidently she had recognised the Rookwood juniors.

"John!" she called out.

"Don't you interfere here, Mary!" snorted Mr. Pudsey. "They're a gang of young tramps, and I'm going to lock them up in the barn for the night. Do 'em good!"

"They are—they are the boys—" gasped Mrs. Pudsey. "John, I told you—they are the boys—"

"Eh—what?"

"This is the brave lad who saved Poppy's life, and the others helped him!"

Mr. Pudsey gave quite a jump.

He stared at the buxom dame, he stared at Poppy, and then he stared blankly at the Rookwooders.

"Them!" he ejaculated at last.

"Yes, yes, yes!" exclaimed his wife, with tears in her eyes. "But for this lad—she touched Putty on the shoulder—"you would never have seen Poppy alive again!"

"Well, dang my buttons!" gasped the big man. "You told me Poppy was fished out of the river by some young gentlemen—"

"Yes, yes, yes—these boys—"

"These here tramps!" ejaculated Whiskers.

"We're not tramps!" bawled Arthur Edward Lovell. "Don't you know a tramp when you see one?"

Mr. Pudsey seemed a prey to conflicting emotions. He blinked at the Rookwooders with quite a queer expression on his face.

"Why couldn't you tell me, blow you?" he ejaculated at last.

(Continued on page 48.)

STICKING IT OUT!

By ERNEST SCOTT.

(Continued from page 46.)

myself about. T' mistress o' t' mill says he isn't a spy; quite t' reverse. It may be that his feyther was a thief, and—

"The know jolly well that he was, Dabley! He got some o' thy brass as well."

"Ay, he did. And I believe him guilty like t' rest o' thee. There doesn't seem any doubt about it, even though I can't condemn t' lad for sticking oop for his own feyther. But we'll keep to footba' just for t' present. We've got a strenuous season in front o' us, as we all know. We've got to get to t' top o' t' league—if we can. Our defence is strong, t' halves are not so bad. But t' forwards are—well, not oop to mark—especially t' inside forwards."

"Centre has been our weak spot, season after season. And I tell thee this, and I think tha'll agree. We 'a' never had anyone playing for t' team that had gi'en anything like such a display as that lad gi' last Saturday."

"He was just fine! 'Twas a good goal that he scored, and we had proof previously that he knows t' way to shoot. T' way he put t' ball past that chap at Blackpool was fine! I made up my mind then that he was going to mak' a good forward, if his dribbling and passing was all reet, and we 'a' seen that it is. A chap like that would carry a team on his shoulders. Gi'en anything like decent support, he'll score goals galore—that's what I say. And I want him in Colville's team. I want him in it, because I know that we 'a' got no one nearly so good—not in t' same street wi' him. I want him in it because I want us to get a decent goal average. And that's why I vote that Len Lowden plays centre-forward for t' first team next Saturday afternoon."

"Hear, hear!" said Fred Playton. "I'm wi' thee. Never mind about his feyther. We've got to get Colville's at t' top o' t' league, and this chap, although he's young, will score t' goals. I vote he plays!"

"I'm against it," said someone else. "We've sent him to Coventry, and we're not going to 'a' a popular hero made out o' him!"

"That shows tha'rt not thinking o' thy side. We want a chap who can score goals, and if—"

Tom held up a hand. "Just a minute, Fred," he said. "We're for Lowden, he's against it. That's two to one; we'll put it to t' count!"

"I'm against it," said Ned Clifton. "I'm for it!"

"Against!"

"That's three to three," said Tom. "Now then, Richards, tha 'a' t' casting vote. What tha say goes. Dost want Lowden to play or not?"

Richards was treasurer of the club. He worked in the office, and he, although an injury received in the war prevented him from playing, was very enthusiastic. He never missed a match.

He had agreed in sending Lowden to Coventry; he had been against the lad all the time. But he had seen him play on Saturday, and he did not keep them long in waiting for his decision now.

"We've got to 'a' a decent centre-forward—'tis very necessary," he said. "I vote that Lowden plays."

Dabley heaved a sigh of satisfaction. "That's all that is necessary,

then," he said. "Lowden is down to play for Saturday—if he will. But I don't think that there will be any doubt about that. I will gi' him credit for saying that he's a thorough sportsman. He has never borne any ill-will. Whenever he has been asked to play he has done so."

"He would," said Ned Clifton, a pal of Brigson's. "He wants to keep in wi' us all so that he can go on playing t' spy!"

"I don't believe he is a spy!" Dabley retorted. "Anyway, 'twill be time eno' to deal wi' that when we find out for certain. For t' present he plays."

At the earliest possible moment Bert took this intelligence to the manager, who frowned slightly when he heard it.

"So they're not going to keep him at Coventry, then?" he said.

"It doesn't look like it. Once he starts playing—and if he scores a few goals—they'll chuck their hats oop in t' air and cheer him for all they're worth. They're like that, t' lot o' fools! I thought, mayhap, that tha could put a stop to it, sir—forbid them to let him play."

"That is for the committee to decide. They have decided in his favour, you say?"

"By one vote, that's all." Silas Warner shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't like the idea of this, Brigson," he said. "I don't want Lowden to become popular; you know that perfectly well. But at the same time I cannot interfere. It is against my principle. He'll have to play; but you ought to be able to see to it that he doesn't play for long, if you're in the same team."

"What do you mean?" Silas Warner lowered his voice to a whisper. Bert Brigson listened, and then started.

"'Tis a risky thing to do," he said. "If—if they found me out in that tha'd gi' me a terrible twisting. Tom Dabley especially. He—he's got a knife into me as it is; he takes Lowden's part in everything."

Warner scribbled a note on his blotting-pad. "I'll remember Tom Dabley," he said. "I've had some little trouble with him myself. He seems to think that he can do just as he likes. He'll find out his mistake. I can easily replace him."

"T' rest don't seem to think so; he takes t' lead in all the sports," he said. "If—if they found me out in that tha'd gi' me a terrible twisting. Tom Dabley especially. He—he's got a knife into me as it is; he takes Lowden's part in everything."

This was true enough. Tom Dabley was the accepted leader of the sporting section. He knew more about football and cricket than any of the others. He was an expert boxer, too, and a wrestler.

In short, he was a fine, straight man if a little quick-tempered. But he had made Colville's a better place, all the same. Tom Dabley believed in playing the game. He believed implicitly in sport for the younger men. He thought it far better that they should be on the football or cricket field than lounging round the streets. And he was right.

But Silas Warner did not have the interests of the employees at heart really. He only pretended that he did. Actually, he cared nothing for them at all. He had his own axe to grind.

And this fresh news about Lowden annoyed him. The lad must not get popular at the mill, and he must be got out of it.

And if Dabley was working against him, Dabley must go, that was all.

"I'll give him a chance, though," the manager murmured to himself. And the next morning Dabley was sent for.

Silas Warner was far too cunning to say anything outright. He only suggested that it might not be altogether a good thing for Lowden to be taken into the football team in regard to his past as the general opinion was against him.

"We've had that out at committee, sir, and he's been elected. He's t' finest young centre-forward we've ever had, and we can't do wi'out his services."

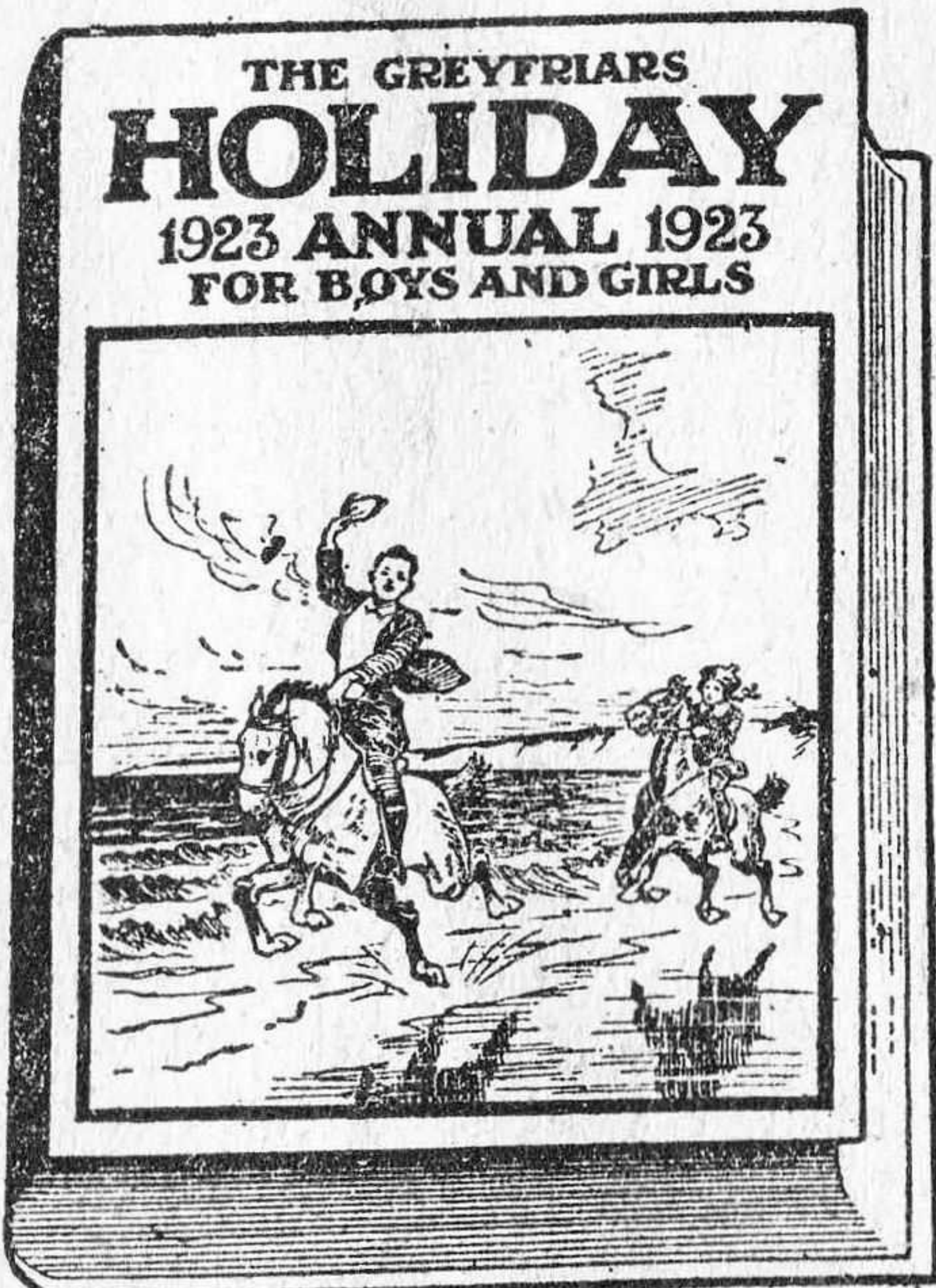
"You remember the father, Dabley?"

"Ay, I do, sir! I lost money o'er him. But I can't help thinking that Len Lowden is a sport."

Warner nodded. "Very well," he said. "If that is so we will say no more about it. You are a man of experience; you should

THE BOOK THAT IS FAMOUS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD!

(Out on September 1st!)



Packed with delicious reading—complete stories of school and adventure, articles, coloured plates, puzzles, riddles, tricks, etc.

PRICE 6/-

You mustn't miss this Big Budget of the best reading—three hundred and sixty pages of sheer delight!

Start saving up for it NOW!

know. Don't think that I want to do the lad any harm. I don't. Far from it. He seems to have taken a dislike to me. He seems to think I am his worst enemy. That is absurd, of course. I am not the enemy of anyone. I like to make those working under my instructions as comfortable and happy as possible. I hope you will win the first match, Dabley, and that your new discovery will be all that you think."

"We're hoping for the best, sir." Tom Dabley went out. Immediately the door had closed behind him the smooth, suave smile went from the manager's face and was replaced with a frown.

"Yes," he murmured, "Dabley will have to go. He's in the way."

He was more than ever of that opinion when, later, he saw the following notice stuck up on the wall:

"The team for Saturday, to play against Huggesdale, has been selected as follows:

"Dudley; Smith and Jarvis; Brigson, Firth, and E. Richards; Dalton, Jones, Lowden, Harrison, Carter.

"Signed for the committee,

"T. DABLEY."

Len's Triumph!

Huggesdale had been a fine team the previous season, and were represented to be even stronger this year. They belonged to a neighbouring town, and were just as keen on winning the championship as Colville's. Last season they had taken the whole of the four points, and so Dabley was especially eager for revenge.

He had informed Len that he was to play at centre-forward for the first team, and the boy had said that he would be glad to turn out.

All his spare time Len had been practising. He had dribbled with a tennis-ball, and then in the little bit of garden he had fixed up a small goal for shooting practice.

All his old confidence came back. He told his mother that he was going to do well.

"For there's a lot depends on it, mum," he added. "It isn't only the scoring of goals and keeping my place in the side, you know. Oh, no; there's more than that in it—a lot more! You realise that, don't you? It means that I'm out to break the set that has been made against me. They sent me to Coventry for nothing at all—for no fault of my own. They condemned me just on suspicion. I—I'm not grumbling about that. I don't bear the majority of the workers any malice. I want to get them on my side, because then—"

Len paused.

"Yes, dear—and then?"

"It will make it all the more easy to deal with the arch enemy Silas Warner, and prove father's innocence."

On the Saturday afternoon, therefore, Len trotted out on to the field with the rest of the team. One glance was sufficient to show him that the ground was practically full. There was a goodly assembly in the stand. Mrs. Colville and her daughter were there, and Silas Warner was seated a little distance off.

Huggesdale won the toss, and Colville's kicked off. For the first few minutes nothing much happened. It was give-and-take play, mostly in midfield.

But Len knew they were up against a fine side. He could not help admiring the fine clean way in which their opponents cleared the ball. The two backs seemed always on the spot. Once Carter, the outside-left, dashed in, but before he had time to take a shot at goal the ball was cleared.

On the other hand, Colville's were playing at top form. Backs and half-backs combined to keep the ball well out of the goal area.

After ten minutes came the first thrill.

The Huggesdale forwards got away. Brigson dashed in to intercept, but he was fairly and squarely beaten by their outside-left, who showed him a clean pair of heels. Tackled on the edge of the penalty-area, he centred, and the inside-right met it with his foot—a sort of flying kick that went, rising all the time, straight for goal.

Dudley, the goalkeeper for Colville's, made a flying leap and earned a round of applause by pushing the ball away. Jarvis, the left back, caught and punted it right up the field. It fell squarely to Len's toe.

Instantly an opponent went for him, but a flick with his foot, and Len had sent the ball hurtling out to the right wing. Dalton took it in his stride, made a little headway, and tapped to his inside man, Jones, who passed to Len again.

Len took the situation in at a glance. He tried an old trick—feinted to pass, and did not. He got a couple of yards farther into goal, and then—whizz!

The ball went into the net!

(How Len Lowden fares in the remainder of next Monday's long instalment of this industrial story.)

FORTUNE FAVOURS THE BRAVE!

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Continued from page 45.)

"You see, we couldn't guess by your features that you were Poppy's father!" explained Putty of the Fourth gravely. "The resemblance is there, but it is not striking."

"We were in a hurry to camp, because our clothes were wet," said Jimmy. "If you'd let me explain to—"

"Nuff said!" said Mr. Pudsey. "I've had a lot of trouble with tramps on my land, stealing chickens, and once they set fire to a hayrick. But—but I'm sorry I was rough with you young fellows. And—and—and—" The words came out in jerks. "And—and I was wrong—I own it—in that row in the lane. I was ratty, and—and I own up I was wrong. Can't say fairer than that. Now I know it was you helped Poppy out of the water, I'm only too thankful you came along this way. Camp on my land for the rest of your lives if you want to."

"We won't do that," said Jimmy, with a chuckle. "But if you're not so keen now on locking us up in your barn, we'll get back to the road."

Mr. Pudsey shook his head. Evidently there was a kindly heart somewhere under his rough exterior, and doubtless his experience with tramps who had set fire to hayricks had been painful enough.

"No, you don't!" he said. "You'll camp where you was, my lads, and I'm sending you some farm stuff to pack in that go-cart of yours before you take the road again; and I tell you you can't beat the milk, eggs, and cheese of River Farm—eh, missis?"

"And the dear boys are coming in to supper," said Mrs. Pudsey. "My hat!" murmured Putty. "This looks like a giddy change in the jolly old barometer—what?"

It was! Mr. Pudsey, alias Whiskers, all hospitality now, would not take "No" for an answer. The Rookwood tramps had supped once, but they supped again quite cheerfully in the farmhouse; and when they went back to camp, Mr. Pudsey lighted them on their way, and with his own powerful hands helped in putting up the tent. And they parted on the best of terms.

The next morning Jimmy Silver & Co. were on the road again—Poppy waving them good-bye, and Mrs. Pudsey kissing them all farewell, rather to their embarrassment. And the baggage-cart fairly groaned under farm produce, heaped there by Whiskers himself. Arthur Edward Lovell remarked again that that ass Putty had come in useful for once; but Jimmy Silver declared that it was a case of fortune favouring the brave, as undoubtedly it was.

Next Week's Grand Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co.

is entitled

"WASHED OUT!"

Don't miss it on any account!

Order your Copy to-day!

3 MONTHLY. Price List Free.

Lady's or Gent's Brogue Shoe in Black or Tan, 3/- deposit and 3/- monthly. Send 3/- and say size required. Boot list free.

MASTERS, Ltd., 8, Hope Street, RYE.

400 MODEL \$5.15 CASH

12 1/2 Months

is all you pay for our No. 400A Mead "Marvel"—the finest cycle ever offered on such exceptionally easy terms. Brilliantly plated, richly enamelled, lined in two colours. Sent packed free, carriage paid on.

15 DAYS' FREE TRIAL. Fully warranted. Prompt delivery. Money refunded if dissatisfied. Old machines exchanged. Big bargains in slightly factor soiled mounts. Tyres and accessories 23 1/2% low 'sp prices. Buy direct from the Factory and save pounds. Write TO-DAY for testimonials and illustrated art catalogue.

Mead Cycle Co. (Inc.) (Dep. B.635) Birmingham.

NERVOUSNESS

is the greatest drawback in life to any man or woman. If you are nervous, timid, low-spirited, lack self-confidence, will-power, mind-concentration, blush, or feel awkward in the presence of others, send 3 penny stamps for particulars of the Mento-Nerve Strengthening Treatment. Used in the Navy from Vice-Admiral to Seaman, and in the Army from Colonel to Private. D.S.O.'s, M.C.'s, M.M.'s, and D.C.M.'s.—**GODFREY ELLIOTT-SMITH, Ltd., 485, Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.4.**

Hammer, Saw, Chisels, Gimlet, Gouge, Nail Lifter, Bradawl, Screwdriver, Etc. 7 ins. Case encloses 10 & forms Handled for all 11 Only 1/6. Postage 3d. Worth Double. Delight or Money Back. List Free, Novelties, Etc. **1/6**

PAIN'S Presents House, Dept. 9F, HASTINGS.

YOURS FOR 1/- ONLY.

This handsome full-sized Gent's Lever Watch sent upon receipt of 1/-. After approval send 1/- more, the balance may then be paid by 6 monthly instalments of 2/- each. Guaranteed 5 years. Chain offered Free with every watch. Cash returned in full if dissatisfied. Send 1/- now to **Simpson's Ltd., (Dept 4) 94, Queen Rd. Brighton, Sussex.**

Chain FREE

XMAS CHOCOLATE CLUBS

Spare-time Agents wanted. Good remuneration. No outlay. Best makes only supplied. Particulars Free.

SAMUEL DRIVER, South Market, Hunslet Lane, Leeds.

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—**FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.**

When Answering Advertisements Please Mention This Paper.