Æ300 in Cash Offered in Simple Cricket Competition!

THE BIG PARES!

No. 1,154. Vol. XXIV.—New Series.]

THE BEST BOYS' PAPER IN THE WORLD!

[Week Ending July 21st, 1923.



AN UNUSUAL CONTEST!

ONTEST! With the speed of light Philip Branscombe ducked and avoided the blow which Flallaghan aimed at his head. Then he brought over a terrific left which crashed against the ruffian's mouth, sending his head back with a jerk which almost overbalanced him.

(This is one of the many breathless incidents in the tip-top boxin; yarn in this bamper number.)

"HELD BY THE RUSTLERS!"

A Thrilling Story of Jimmy Silver & Co. Out West in This Issue!

left us out."

and read:

Lovell opened the note.

"Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated.

Don't worry.—JIMMY."

claimed Lovell warmly.

silence, returned to the ranch.

under the stars.

The 2nd Chapter.

Foes of the Foot-hills.

Jimmy Silver rode at a gallop

moments.

Newcome jerked it away from him,

"I'm off to look for Mr. Smedley!

ANOTHER THRILLING ADVENTURE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. OUT WEST!



The 1st Chapter. Missing!

"Here they come!" "It's the outfit back!"

Jimmy Silver ran eagerly out of the ranch-house at Windy River. Lovell and Ruby and Newcome followed at his heels.

It was nearly sundown, and against the red sky to the west a bunch of horsemen had appeared in sight.

For three days Hudson Smedley and his outfit had been absent from the ranch, on the trail of the cattlethieves.

What had happened to them in those three days Jimmy Silver did not know, and he was growing very uneasy about his Canadian cousin. Somewhere in the western foot-hills the Windy River men were hunting for the outlaws; that was all that was i had tired even his iron frame. known at the ranch. And Jimmy was glad and relieved when the horsemen appeared in sight, heading for the ranch by the Windy River.

Pete Peters, the foreman, came out of the corral as the Rookwood chums ran from the ranch-house.

He shaded his eyes with his hand, and stared into the sunset.

"I guess they've slipped up on it," he remarked.

"How's that?" asked Jimmy. "They ain't got the steers, I

reckon." "Never mind, so long as they're

safe back," said Lovell. "I've been I wondering what had happened." "I guess Boss Smedley knows how

to take care of himself," grunted the foreman of the ranch. "But I'm glad to see the boys back, steers or no steers."

they came on at a tired trot. He rocks, and nothing doing. It's a job recognised among them Skitter Dick I for the Mounted Police now." and Spike Thompson and Red Alf. and others of the cowpunchers. But Hudson Smedley was not to be picked out in the bunch of riders.

Jimmy felt his uneasiness deepen. The rancher did not seem to be returning with his men. Where was

"I don't see Mr. Smedley," said Raby in a low voice. "He may be

behind, though-" Newcome ran into the ranch-house

for the field-glasses. Jimmy Silver noticed a grim look on Pete Peters' bronzed visage.

"The boss ain't there," he said. "What the thunder-"

He broke off, and shouted to Baldy in the cookhouse: "Get a move on. Baldy! Here come the boys, and they'lligbe hungry, I reckon."

"I guess supper'll be ready," called back Baldy. Pots and pans were clinking in the ranch cookhouse.

Newcome came back with the glasses and silently handed them to Jimmy Silver. Jimmy stared through | grows hot." the binoculars at the approaching riders. One by one he counted them. The whole outfit, with one exception, and the exception was Hudson Smedley, the "boss" of the Windy River

"He's not there," said Jimmy in a low voice.

"The rustlers can't have got him!"

had established themselves in the foot- brow was wrinkled in thought. I ness sake, Lovell," exclaimed Raby. I It was rash and reckless; and he i continued overleaf.)

during the past few weeks had levied | cousin, the bluff and kind-hearted tribute on half the ranches in the rancher, was in the hands of the section. There had been a raid on rustlers. That knowledge was enough the Windy River Ranch itself, which to drive every other thought from had been beaten off, by good fortune, I Jimmy's mind. Supper was on the and since then half a dozen men from I the Sunset Ranch had remained there with Pete Peters, to keep watch and ward. Nothing had been seen of Spanish Kit and his gang since then. Had Hudson Smedley fallen in with them in some lonely pass in the foot-

hills, and fallen in the fray? The horsemen rode in at last, tired and dusty and worn, and evidently in despondent spirits. Pete Peters' powerful voice hailed them as soon as they were within hearing.

"Where's the boss?"

"He ain't with us!" said Skitter

"Where is he?"

"You've got me guessing." Skitter Dick almost tumbled from his horse. The long and weary trail

Jimmy ran towards him. "What's happened to my cousin?" he exclaimed.

The Skitter shook his head.

"Nobody knows," he answered. "For three days we was arter that gang, and never saw hide nor hair of them. They're tucked away pretty deep, I reckon, in the foot-hills. Boss Smedley left the camp to scout last night, and never came back."

"He is not-not-" Jimmy fal-

"We never heard any shooting. guess he was roped in."

"A prisoner?" "Sure!"

"And you've come back without him!" exclaimed Lovell hotly. Skitter Dick looked at him. -

"I guess we've been hunting hard for a whole day without a stop," he Jimmy Silver watched the riders as | said. "There was no trail on the |

> And Skitter Dick tramped away to the cookhouse. The rest of the tired and dispirited cowpunchers followed

"Well, I think-" began Lovell. "Cheese it, old chap!" muttered Jimmy Silver. . "They did all they could. Don't jaw!"

Lovell grunted, and was silent. Jimmy Silver turned to Pete. The ranch foreman was looking blankly dismayed.

"What's going to be done, Pete?"

asked Jimmy. "They've got him," said Pete Peters. "I guess they won't dare to do him any harm; but they've got him. The Mounted Police are at Mosquito now, and I guess I'm sending them a messenger. It's too big a job for a handful of cowpunchers. I guess it may be weeks before they get the rustlers cornered. Spanish Kit is a deep card, and I shouldn't wonder if he crosses right over the Rockies into British Columbia when the trail

"And-and my cousin-" mut-

tered Jimmy. "I guess they won't hurt himmore likely to make him pay ten thousand dollars to be let loose."

"And if he wouldn't?" "No good thinkin' about that, I guess."

And the big foreman strode away

knew only too well the desperate Jimmy Silver went back into the time." behind the pines, mounted, and rocky and desolate, deserted and nature of the gang of rustlers who ranch-house with his chums. His Let's see what's in it, for good- started to ride to the hills. | silent as if fresh from its creation.

table. Lovell and Raby and Newcome discussed the news over supper in low tones. Jimmy Silver hardly spoke as he ate. He was thinking

Blazer, under him, was covering

JIWWY'S PLICHT! Jimmy Silver took the pannikin from the half-breed in his shackled hands, and drank the water. "Thank you," he said, at last. "For nothing," said the half-breed. "It is to keep you alive till Spanish Kit can deal with you." "I guess that's so, Pequod," said Cactus Bill, looking in at the doorway.

After supper he went round to the I the ground in great style, and many bunkhouse by himself, to speak to a long mile had glided under his Skitter Dick. The cowpuncher told hoofs since Jimmy had turned his him of the long trail and its incidents, | back on the Windy River Ranch.

"But where were you camped when I determined. my cousin disappeared?" asked

"Gopher Creek canyon. I guess you went that way once, when Blazer ran away with you," said Skitter | canyon, and failed to find him. What |

"I remember," said Jimmy. Jimmy Silver left the bunkhouse, but he did not return to the ranch.

Where is he, Woo Sing?"

"No savvy." "Soonee aftee suppee."

Jimmy listening attentively. Jimmy's face was grave and very

He knew well enough how rashly he was acting. The whole outfit had sought for Hudson Smedley after his disappearance in Gopher Creek chance had the Rookwood schoolboy of succeeding where they had failed?

Common-sense told him, none. Lovell & Co. did not see him again | him, and at least he would be doing | water from the stream. that evening, and wondered where he all he could. "And now-" murmured Jimmy,

was. At bedtime Jimmy Silver was | Jimmy had said no word to the staring around him. still absent. Woo Sing, the Chinese | outfit before he left. He was aware | He missed his chums serely; but chore-boy, brought a note to Lovell | that Pete Peters would have stopped | he was glad that he had told them him from the foolhardy enterprise, nothing. He had no right to drag "Flom Misty Jimmy," he said. even if the foreman had had to lock them into the perils of such a "What the thump!" said Lovell, in him in his room at the ranch. desperate enterprise. And they could astonishment. "What the dickens is | Quietly, in the dusk, Jimmy had | scarcely have helped him. An open Jimmy sending me a letter for? saddled and bridled Blazer and led attack on the gang of rustlers, if him out. From Woo Sing, who asked they were found, would not have no questions, he obtained provisions been practicable. Jimmy had formed "When did he give you this note?" | for his wallet. He had borrowed a | no definite plans in his mind. His revolver and cartridges from the only plan so far was to find Hudson "You young heathen! Why weapons the outfit had laid aside at Smedley, somehow, and help him if muttered Lovell.

"Goodness knows!"

to send his messenger with the news didn't you give it to me then?" supper, leaving the circumstances to he could.

to the Mounted Police at Mosquito exclaimed Lovell.

to the Mounted Police at Mosquito exclaimed Lovell. Jimmy's heart was heavy. He township. "Misty Jimmy sayee givee at bed- then, quietly, he had led Blazer now as the sun rose higher, stretched

"Jimmy's up to something, and he's knew it. But he could not have slept while Hudson Smedley was in danger of death at the hands of the rustlers. He knew Smedley's determined character well enough. The rancher would never consent to pay a ransom for his freedom, whatever threats Spanish The three Rookwood juniors stared | Kit and his gang might use. And at one another in silence for some the lawless, rascals were not likely to cumber their movements long with a "The awful ass!" said Lovell at useless prisoner—and that prisoner man who had been most "He was anxious about him," said active in hunting them down. Raby. "But—but we ought to have Ere many days had passed—gone together, if he went at all." perhaps ere many hours had passed "He oughtn't to have gone! I'd -Hudson Smedley's life would pay have jolly well stopped him," ex- for it. Jimmy knew it-he felt itand he was resolved that at least he "Perhaps that's why he sent the would not be idle.

note," said Newcome, smiling The night was fine; stars glimfaintly. "We'd better show this to mered in the velvety sky of Alberta. Mr. Peters." Through the silence rang the steady The juniors hurried out of the staccato beat of Blazer's hoofs on

ranch. They found Pete Peters in the hard earth.

his cabin, and the ranch foreman Like a black mass against the stared when he saw Jimmy's note. heavens, the vast structure of the "The pesky young guy! How Rockies shut out the stars to the long's he been gone?" West. But the foot-hills were nearer "Three hours at least, from what | already. As the night grew old the Woo Sing says." ground rose under Blazer's hoofs, Pete Peters strode away to the and the hoofs rang on outcropping corral. Blazer was gone from among rock.

the horses. The foreman stared away | Jimmy Silver did not mistake his into the darkness of the plains. I trail. He had been long enough in Jimmy Silver was gone-swallowed the Canadian West to learn his way up in the night. There was nothing | about on the plains. And this trail to be done. Lovell & Co., in grim | he had ridden more than once before. He knew the Gopher Creek well enough.

The creek, glimmering in the stars, was in sight at last-a slender stream trickling down from the hills to the plains below.

Jimmy Silver had to slacken speed now. Following the bank of the creek, he rode into the wide, rocky canyon of the foot-hills, the hoofs ringing sharp on the rocky soil.

From what Skitter Dick had told him, he knew where to find the spot where the outfit had been camped. Higher up in the hills, the creek was a torrent, leaping from level to level in cascades. Blazer dropped into a walk at last.

It was not yet dawn when Jimmy Silver dismounted and led Blazer by the bridle into the abandoned camp.

There were plenty of signs to show that this was the spot where the Windy River outfit had rested the night before.

The charred embers of the campfire remained, and three or four empty beef tins glimmered in the starlight.

Jimmy Silver looked about him. The silence of the foot-hills was broken only by a howl from a distant coyote, and the murmur of the tumblings waters of the torrent.

Somewhere in the hills-perhaps within two or three miles, perhaps fifty miles away—was the retreat of the rustlers. And the hard rocks bore no trail that could guide even a skilled hand of the Windy River

Now that he was on the spot, alone in the silent immensity of the hills, Jimmy Silver realised more clearly the hopelessness of his attempt. But he did not regret that he had come.

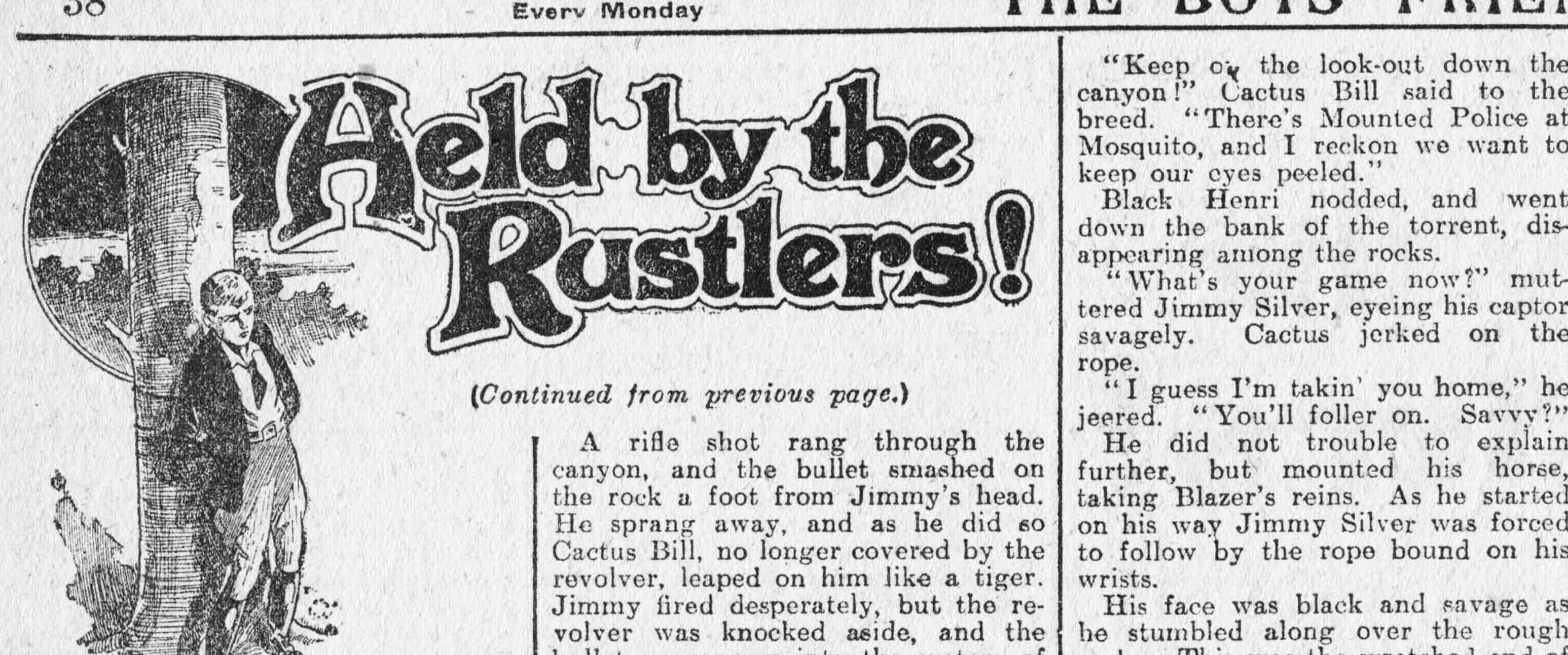
He staked out Blazer on a patch of herbage by the water, and unrolled his blanket. He could hope to do nothing till dawn. And then he rolled himself in the blanket and lay down to get what rest he could before sunrise. He did not expect to sleep; but,

as a matter of fact, before he had been in the blanket five minutes, he was sleeping soundly. His eyes opened on a sunny

morning.

Jimmy Silver sat up and tossed aside the blanket. The sun was high on the plains to the East. It was long past dawn.

The Rookwood junior rose to his feet. His first proceeding was to examine the revolver and make sure that it was in good working order. And yet, somehow, there was a hope Then he ate a hasty breakfast from His steps led him towards the corral. | in his breast. Fortune might favour | his wallet, washed down by clear cold



Published

But for the remnants of the cowboys' camp at hand, it would have seemed the rustler. that no human foot had ever trodden those rocky fastnesses.

Jimmy Silver saddled Blazer at last, and mounted. There was no trail to follow-no clue to guide him -and he left the guidance to the horse. It occurred to him, too, that Blazer might scent out the neighbourhood of other horses, if the justlers' camp was near. But as he rode up the canyon, his hope was slight. He realised that nothing but chance rock he almost rode into a horseman coming from the opposite direction.

"Cactus Bill!" He recognised the man at onceone of the gang that had raided the Windy River Ranch during the absence of the outfit-Spanish Kit's right-hand man. Jimmy Silver acted promptly. The astonished ruffian was staring at him blankly, when Jimmy whipped up his revolver and levelled it.

"Put up your hands, Cactus Bill!" "Waal, I swow!" ejaculated

Cactus. Jimmy's eye looked steadily over the revolver. The rustler stared at him and hesitated, and then his hands went up. He read the schoolboy's determination in his face. Silver had taken his life into his hands, and he would not have hesitated to pull the trigger if the ruffian; had reached for a weapon.

Cactus Bill's hands went up over

his Stetson hat. "I guess you've got me fixed!" he remarked. "Where the thunder did you spring from, tenderfoot?"

"Where's Hudson Smedley?" grinned "Lookin' for him?" Cactus.

"Yes." "I guess you won't find him." "He's alive?" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Sure! I guess I wouldn't answer for his life to-morrow, but he's sure alive!" Cactus Bill was watching the junior

keenly, as he sat in the saddle on his halted horse. The grin on his face puzzled Jimmy a little.

"Get off that horse!" snapped Jimmy. "Mind, I mean business! Touch a gun and I'll put a bullet through you!"

"I guess you're spry for a tenderfoot," said Cactus. "I ain't taking chances. I've seed you shoot."

He dismounted without attempting to touch the revolver in his belt, and raised his hands over his head again. The grin was still on his rugged, stubbly face.

"I'm going to tie your hands, Cactus Bill!" said Jimmy. "You know what to expect if you give trouble."

"Sure!" almost turned his head; but he out, gasping painfully for breath exchanged signs with him. there was an enemy behind him he He grinned down at the helpless in getting them cornered.

keeping the muzzle of his revolver | gang.

Blazer's back a moment after Jimmy | catamount. Keep still, you 'un!" | held by a handful of men almost | horses. Pequod, leaning on his rifle, | lessness. had left the saddle. Had he been | "Let me go, you rotter!" panted against an army. If the outlaws stood looking after him, still with "You're a plucky lad, Jimmy," sitting Blazer he would have been roped in without a chance of escape. Cactus Bill's grin was explained now. The guess you're my mutton!" he of life would be heavy before Spanish and that strange expression on his said Hudson Smedley. "But I guess you're in the soup now as well."

Were desperate enough to resist—as that strange expression on his capture. The said Hudson Smedley. "But I guess you're in the soup now as well."

Some faint hope had awakened for "Looks like it," said Jimmy Silver of life would be heavy before Spanish." There was another of the gang

rope.

Crack!

keep our cyes peeled."

down the bank of the torrent, dis-

"What's your game now?" mut- exclamation.

"I guess I'm takin' you home," he l jeered. "You'll foller on. Savvy?" A rifle shot rang through the He did not trouble to explain | Pequod? I guess there ain't any | From a rocky trail they turned into the rock a foot from Jimmy's head. | taking Blazer's reins. As he started | hyer!"

volver was knocked aside, and the he stumbled along over the rough the breed. bullet sang away into the waters of rocks. This was the wretched end of The name of Pequod had struck on horses were lying or grazing—cattle the torrent. The next moment he his reckless enterprise, an end that his ear. He had seen the man before. that bore the brands of a dozen was on the ground, struggling in he might have foreseen. He had, He remembered Pequod le Couteau, different ranches. A group of rough desperation in the powerful grasp of | indeed, foreseen it among the possibilities, but it had not stopped him. Now it was too late. But even now Jimmy did not regret that he had left Windy River to look for Mr. Smedley. Hope dies hard; it lasts while there is life. Jimmy Silver, There was no doubt that Jimmy enraged as he was by the trick fortune had served him, still hoped for He was stretched on his back on the best.

at a loss.

savagely. Cactus jerked on the a lithe-limbed half-breed stepped into tains. view, and waved his hand.

"What are you loosing off for, an hour later.

Cactus nodded.

Jimmy fired desperately, but the re- His face was black and savage as | Jimmy Silver was staring hard at |

and his dusky face, his cruel lips, and glittering black eyes.

The breed glanced at him carelessly, and then gave a start as he rustlers, and Cactus Bill drew rein recognised the junior.

"You here!" he exclaimed. "You seen the kid afore, Pequod?" asked Cactus Bill.

The half-breed smiled strangely. "I have seen him. It was he who the rocks, with a brawny knee! He stumbled on after the horses, roped me in, and made me a prisoner

"Keep or the look-out down the | behind at the end of the rope. Almost | Jimmy wondered idly how Pequod canyon!" Cactus Bill said to the all sense of direction was lost to the had escaped from behind prison breed. "There's Mounted Police at Rookwood schoolboy now, though walls. He remembered having heard Mosquito, and I reckon we want to | Cactus never seemed for a moment | the breed tell Trooper Bright that there were no walls of stone or Black Henri nodded, and went | A rifle-shot rang out in a patch of | timber that could hold him, and the timber, and Cactus Bill started, and trooper had shrugged his shoulders appearing among the rocks. | pulled in his horse with a savage | and laughed. But it seemed that the breed was right, after all, for here tered Jimmy Silver, eyeing his captor | There was a rustle of branches, and | he was, free in the trackless moun-"I guess we're close on home,

"Oh, you!" said the rustler. tenderfoot," grinned Cactus Bill half

canyon, and the bullet smashed on further, but mounted his horse, punchers so deep in the hills as this a deep valley, where a silvery stream glimmered in the sun. In the heart He sprang away, and as he did so on his way Jimmy Silver was forced The half-breed pointed to the body of the barren foothills the valley was Cactus Bill, no longer covered by the to follow by the rope bound on his of a deer that lay under the trees. a sheet of verdure, clothed in rich grass, with thick timber on the slopes about it. In the grass along the stream some scores of cattle and shacks stood near the stream, and five or six men were loafing or smoking about them. It was the camp of the and dismounted as he reached the shacks.

The 4th Chapter. The Sentence.

Spanish Kit came out of one of the shacks, with a Mexican cheroot between his teeth.

He nodded to Cactus, and fixed his eyes upon Jimmy Silver.

"Where did you pick up the kid?" "I guess he was arter us," said Cactus Bill, with a grin. "Looking for Boss Smedley."

The Mexican laughed. There was a loud laugh from the rest of the gang as they gathered round to stare at Jimmy Silver. The schoolboy's face crimsoned.

"So you came to look for Boss Smedley?" asked the Mexican. "Yes." said Jimmy.

"Well, you've found him. He's

The rustlers laughed again. "I guess he got me covered with a six-shooter," said Cactus Bill, with a loud chortle. "I really reckon he'd have fixed me sure, but for Black Henri chippin' in. But I reckon I've got his shooter, and his hoss, and him

-if he's any good." "It's a good hoss, anyhow," grinned one of the rustlers.

"Sure!" assented Cactus. Jimmy Silver felt a pang. Blazer was lost to him for good now, in the hands of this thievish gang. The Mexican signed to some of the men, and Jimmy Silver was placed against a tree near the shacks, and the lasso run round the trunks and secured

There was a cruel grin on the Mexican's swarthy face. Several times he passed his hand over a scarcety healed scar on his cheek.

"You remember this, nino?" he said, touching it. "You gave it to me the night we attacked the ranch." "I wish it had gone through your head," answered Jimmy Silver.

Spanish Kit laughed. But his laugh had a ring in it that sent a chill to Jimmy's heart.

"It was you who stopped the attack on the ranch, and held it till that fool Peters came up with the Sunset crowd," he said. "I'm glad of it," said Jimmy.

"You came here to see your cousin, Boss Smedley. Well, you shall see him. He is here. Bring out the rancher, boys."

Two of the rustlers entered a little shack, and reappeared, dragging out Hudson Smedley.

The rancher's hands were bound behind him, and his legs were shackled so that he could barely stumble along. He was bareheaded. and there was a cut on his forehead under the dark hair. But his bronzed face was stern and composed.

His lips quivered for a second at the

"You here, Jimmy!" he muttered. "The nino came to hunt for you,"

"Jimmy! You should have stayed at the ranch! What in the name of

The loop of a lasso dropped on | guess he wants tying up! Regler | furred with thickets, could have been | Jimmy stumbled on after the paying dearly enough for his reck-

could help him. But it is the unexpected that happens; and as Jimmy Great Competition for Cricket Lovers.

First Prize, £100; Second Prize, £50; Third Prize, £30; and 120 Prizes of £1 Each.

CAN YOU FORECAST HOW THE COUNTIES ARE GOING TO FINISH UP?

We offer the above splendid Prizes to the reader who is clever enough to send us a list showing exactly in what order the seventeen first class County Cricket Clubs will stand at the end of the season.

For your guidance, we publish the order in which each of the clubs stood last year, which was as follows:

1.—Yorkshire. 2.-Nottinghamshire. 3.—Surrey. 4.—Kent. 5.—Laucashire. 6.—Hampshire.

7.—Middlesex.

8.—Essex.

9.—Sussex.

The 3rd Chapter.

Among the Rustlers.

"Got you fixed, I guess!"

Silver was "fixed."

10.—Somerset. 11.—Derbyshire. 12.-Warwickshire. 13.—Gloucestershire. 14.—Leicestershire. 15.—Northamptonshire. 16.-Glamorgan. 17. - Worcestershire.

What you have to do is to fill in on the coupon on this page your forecast of the order in which the counties will finish up. To the reader who does this correctly we shall award a prize of £100, and the other prizes in the order of the correctness of the forecasts. In the case of ties, any or all of the prizes will be added together and divided, but the full amount of £300 will be awarded.

All forecasts must be submitted on coupons taken from this journal or from one of the other publications taking part in this contest. You may send as many coupon-forecasts as you like. They must all be addressed to "Cricket Competition," Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, and must reach that address not later than Thursday, August 16th.

You may send in your forecasts at once if you like, but none will be considered after August 16th.

The decision of the Editor in all matters concerning this competition must be accepted as final and binding, and entries will only be admitted on that understanding. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Football Favourite," "Sports Budget," "Magnet," "Young Britain," "Champion," "Boys' Realm," "Popular," "Pluck," "Union Jack," "Rocket," "Nelson Lee Library," "Boys' Cinema," and "Gem," and readers of these journals are invited to compete.

No. 1 No. 2 No. 3 No. 4 No. 5 No. 6 No. 7 No. 8 No. 9 No. 10 No. 11 No. 12 No. 13 No. 14 No. 15 No. 16 No. 17 I enter " Cricket" Competition in accordance with the Rules as announced, and agree to abide by the published decision. Closing date, August 16th, 1923.

I forecast that the Counties will finish the season

in this order:

FREE

planted on his chest, the stubbly, Cactus Bill every now and then turn- at the Windy River Ranch before I down on him.

had to take his chance. junior. He was a dark-skinned half- Indeed, Jimmy felt something like him. He slipped from Blazer's back, still breed, as were most of Spanish Kit's | despair at the thought of an attack | "You remember me, petit?" he

I his knee, and Jimmy staggered up. I with Jimmy Silver stumbling wearily But the hope died as soon as it rose. | "Nothing could have happened,"

grinning face of Cactus Bill looking | ing a grinning glance back towards | joined your crowd."

on Spanish Kit's gang in this rocky, said. turned on Cactus Bill.

"Hitch that rope on to his fins, remote wilderness. The bleak hillsides, "Yes," said Jimmy.

Whiz!

"Hitch that rope on to his fins, remote wilderness. The bleak hillsides, "Yes," said Jimmy.

Black Henri," said Cactus Bill. "I rugged and stacked with boulders, "Kim on!" rapped out Cactus Bill. The rancher broke off. Jimmy was

Jimmy gave a start as Blazer | fastened the end of the rope to | Cactus rode, over rocky paths, where | Red Deer and prison. Even a ruffian | thought I might be able to help-" jumped under the blow from the Jimmy Silver's wrists, securing them | his horse had to pick a way, and | and desperado like Pequod le | The mocking laugh of the Mexican together. Then Cactus Bill removed Blazer to pick a way after him, Couteau might have remembered it. broke in.

Jimmy looked fixedly at Pequod. The Rookwood junior had put up | On the way through the canyon | Well he remembered the day when | Cactus Bill's glance passed Jimmy | a fierce fight. But, sturdy as he was, | they passed more than one member | the breed, roped as Jimmy was now Silver. He seemed to be staring at he had no chance against the of the outlaw gang, who peered out roped, was led away a prisoner at something behind the junior. Jimmy muscular ruffian. He was down and of cover as Cactus Bill rode by, and the tail of Trooper Bright's horse. He had been a savage enemy to the his enemy the game was up. He | The other outlaw, who had made | keeping careful watch in their moun- | Jimmy had risked his life to save | sight of Jimmy Silver. realised, too, that this was probably | the unsuccessful lasso cast, came up, | tain fastness, and that the Mounted | Pequod when the breed fell from a a trick to divert his attention. If coiling his rope. Police would not have an easy task cliff in an attempt to escape. Pequod's eyes glittered strangely at grinned the Mexican. "He has found

"Yes," said Jimmy.

remarked. "Hitch him up, Henri." | Kit was brought to book. | a moment in Jimmy's heart. He had | dismally. "I-I suppose I was rather abroad in the canyon. The half-breed grinned, and Deeper into the untrodden wild saved the breed's life on his way to an ass. But I couldn't help it. I

His grip closed on the revolver,

Smedley," he said, in his soft, silky

"Shoot, then!" shouted the Mexi-

Jimmy Silver gripped the revolver

"Shoot!" shouted the Mexican,

convulsively. He turned a haggard

and he made a threatening movement

Jimmy Silver pulled the trigger.

But it was not at Hudson Smedley

At the last moment he swung the

The rancher did not speak.

and the Mexican grinned.

"For the last time!"

No reply.

hear, or-

Crack!

that he fired.

glance round him.

with the branding-iron.

better," he said. And he walked away, blowing out little clouds of smoke from his cheroot.

The two prisoners were left together. They were too securely bound to be able to help one another. At a little distance Spanish Kit and Cactus and several of the raiders talked together in low tones.

"I guess it was my fault, Jimmy," said Hudson Smedley. "I let them rope me in. I reckon I didn't figure doing?"

"The outfit came back at sunset yesterday," answered Jimmy. "Pete Peters sent off a man to the Mounted Police at Mosquito."

"They're at Mosquito already, then?" The rancher's face lighted a little. "I guess they'll have this gang to rights before long."

"But you-" said Jimmy. "You shouldn't have tried your luck, my boy," said the rancher kindly. "What did you think you could do? As for me--" paused and shrugged his shoulders.

"They'll never dare-" muttered Jimmy, his heart beating.

"I guess I've got my ticket," I answered Hudson Smedley coolly. "I'm not grumbling-after letting them rope me in like a tenderfoot. They want ten thousand dollars ransom; and they won't get it." "But to save your life!" breathed

Jimmy. The rancher shook his head.

"Not to save a thousand lives, if I had them," he answered stolidly. "I guess I'm not knuckling under to a gang of cattle thieves. And who's to trust them? Spanish Kit's word to let me go after he's fingered the dollars! What's his word worth?"

"Nothing, I suppose," said Jimmy. "Less than that! I reckon he would break faith. But good or bad faith, he doesn't touch a dollar of mine, excepting what the scoundrels grabbed from my pockets. There's one comfort-this game won't last long in Canada. Spanish Kit fancies he's back in Mexico or Texas by this time; but he's making a mistake. It won't be weeks before the rope's round his thievish neck."

Jimmy Silver nodded, but his heart was heavy. He was of the rancher's opinion-the gang of rustlers would be rounded up and exterminated by the Mounted Police sooner or later; Canada was not Texas or Mexico. That outbreak of savage ruffianism would be stamped out. But that would not come in time to save the life of Hudson Smedley.

Spanish Kit, his discussion with his comrades finished, came over to the prisoners, and sat on a log near a tree, his cheroot in his teeth. He grinned as he met the rancher's grim, stern glance.

"I guess I've got all fixed for you, the embers of the fire. to write the draft on Red Deer for ten thousand dollars, Hudson Smedley," he remarked.

"I've given you my answer."

"I guess I'm waiting for another." "I gave you my answer with a rifle held to my head," said the rancher quietly. "I'm not changing it."

"But matters are altered now, since the senorito has visited us," said the Mexican. "You will write out the draft in half an hour."

The rancher gave a shrug, but no other answer.

"Otherwise," continued Spanish Kit, "here is the revolver that will send a bullet through your brain-in the hand of the senorito."

"You villain!" he gasped. "You dare to think-you fancy that I

when a red-hot branding-iron is touching your skin," he answered. was the only one that enjoyed the "How's that, Hudson Smedley?" The rancher did not speak.

Mexican; and he strolled away again, I foothills. Even Cactus Bill, reckless still blowing out little clouds of blue smoke.

left alone again. They did not speak. | Spanish Kit, as he lounged up, and | There was nothing to say. But the | took a cheroot from his teeth. face of Hudson Smedley was grimmer and harder than before, and Hudson Smedley. The rancher's sun-Jimmy Silver's face pale with horror. | burnt face was pale, but steady and One of the breeds walked over to a composed. half-extinct camp-fire and stirred its embers together with his boot. As the embers glowed he thrust into them a branding-iron such as is used for for a moment. marking cattle at the round-up.

"You'll do it, Jimmy." "Never!" said Jimmy

Silver huskily. "You'll do it. It won't be your

act, but his. What does it matter whose finger touches the trigger?"

"I never will!" "You will!" said the rancher quietly. "You cannot face the branding-iron, Jimmy boy; and that it out they were scouting round our | demon means every word he says. camp in the canyon. I was roped in Jimmy, for your sake I'd pay the and bagged neatly enough. I've been | ransom, if the brute meant to keep here since. What are the boys faith. But he does not. There would be the same to face again-I know it. The same situation, and that scoundrel ten thousand dollars richer. You wounded him in holding the ranch! the other night-he's told me so. He was already planning another raid to get you. This is his revenge. Jimmy, you'll pull the trigger when you're told, and keep safe from the branding-iron. It's my last command | sunshine. to you, my boy."

Jimmy Silver did not answer.

His heart was sick within him. There was no hope of rescue-none. Long, long miles of barren rock and trackless hill lay between the prisoners and their friends, with watch and ward kept by sharp eyes. There was no hope of rescue, and Hudson Smedley was doomed! But Jimmy Silver vowed passionately, silently, that he would not carry out the Mexican's savage

Then the rancher broke silence at | "Count the remainder of your life in minutes, Hudson Smedley."

"I guess I'm ready!" The Mexican freed Jimmy Silver's right arm, fastening the lasso so that the junior's left arm, and the rest of his person, remained tightly secured to the tree.

"And you are ready also, nino?" he asked.

"Never!" "We shall see! Cactus Bill, bring the branding-iron. It is hot!" Cactus did not stir.

"You hear me?" shouted Spanish

"I hear you," answered the ruffian sullenly. "Do your dirty work yourself. I'll have no hand in it!" Again Spanish Kit's eyes blazed,

but he laughed. Crossing over to the fire he took hold of the handle of the branding-iron and drew it from the embers.

The iron glowed a dull red in the

From a short distance the outlaws looked on, gloomy and sullen. Cactus Bill made a movement, as if he would have intervened, but he checked himself. It was easy to see that the whole gang went in fear of the Mexican.

Spanish Kit approached the tree with the hot iron glowing in his hand. Cactus called out hoarsely:

"Kit! Let up on it!"



With Cactus Eill holding the rope which bound his wrists together, Jimmy Silver was forced to follow the rustler on feet when the ruffian took Blazer's reins and, mounting his own horse, started on his way.

though his flesh thrilled with horror I and the heat of the iron scorched the I desperate thought had risen in his knew. as his eyes turned upon the brand- | boy's face. ing-iron, beginning to glow red in | Jimmys was as white as chalk.

The 5th Chapter. Shot Down!

Spanish Kit sauntered back towards the spot, a smile on his dusky face. His swarthy finger ran along the scar on his cheek. The savage outlaw was enjoying the situation, but the same could not be said of his followers. Cactus Bill's stubbly face was gloomy and angry, and the other white men in the gang showed by their looks how strongly they disapproved. They were brutal and ruffianly outlaws, but they lacked the Southern ferocity of their leader. The blood of half a dozen races ran in the veins of Spanish Kit-Mexi-Jimmy Silver started convulsively. | can, Indian, negro-and his nature was drawn from the worst of each. Lithe as a tiger, handsome in a bold, theatrical way, the outlaw was little The Mexican laughed his cruel more than a wild beast within. Even the "breeds" in the camp, with the "Si, senorito, si! I think you will blood of Blackfoot and Sioux in them, looked gloomy. Spanish Kit situation. But he was the captain of the wild gang, and his word was "Thirty minutes!" said the law in the camp in the heart of the ruffian as he was, did not venture to dispute the will of the Mexican.

Jimmy Silver and the rancher were | "You have decided, amigo?" asked

"I've given you my answer!" said

"And it is still a 'No'?"

"Sure!" The Mexican's black eyes blazed

Hudson Smedley stood like a rock, bound and powerless, but unconquered. His face was set, but there was no sign of fear in it.

"Jimmy, you'll do as I've said?"

"I can't!" "You can't help me, boy! If you do not pull the trigger another will," said the rancher. "Save yourself! order you, Jimmy."

With his left hand the Mexican took the revolver from his belt, and held it by the barrel towards Jimmy. "The iron is ready!" he said.

Jimmy Silver felt his brain swim. The horror of the glowing iron so



mind as soon as his fingers grasped the batt. It might not be in time | aching and dizzy, the rustlers taking to save him from the hot iron; but no heed of him. All through the the Mexican, in his rage, had given | sunny hours there came, at intervals, the boy the chance, and he used it.

Right in the savage face of the outlaw the revolver cracked, and If the Mexican came to his senses, Spanish Kit gave a fearful cry and Jimmy could guess what his first staggered back.

Every nerve in Jimmy's body quivered from the touch of the hot | prisoners they were left alone. But iron, but it did not touch him. Within an inch of his face it dropped from the Mexican's nerveless hand.

There was a shout from the rustlers, and they ran forward in a | might lay for days in the same state.

with a red gash along his cheek | through; it was terrible to think of where the bullet had ploughed having the life even of that ruthless

the eyes of a wild beast.

But the revolver was still in Jimmy | it came to that. Silver's hand, and the raiders could not reach him for a few seconds. Those seconds were his to use to save himself from death by torture. Crack, crack! rang the revolver twice again before Cactus Bill reached him and struck the weapon from his hand. And both bullets struck the savage

"By thunder!" Jimmy's hand. Cactus Bill picked it Black Henri came in from the from the grass, and for a moment | gulches and spoke to Cactus Bill, and seemed about to turn it on the then departed again to keep his prisoner. But he held his hand, and watch. It was in the sunset that the sprang towards the Mexican instead. lithe figure of Pequod le Couteau Spanish Kit lay still in the grass.

"By thunder! He's out!" Jimmy Silver heard the words with a reeling brain. He shut his eyes at the bound figure at the tree. so that he should not see the Mexican

lying before him.

close to his face almost overcame Mexican was stirring feebly. He was not dead.

Once his black, gleaming eyes opened wildly, and he muttered some-"There is still time, Hudson thing in Spanish, too faint to be heard. Then he sank back insensible.

voice. "The draft waits to be signed." Hudson Smedley looked down on him grimly. He felt none of the emotion of the schoolboy. His

bronzed face was grim and hard. "Well done, Jimmy!" he said ean, his whole dusky face blazing between his teeth. with passion, "Shoot! Do you Cactus Bill, be

Cactus Bill, bending over the Mexican, bared his wounds, and examined them. One of the raiders fetched water from the stream.

Spanish Kit lay like a log. "I guess this will be a close call!" said Cactus. "He ain't out; he's got the lives of a cat, I reckon. One in the shoulder, one in the chest, and a gash along his face. By thunder, Spanish Kit has got it at last!"

"He-he is not dead?" panted Jimmy. Cactus glanced round at him.

revolver round full in the savage. "No thanks to you if he ain't!" dusky face of the Mexican. That I he snapped. "I guess you will pay for this when Kit comes round!" "It was his own doing!" said

Jimmy resolutely. "Lend me a hand with him, you 'uns," said Cactus Bill: and the Mexican was lifted and carried into

Two or three of the rustlers hustled Hudson Smedley back into the shack from which he had been taken. He disappeared from Jimmy Silver's

Round the Mexican's shack most of the raiders had gathered, muttering in low tones. Cactus Bill was with the sorely wounded man. In the grass at Jimmy Silver's feet the branding-iron lay cooling.

Cactus Bill emerged at last. "I guess it will be a close call," he said. "I've done what I can. He may come round by the morning, but I guess he will be laid up for some weeks if he pulls through."

"And the Mounted Police at Mosquito!" growled one of the rustlers. "What are you going to do with the tenderfoot?"

"Leave that to Kit!" Cactus Bill crossed over to the tree. Jimmy Silver's right arm was still free, and the rustler secured it carefully. He did not speak, and Jimmy did not open his lips. As the long hours of the day wore on Jimmy Silver remained bound to the tree, unheeded by the gang, and from the Mexican's shack there came to his cars, at intervals the wild mutterings of a man fever-tossed.

The 6th Chapter. A Friend Among Foes!

Night fell on the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

The long, long day was ended at last. How he had got through that terrible day Jimmy Silver hardly

He remained bound to the tree, sounds of delirious babbling from the Mexican's shack. Jimmy Silver

ceased to heed it at last. order would be. But until Spanish Kit was able to deal with the from his delirious mutterings it did not seem likely that the Mexican would come to his senses soon. Life was flickering in his wiry frame; he even if he pulled through. Jimmy Spanish Kit sprawled in the grass | Silver hoped that he would pull desperado on his hands. But he could The blood streamed down his not regret that he had won a respite dusky skin, and his eyes were like from torture and death, even at the cost of the rustler's lawless life, if

And soon he ceased to think of it as he leaned wearily on the tree in the hot sunshine of the valley. The approach of night was an unspeakable relief to him with the shade and coolness it brought.

Some of the rustlers came and went -once he noted a couple of the gang Mexican as he rolled in the grass. | driving steers into the valley, evidently stolen from some outlying The revolver was struck from herd on one of the ranches. The man came lounging in.

Jimmy's glance turned on him dully. The half-breed stopped and stared Again that strange look came over his

copperv face. (Continued on page 48.)



After a long stare at the boy, Pequod crossed over to where Cactus Bill was sitting smoking on a log outside the Mexican's shack.

Jimmy saw them talking together, and guessed that Cactus was telling the half-breed what had happened at the outlaw camp.

Several times Pequod glanced round at Jimmy while Cactus was speaking. But the schoolboy hardly heeded him. He was worn out with that aching day.

The half-breed spoke in a low tone, and Cactus Bill gave a careless nod. His reply, spoken more loudly, reached Jimmy Silver's ears. .

"Jest as you like! I guess it makes no difference. Spanish Kit will fix him dead when he comes to."

Pequod lounged over to the tree. He did not speak, but he proceeded to unfasten the lasso that bound Jimmy Silver, and the schoolboy and fell, and one or two of the raiders | longer galled his aching limbs. And | your bitter enemy-and it is safe! laughed.

"Get up, you young fool!" growled ! Pequod roughly. "Do you think I am going to carry you, petit?"

If Jimmy had hoped anything from the half-breed, that savage growl would have destroyed his hope. This and it was to Pequod, too, that he was the man for whom Jimmy had owed his release from the tree. The descended on a rope into a raging | relief of lying down and resting was torrent-his enemy, whose life he had delicious. saved. But the half-breed only seemed to remember that he was his enemy. and did not care to remember the gratitude for a service rendered lin-If not, why had he taken any trouble

"Get up!" he growled again.

But poor Jimmy could not move | about the prisoner at all? for some minutes; he was too stiff | Was the brutality he had shown and numbed. assumed to deceive the sharp eyes of

Pequod le Couteau stooped, seized the rustlers? Pequod was evidently him by the collar, and dragged him a new member of the gang, and perroughly to his feet. Jimmy uttered haps not fully trusted. a faint cry. In a few minutes the half-breed

"Get into that shack!" growled returned. He carried a lump of cornthe half-breed. | cake and a tin pannikin of water.

He pointed to one of the rough | Jimmy's eyes glistened. Food or shacks, built of rudely-hewed timber | drink had not passed his lips since and branches, that stood empty. he had fallen into the hands of the Jimmy staggered towards it. He had | rustlers. not realised until then how utterly he | He took the pannikin in his shackled | But no sleep came to Jimmy Silver. |

in the air.

"Get moving or-"

with that whip." "Morbleu! I have not forgotten | remained bound to the tree you might that he roped me in in these very have been dead in the morning."

"I guess that's so," said Cactus Bill, looking in at the opening. "You've made him safe, Pequod?"

BOYS' FRIEND

"Look!" snapped the half-breed. "I guess I ain't taking any risks with him. I don't want Spanish Kit arguing with me in the morning,' grinned Cactus. "He's too durned sudden on the shoot."

The ruffian stooped over Jimmy Silver and examined every knot in the rope carefully. He nodded,

floor and proceeded to bind him again

looking in at the opening that formed

Pequod," he said. "There'll be

thunder to pay if Spanish Kit don't

find him here when he comes to.

guess there would be some shooting

forgotten that he handed me over to

the troopers? To-morrow, when the

chief gives the order, it is I who will

left free enough for him to move

them. Pequod left, the shack, and

handled him, he had been merciful;

Jimmy's heart beat as he reflected.

Was it possible that some trace of

gered in the outcast's savage heart?

Jimmy was left lying on the floor,

a doorway to the shack.

if that young guy got away."

handle the branding-iron."

lounged away.

Pequod laughed.

Cactus Bill lounged across and stood !

"Make the young idiot safe,

hand and foot.

"I calculate he won't get out of hills, and handed me over to the that!" he said, and he lounged back to the log by the Mexican's shack and And as Jimmy almost tottered refilled his pipe.

Pequod bent over the junior and seemed to make a final examination Jimmy turned on him with blazing of the ropes. Through the opening of the shack he was visible to the

But, as he fumbled with the rope, he spoke in a low whisper that could There he flung him on the earthen | reach only Jimmy Silver's ear.

"Ecoutez! Not a word--listen."

Jimmy lay breathless, silent. "I have not forgotten, petit," went on the breed, in the same, barely audible whisper, "you saved my life when I would have killed you. Did not tell you that Pequod le Couteau would not forget?"

Jimmy Silver gazed at him in silence, his heart thumping. Was it possible, after all, that he had a friend | NOW'S THE TIME! to help him in the midst of this gang "Leave that to me, l'ami," he of savage outcasts, and that friend answered. "Do you think I have the most savage of the whole crew?

"You savvy?" muttered the breed. "If they suspect—if they half-suspect -I am a dead man! If I ill-use you, mon petit, it is so that they shall not "You're the sort of sneaking coyote | suspect. You understand?"

that would!" said Cactus Bill, and he "Yes!" breathed Jimmy Silver. "I can do nothing now. But in the The half-breed glanced after him, night-when the camp is sleeping, his dark lip curling in a sneer. He shall be on the watch. I will save finished binding Jimmy Silver you, mon petit, as you saved me, or staggered away from the trunk. His securely enough; but Jimmy could else this is the last night on earth for limbs were so stiff that he staggered | not help noticing that the ropes no | Pequod. Now they believe that I am his hands, though well secured, were | Not a word. Sleep if you can; I shall wake you when the time comes."

He left the shack hurriedly, without waiting for Jimmy Silver to whisper wondering. Brutally as the man had a reply.

> Jimmy Silver felt his brain in a whirl. That day, long ago on the trail to Red Deer, he had risked his life to save the desperate outcast, never dreaming that a day might come when Pequod would stand between him and a terrible death in his turnnever dreaming that what he did would make any impression on the breed's savage heart. But a good deed is never wasted; he had cast his bread upon the waters, and it had returned after many days!

heart. Darkness fell on the outlaw camp, and a fire blazed and gleamed among the shacks. The delirious mutterings of the Mexican were still; the wounded man had sunk into repose at last. One by one the out- romance. It is full of brainy notions. laws rolled themselves in their Above all, it shows Storm at his blankets round the camp-fire, or went to sleep in the shacks.

was worn out. | hands and drank the water. The half- In the darkness he watched and The half-breed picked up a quirt, breed watched him. Then the junior | waited-waited with beating heart | "ROUNDING UP THE and made the thong ring and crack started on the corn-cake. It was and sleepless eyes as the outlaw camp RUSTLERS!" stale and hard, but it seemed delicious | sank into silence.

to the hungry boy. THE END. "Go easy, Pequod!" called out "Thank you!" he said at last. (Thrills galore in "Rounding up Cactus Bill from the log; "the kid's "For nothing," said the half-breed. the Rustlers!"—next Monday's stunfor it to-morrow! Leave him alone | "It is to keep you alive till Spanish | ning story of Jimmy Silver & Co. out Kit can deal with you. If you had | West. Make sure you read it by ordering your copy of the Boxs' | FRIEND in advance!)

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The week after next there is a grand treat for all readers of the Boys' FRIEND. Duncan Storm comes back! It is a real pleasure to print a bit of news of this sort. Since the wind up of his last great serial there has been a continual demand for more of Duncan Storm and the Bombay Castle. There were difficulties in the way. Duncan Storm was far away from England ploughing the main on his own account. But, thank finer yarn than any he has yet committed to paper.

"THE BULLIES OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"

Keep your eye on the Boys' FRIEND for the opening chapters of There was hope now in Jimmy's this record-making story. We shall find the old and always popular favourites hard at it as in the good old days. Dick Dorrington & Co. would take a lot of beating. Duncan Storm has got a fine theme for his new smartest and wittiest. You are bound to like this coming serial. In two weeks' time!

Now for next Monday's programme. I am proud of it, and so will you be, for we have a big send off next week with another of Owen Conquest's dashing tip-toppers about Jimmy Silver and the alert band of Rookwooders in the Far West. This

A MAGNIFICENT COMPETITION!, series has scored nobly on the target of fame, and I have not a doubt of it but that the young leader of Rookwood and his chums will be better liked than ever when they take the home trail and return to prep.

"THE BO'SUN'S LUCK!"

This is special. Sidney Drew has obliged with one of his ripping stories better than ever. It is long-much too long-since we have heard of the resourceful Prince Ching Lung. Well, he will be on the warpath on Monday; so will Ben Maddox and that splendid fellow, Rupert Thurs-

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NOTEWORTHY!

There will be another Danes ry School yarn next week, also the carry-on of Hearne's reminiscences. As usual, when you pick up your copy of the old "Green 'Un" you know you have got the goods.

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