

Week Ending—
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New Series.

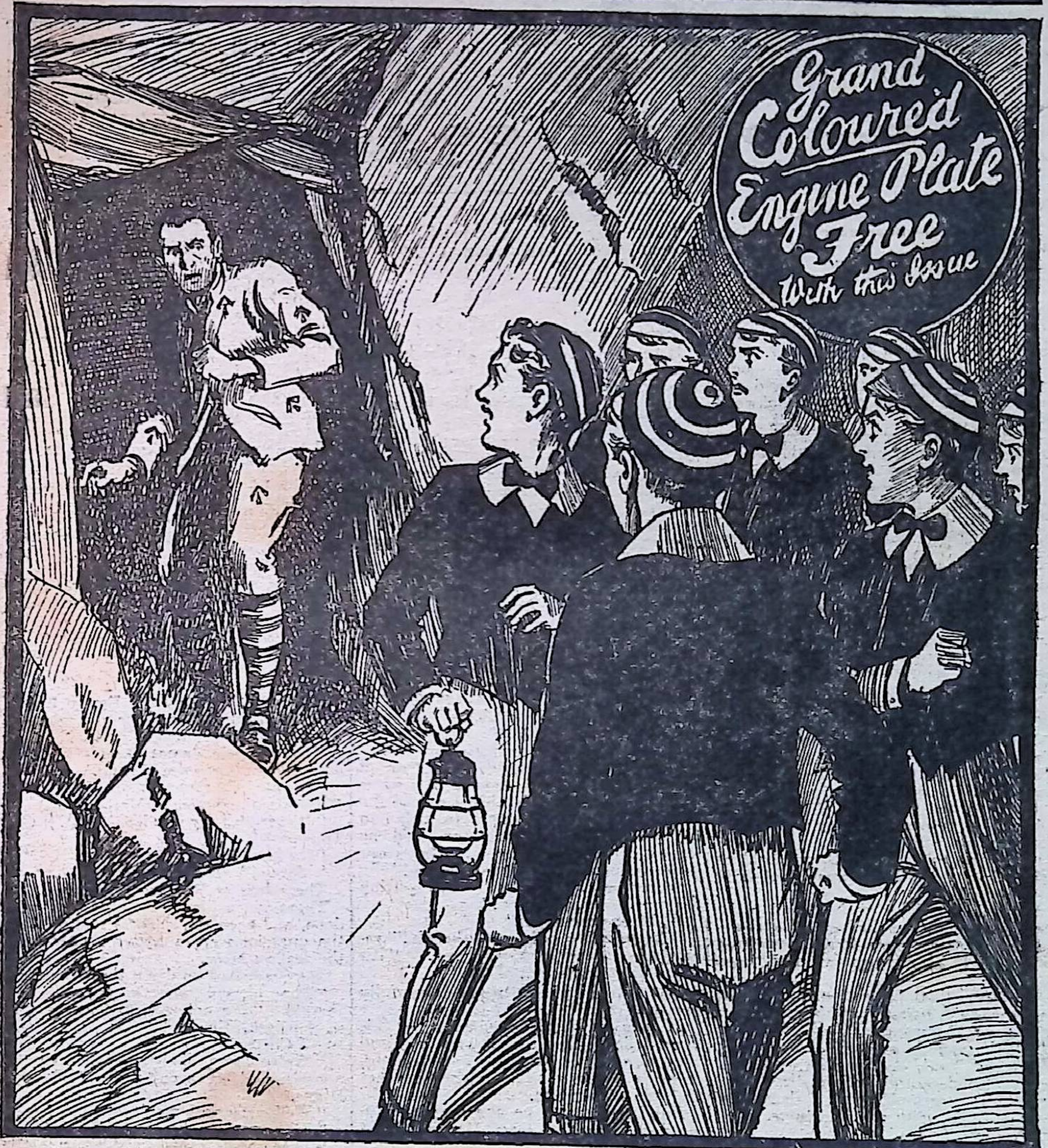
No. 165.

28 Pages.

The POPULAR 2d

GREATLY ENLARGED.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT INSIDE.

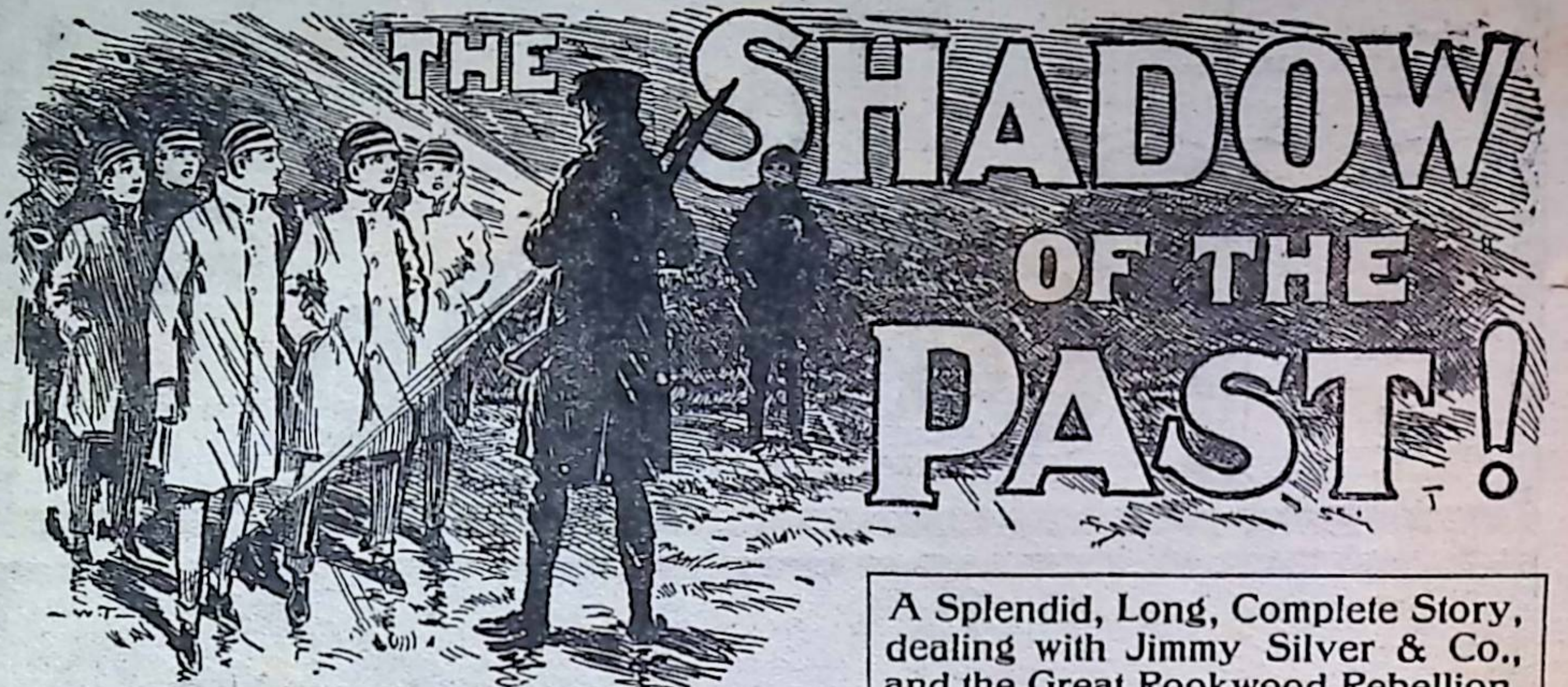


A SURPRISE FOR THE SCHOOLBOY REBELS!

A dramatic incident from the long complete tale of Rookwood in this issue.

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THE SCHOOLBOY REBELS MEET WITH A STRANGE ADVENTURE OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF ROOKWOOD!



A Splendid, Long, Complete Story, dealing with Jimmy Silver & Co., and the Great Rookwood Rebellion.

By OWEN CONQUEST

(Author of the Famous Rookwood Yarns in "The Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER. No Surrender!

"RAIN!" "Oh, crumbs!" "Oh dear!" Even Jimmy Silver said "Blow it!"

It began with a slight shower, and continued with a steady downpour. Clouds had drifted over the moon, and darkness lay on the lane and the fields and the distant pile of Rookwood School.

Late as the hour was, there was a crowd of Rookwood juniors in the lane.

They drew to the side of the road for shelter under the trees; but the leafless branches did not afford much shelter.

The Fourth Form of Rookwood were out of bounds, and they were not enjoying it.

The barring-out at Rookwood, which had lasted for whole days, was over, and the Head had the upper hand.

And Jimmy Silver & Co., not to be beaten, had marched out of Rookwood in a body, determined to keep up the contest, but with very vague ideas as to their future intentions.

Most of the rebels of Rookwood were still in a determined mood.

Townsend & Co., the nuts of the Fourth, would gladly have returned to the school, and taken their chance with the Head.

But they had no chance of that. The Fourth were standing together in the struggle with their headmaster, and slackers had to line up with the rest.

But for the rain, it would not have been so bad.

But rain, without shelter, had a depressing effect upon the highest spirits.

Even Jimmy Silver found it difficult to live up to his own maxim, and "keep smiling."

"I say, this is rotten!" groaned Tommy Dodd, turning up his coat-collar. "Beastly!" murmured Cook.

"Don't you blessed Moderns begin grumbling!" said Arthur Edward Lovell tartly. "Bad enough without that!"

"Who's grumbling?" demanded Tommy Dodd, with equal tartness.

"You are, fathead!"

"You Classical ass!"

"You Modern grouser!" "Oh, dry up!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Don't begin ragging now, for goodness' sake!"

"Blow the rain!" "Bless it!" "Br-r-r-r!"

It came down steadily. It dripped quickly through the leafless branches, and dropped on the disconsolate Fourth-Formers of Rookwood.

Jimmy Silver wrinkled his brows in deep thought.

Something had to be done; that was certain.

"It's no good thinking of giving in," said Kit Erroll, breaking the dismal silence. "Going back to Rookwood means the sack for some of us, and a flogging all round for the rest. That's not good enough!"

"Better than this!" mumbled Peele.

"It means worse than that," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "If we were going to give in we ought never to have started. We've been downed at Rookwood; there's no getting out of that. The Head couldn't down us, but Mr. Lattrey did—bless him! We're going to keep it up, outside the school!"

"How long?" snapped Townsend.

"Until we win!" said Jimmy. "The situation hasn't changed. Lattrey of our Form is still at Rookwood, and we're not giving in till he's kicked out of the school! The Head ought to kick him out for blinding Mornington, and he knows it, and we know it! That's our peace terms, and we can't take less!"

"Ow-wow! It's wet! I'm getting the rain down my neck!"

"Bother your neck!" "By gad, it's jolly wet, though!" remarked Valentine Mornington. "It's about time we got out of this."

The blind junior spoke cheerfully enough.

It was a standing surprise to his Form-fellows that Mornington retained his cool, somewhat sardonic good-humour, in spite of the terrible misfortune that had fallen upon him.

Blind as he was, no one ever heard a word of complaint from Mornington of the Fourth.

"What about going to the village?" asked Raby.

"No accommodation for the lot of us," said Newcome. "Besides, who'd take in a gang of fellows who'd run away from school?"

"I suppose they wouldn't." "Of course they wouldn't! They'd tell us to go back."

"That's so," said Jimmy Silver. "They know all about the barring-out by this time in Coombe, and taking us in would be taking a hand in it. And we couldn't expect anybody to do that."

"Are we goin' to stand here till we drown?" sniffed Peele.

"I'm c-c-catchin' a cold!" mumbled Topham.

"Catch it quickly, then, you funk!" "May I make a suggestion?" drawled Mornington.

"Go ahead, Morny!" "What about goin' on the heath?" "Coombe Heath?" yelled Townsend.

"That's worse than this!" "There's shelter there, dear boy." "What shelter is there on the heath, Morny?" asked Erroll.

"The old quarries." "My hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, brightening up. "Good for you, Morny! I ought to have thought of that!"

"Even Uncle James doesn't think of everything!" grinned Lovell.

"Granted!" said Jimmy cheerfully. "It's a ripipng idea! March!" "It's frightfully muddy there!" said Townsend.

"Go hon!" "March!" repeated Jimmy Silver. The rebels of Rookwood marched.

There was evidently nothing else to be done, and even the slackers realised that the quarries were a better shelter than the leafless trees.

They marched on down the rainy lane. "The blessed moon's gone!" said Oswald. "It's not easy to find the way in the dark, Jimmy."

"We'll try." "We're more likely to fall into the quarries and break our necks!" growled Higgs.

"Well, your neck won't be much loss!" "Why, you cheeky ass—"

"This way!" rapped out Silver.

"That soldier chap, perhaps," said Tommy Dodd.

"But he's quartered at Latcham. He told us so when we saw him weeks ago."

"Looks as if he's a deserter, after all."

"Oh!" said Jimmy.

"That grub will come in useful," remarked Higgs.

"It's not ours."

"Rats! It's ours now."

It was something to have escaped the rain. And in a quarter of an hour more there were few of them who were wakeful.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Shadow of the Past.

MORNING lessons began at Rookwood School with much half-suppressed excitement the next day.

There was only one topic in the school. The flight of the Fourth was known to all Rookwood, and the fellows wondered breathlessly what the Head was going to do now.

Fellows who caught a glimpse of Dr. Chisholm that morning related that he was looking worried.

It was no wonder.

For days the rebels of Rookwood had held out in the camp on the school allotments.

During those days, Mr. Bootles, the

He gritted his teeth with savage anger when he learned that Jimmy Silver & Co. had left Rookwood to keep up the rebellion outside the school.

His face was gloomy when he came into the Form-room that morning.

Mr. Bootles gave him a very sour look. The Form-master was feeling the present situation acutely.

He laid all the blame upon Lattrey; as, indeed, all the school did.

It was a mystery to all Rookwood why the Head did not expel the young rascal.

Mr. Bootles set the three juniors their tasks, and retired.

He was not inclined to waste his morning on a class of three.

Leggett grumbled savagely when he was gone.

He was already repenting of his desertion of the rebel Form.

He rubbed his hands and growled.

Mr. Manders, the Modern master, was a sharp-tempered gentleman, and Leggett had the happy prospect of enduring all Mr. Manders' bad temper "on his own" till the other fellows came back. It did not please Leggett.

While the three juniors sat at their lonely tasks Mr. Bootles returned to his study, with a very thoughtful expression upon his face.

The master of the Fourth seemed to be

Mr. Bootles coughed and blew his nose.

The Head of Rookwood was rather an awful personage, to the masters as well as to the boys.

But the little Form-master had made up his mind, and he was resolute.

"The—the fact is, sir, this is a most disastrous state of affairs. It cannot be long before it reaches the ears of the governors, and they will certainly interfere."

Dr. Chisholm nodded.

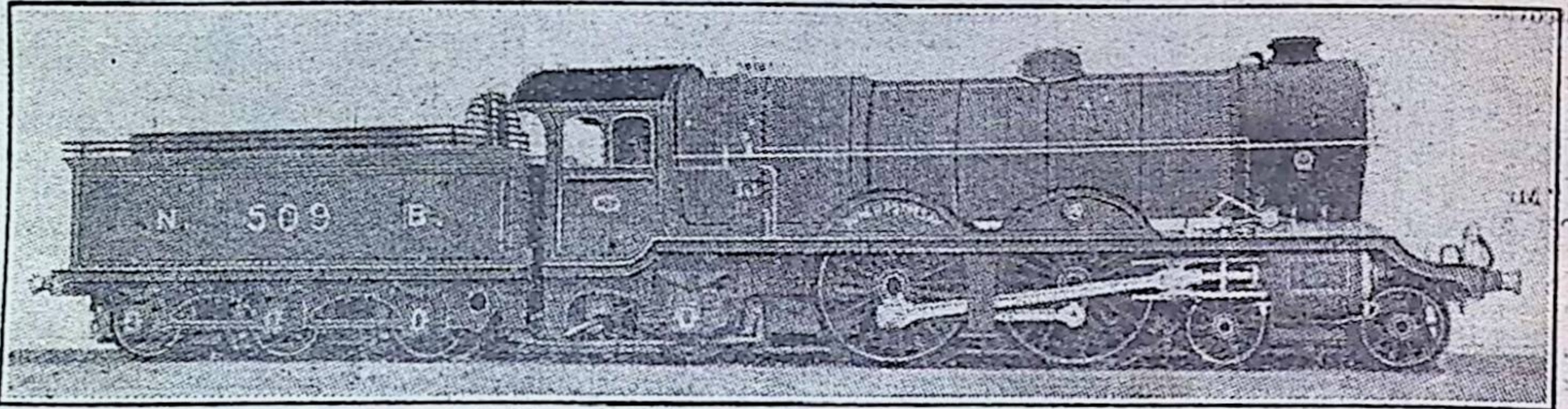
That was one of his greatest worries. What was he to say and to do if the governing body called on him for an account of his stewardship?

"I am going to speak plainly, sir. The whole school—the staff as well as the pupils—regard your leniency to Lattrey with amazement. The boy's conduct has always been bad. It is known that he was once sentenced to expulsion, but after a visit from his father you rescinded the sentence. That was before his brutal attack upon Mornington."

Mr. Bootles paused, but the Head did not speak.

"And now, sir," pursued Mr. Bootles, warming up, as it were—"now, sir, he has added an act of brutal ruffianism to his record of rascality, and still he is allowed to remain in the school. You cannot fail to be aware, sir, that deplor-

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GIVEN AWAY FREE WITH NEXT FRIDAY'S "POPULAR"!

master of the Fourth, had had a class of two—Tubby Muffin, who was left out of the revolt, and Mark Lattrey, the cad of the Fourth, who was the cause of all the trouble.

Lattrey and Muffin had the Fourth Form room to themselves all the time, being set tasks by their Form-master, but this morning there were three, Leggett, the Modern, being a deserter from the rebel camp.

Mark Lattrey was not looking happy.

It was his father who had succeeded in turning the rebels out of their camp, having given his assistance to the Head.

Mr. Lattrey had left Rookwood again, supposing that the rebellion was over.

Lattrey of the Fourth had supposed the same.

He had been greatly relieved.

For though he knew that his father had some secret hold-over Dr. Chisholm, the situation was a troublesome one to him.

He would have been glad to see order restored, and to take his place in the Fourth again.

So long as the rebellion lasted there was no telling how it might end; and Lattrey did not feel that his stay in the school was secure.

THE POPULAR.—No. 165.

NEXT
FRIDAY!

"THE HEAD'S TRIUMPH!"

A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

trying to make up his mind, and to find it difficult to do so.

He paced the study for half an hour or more, thinking, with a deeply-wrinkled brow.

At last, apparently coming to a decision, he whisked out, and made his way to the Head's study.

The Head was not taking the Sixth that morning. He was feeling too disturbed for Form work.

Mr. Bootles tapped at the door.

"Come in!"

The Form-master coughed as he entered the study.

Dr. Chisholm was seated at his table.

"Well, Mr. Bootles?" said the Head.

"Ahem! I have come here to speak to you, sir, on the present disastrous situation in the school," stammered Mr. Bootles. "It may be taking a liberty, but I feel bound to speak."

"Please proceed. If you can give me any counsel I shall be glad."

"The Fourth Form have left the school, sir."

"I am aware of that."

"You do not know where they are?"

"Not at present."

"It is a most unprecedented state of affairs."

"Quite so."

able as the insubordination of the Fourth Form may be, the rebels have the sympathy of the whole school. No one can understand why Lattrey is allowed to remain. I believe that only Mornington's request to his guardian saved the wretched boy from actual prosecution."

Mr. Bootles stopped, almost breathless.

A flush was creeping into Dr. Chisholm's face.

No one had ever ventured to speak to the headmaster like this before.

But the old gentleman did not seem to be angry.

"Forgive me, sir," said Mr. Bootles. "I am speaking frankly. I feel that you ought to know the view taken by the whole school—masters, seniors, and juniors."

"I was already aware of it, Mr. Bootles."

"Now the matter has gone from bad to worse. A whole Form has left Rookwood. Why, sir, it will grow into a regular scandal if something is not done! I do not uphold the boys in their rebellion. But I cannot wonder at it. I must suggest, sir, that this is not a time for punishments. I suggest that a free pardon be offered to the Fourth Form if

they will return to their duty. And, first of all, Lattrey should leave Rookwood."

Mr. Bootles paused once more, fully expecting a thunderous outbreak of anger, to be followed by a request for his resignation.

But the Head did not speak.

"Well, sir, I have done my duty in speaking," said Mr. Bootles at last. "I can do no more. I am surprised—I must say shocked—by the leniency shown to a boy of Lattrey's character."

"Please sit down, Mr. Bootles."

Mr. Bootles sat down, in great surprise. "You have known me many years, Mr. Bootles," said the Head, speaking in a low voice. "To you I feel some explanation is due. Mr. Bootles, I cannot send Lattrey away from Rookwood!"

"You—you cannot, sir!" stuttered Mr. Bootles.

"I cannot."

"B-b-but I do not understand!" said the bewildered Form-master. "You have the power to do so."

"I have not the power. You are aware that the boy's father, Lucas Lattrey, is the head of a firm of inquiry agents—in other words, a detective. In the course of his professional work Mr. Lattrey has discovered a secret concerning me, and he holds it over my head."

"Bless my soul! But—but that is blackmail, sir!"

"Mr. Lattrey is not a scrupulous man!" said the Head bitterly.

"He is a scoundrel!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles indignantly.

"He is a scoundrel, if you like, but he holds me under his thumb."

"But—but you must be—be dreaming, sir!" stammered Mr. Bootles.

"I am absolutely assured that you, sir, have never done anything to cause you to fear Mr. Lattrey, or anyone else."

Dr. Chisholm smiled slightly.

"Thank you, Mr. Bootles. It is no deed of mine that is in question, but the disgrace of a near relative. You were a master at Rookwood, Mr. Bootles, when my brother was here. You remember him? Oliver, my young brother, was in the Sixth Form here when I became headmaster."

"I remember him, sir."

Mr. Bootles blinked at the Head. Never before, since Oliver Chisholm had left Rookwood, had he heard the name upon Dr. Chisholm's lips.

"You knew," resumed the Head, in a low voice, "that he was a reckless lad—reckless, wilful, and given to bad associations. He was my brother, but I had to send him away from the school."

"I—I remember him, sir. But—but you—"

"He went in an angry mood, and he went from bad to worse. When I next heard of him he was the associate of cardsharps and racecourse touts."

"Dr. Chisholm!"

"Then came the South African War," continued the Head. "He joined up as a private soldier. He wrote to me then. He told me that he had seen the error of his ways, and that he had resolved to atone for the past, and either earn a new record of honour or give his life for his country."

"I always knew there was good in the lad. I always thought so," said Mr. Bootles.

"I hoped so," said Dr. Chisholm, with a sigh. "I was disappointed. At first it seemed that he had kept his word. He received a commission for gallantry in the field, under the name of Smith, which he had taken when he enlisted. But—but miserable news followed. He was court-martialled for treacherous dealings

The Head drew a deep breath.

"These facts, Mr. Bootles, have come to Lucas Lattrey's knowledge. In his work as a detective, he had to visit South Africa, he has told me, and was employed in tracing the same German scoundrel who had led Oliver astray—the wretch having remained in the country, continuing his evil work."

"He was one of the many German agents in South Africa at that time who led the Boers to expect German help in the war. But those brave and unfortunate men found themselves betrayed by the Kaiser, with his usual treachery. Mr. Lattrey appears to have exposed this rascal, and in doing so learned my brother's story. Now he threatens to make his knowledge public, unless—"

"Unless you allow Lattrey to remain



THE FIGHT ON THE MOOR!—The soldier did not reply, but he sprang at the convict, and the two rolled over on the ground, locked in a desperate clutch. The convict was under, and his eyes blazed up at the soldier like a reptile's. (See Chapter 4.)

with a German employed as a spy on the Boer side, and sentenced to death."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, greatly agitated. "I never heard of this!"

The Head smiled bitterly.

"I was not likely to tell anyone," he said, "I had the news from a friend in the regiment who knew that Lieutenant Smith was a connection of mine, and that I was interested in him, though he did not know all. Oliver escaped the night before his execution, and has never been heard of since. He escaped death, but not the blackest shame, worse than a thousand deaths. One letter came to me in his handwriting. I threw it into the fire unopened. I had done with him. I shut the thought of him from my mind, and kept the wretched secret. He had sinned and suffered under another name, and I was thankful that my name was not to be dragged in the mire by his crime, a name that had always been honoured till he bore it."

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Bootles.

at Rookwood!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, comprehending at last.

"Yes. He desires to save the disgrace of his son. As a price, he promises to keep concealed my disgrace," said the Head heavily. "I felt you were entitled to know this, Mr. Bootles; I should not like you to misjudge me. Can I face such an exposure—the public knowledge that my brother was condemned to death by court-martial as a traitor, and now lives as a fugitive on the earth under the ban of the law, his life forfeit if he should be found?"

Mr. Bootles was silent.

"I could not remain headmaster of Rookwood," continued Dr. Chisholm, in an agitated voice. "I should be compelled to resign, to hide my shame in seclusion. I have a wife and a child to think of, Mr. Bootles; can I cover them with my own disgrace—my brother's disgrace. It was a bitter blow to me, but I decided to allow Lattrey to remain, at his father's order."

The Fourth Form master did not speak.

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A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS. BY OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"THE HEAD'S TRIUMPH!"

His hand was under his coat. It came out suddenly, and there was a sudden flash, and a stunning report. A sharp, terrible cry rang on the heath, and the soldier pitched sideways and fell in the grass. The convict, panting, struggled up. But before the villain could rise, Jimmy Silver had reached him. He struck with all his strength, and the blow caught the convict in the mouth, and stretched him in the grass. The rascal, who had not seen the juniors yet, was taken completely by surprise. Before he could even think of using his weapon, Kit Erroll had wrenched it from his hand, and the juniors had hurled themselves upon him. The convict, panting and cursing, struggled furiously. But the six sturdy Rookwood juniors were too much for him. He was held helplessly, and Jimmy Silver bound his wrists together with a whipcord from his pocket. Then Jimmy Silver went on his knees beside the soldier. Blood drenched the khaki tunic, and the man's face was deathly white. But he was still conscious. "You're hurt!" groaned Jimmy. The wounded man struggled to speak. Jimmy Silver had to bend low to catch his words. Faint and low the voice came. "The bullet's in my chest—I think I'm done. Tell my brother—tell him—" The voice trailed away. "Your brother?" said Jimmy. "His name?" "Dr. Chisholm, the headmaster of your school." The voice was clearer now. "Tell him that I was innocent—he will understand. Tell him that I swore, with my last breath, that I was innocent in South Africa, and that I have fallen doing my duty!" His eyes closed.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In the Shadow of Death!

JIMMY SILVER rose to his feet. His eyes were blinded with tears. In the grass the soldier lay motionless still. His face was like the face of the dead, strangely calm. He was living yet, but Jimmy knew that he was very near to death. With aid he might be saved yet! Jimmy looked round almost wildly. "What did he say?" muttered Lovell. "He's given me a message for the Head. He's Dr. Chisholm's brother!" "Good heavens!" "The brother we heard them speak of that evening," muttered Raby. "The Head never knew him, then." "Poor chap!" Jimmy's voice trembled. "It was himself he was speaking of when he told the Head he could give him news of his brother. He's Oliver Chisholm. He seems to have been accused of something—poor chap! We—we've got to get help. He may live yet!" Jimmy Silver pulled himself together. "Look here, you chaps!" He gave his orders quickly. "Erroll, you stay with that German hound, and see that he doesn't get away. Stun him if he makes a move. You cut off to Coombe, Lovell, tell the doctor to come to Rookwood to see a badly wounded man, and then go to the police-station and tell them to come for this German pig. You other fellows, lend me a hand; we've got to get this poor chap to the school." Jimmy's directions were obeyed without question.

Lovell started off over the moonlit heath for the distant village at top speed. Kit Erroll picked up the revolver, and stood over the bound convict, who was still panting and cursing. Jimmy, Raby, Newcome, and Tommy Dodd raised the wounded man in their arms. He made no movement. The weight was little to four strong and sturdy juniors. They bore him quickly away from the spot in the direction of Rookwood School. The school was the nearest place to take him—and now that he knew that the Tommy was the Head's brother, Jimmy Silver would not have thought of taking him anywhere else. As soon as they reached the fields, the wounded man was laid in the grass, and a gate torn off its hinges to make a stretcher. Laid upon the gate, the unconscious soldier was carried rapidly away. Without a halt the four juniors tramped up the moonlit lane to the school. Swift as they were, it seemed an age before they reached the gates of Rookwood. But the school was reached at last, and Jimmy Silver rang a thunderous peal at the bell. He had to ring again and again before old Mack came grumbling, half dressed, from his lodge to open the gate. The porter turned his lantern upon the juniors, and simply blinked. Unheeding him, they marched in as soon as the gate was opened, and hurried to the School House with the stretcher and its grim burden. Rookwood School was in darkness. Only a faint glimmer of light escaped from the dark blinds of the Head's study. Late as the hour was, the troubled headmaster had not yet retired. Jimmy Silver rang loudly at the bell. It was the Head himself who opened the door, in surprise. He started as he saw the captain of the Fourth. "Silver! You have returned, then? At this hour—" He broke off as he saw the stretcher. His first impression had been that the rebel juniors had returned, and that the revolt was over. But the Rookwood rebellion was not in Jimmy Silver's mind then; in the shadow of the tragic happening on the heath he had almost forgotten it. "What—what is that?" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm. "A soldier—" "He's wounded, sir. He was shot on the heath by an escaped convict!" "Good heavens!" "We've brought him here, sir. The doctor will be here soon; Lovell's gone to fetch him." "You did quite right, Silver. Bring the poor fellow in." The juniors tramped into the Hall. Dr. Chisholm scanned the white, unconscious face of the soldier. "I have seen this man before," he said. "He is a man who spoke to me once—" He broke off. "Bring him into my study. Place him on the couch. I think I hear the doctor." There was a rattle of wheels from the road, and a light gleamed at the gate. The medical man came in breathlessly. On the couch in the Head's study the soldier lay insensible. Lovell joined his chums in the passage. He had come in the trap with the doctor from Coombe. Leaving the doctor with the wounded man, the Head came softly from the

study, and his expression was strange as he looked at the juniors. "Will he live, sir?" asked Jimmy Silver, his voice faltering. "Dr. Bolton thinks there is a chance. Silver," said the Head in a low voice. "Are you—are you aware of this man's name, Silver? I—I seem to see something familiar in his features. It appears to me that I have known him, and not only on the occasion when he spoke to me once near Rookwood." Jimmy hesitated. He had his message to deliver, but it was hard to give it. "I—I—I have something to tell you, sir," he faltered. "Before he became unconscious he gave me a message for you." "For me?" "Yes, sir." "Who is he?" The question came sharply. "Silver, who is this man?" "His name is Oliver Chisholm, sir." The Head staggered back. His eyes were fixed almost wildly upon the junior. Jimmy made a movement forward; but the Head recovered himself, and waved him back. "He told you he was my brother?" he asked in a low, husky tone. "Yes, sir. And he gave me a message." "And the message?" whispered the Head. "He said: 'Tell my brother that I was innocent in South Africa, that I swore it with my last breath, and that I have fallen doing my duty,'" said Jimmy Silver steadily. Dr. Chisholm groaned. "I don't know what he meant, sir, but that's what he told me to tell you," said Jimmy Silver. Dr. Chisholm's hands were hard clenched. His face was like chalk. "Tell me what has happened this night," he said. Jimmy told him. The Head listened without a word. Still without a word, he turned and went into the study, and the door closed upon him. The juniors looked at one another uncertainly. The Head did not come out again, and the juniors moved away at last, hardly knowing what to do. Dr. Chisholm had not given them another thought. Under the old roof of Rookwood a man lay in the shadow of death, and that man was the Head's brother—the brother who had been condemned and, as the Head now believed, wronged. He had been placed in bed. The school nurse was in attendance, and the doctor had remained. By the bedside, watching the white face with silent anguish, sat the Head of Rookwood—watching, watching through the long, bitter night, with the chill of icy fear in his heart, and a faint, faint hope that the closed eyes would open with recognition and forgiveness.

THE END.

YOU MUST NOT MISS

the Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., and the Great Rookwood Rebellion, entitled:

"THE HEAD'S TRIUMPH,"

By OWEN CONQUEST.

in next week's issue of The Popular.

THE POPULAR.—No. 165.

A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS. By OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"THE HEAD'S TRIUMPH!"

A SPLendid TALE SHOWING HOW THE REMITTANCE MAN'S SON PROVED HIMSELF A HERO!



The Right Stuff!

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of FRANK RICHARDS' Schooldays in Canada.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD,

Author of the famous tales of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, appearing in "The Gem."

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Not Popular!

"HA, ha, ha!"
Frank Richards sat up in the grass on the bank of the creek, and looked round as he heard the sudden shout of laughter.

His cousin, Bob Lawless, was stretched on his back in the grass, with his hands behind his head, staring lazily at the distant peaks of the Rockies, dim against the deep blue of the sky.

"Something's on, Bob," said Frank, as he sat up.

Bob did not trouble to move.

"Only that guy!" he said tersely.

"Who?" asked Frank.

"Beaulerc. The chaps are making fun of him, as usual," yawned Bob Lawless. "Let him rip!"

But Frank Richards rose to his feet and looked quickly in the direction of the log School House of Cedar Creek.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank did not join in the laughter of the Cedar Creek fellows, but he could not help grinning.

It was close on time for afternoon lessons, and many of the fellows were making their way towards the School House.

Vere Beaulerc, the new boy at Cedar Creek, was conspicuous among them.

The slim handsome lad, with his quiet, reserved manner and half-arrogant expression, would have been picked out at a glance among the cheery, sturdy sons of the Canadian settlers.

A fellow could hardly have looked more out of place than Vere Beaulerc looked at Cedar Creek School.

Pride of birth and aristocratic loftiness were ludicrously out of place at the lumber school in the great Western land, where such prejudices were held in humorous scorn.

And Beaulerc, with all his pride of race, was only the son of a remittance man, an idle waster, known as a hanger-on at all the saloons in the

Frank Richards was probably the only

fellow at Cedar Creek who felt anything but contemptuous dislike for the remittance man's son.

But Frank could not help feeling a certain amount of interest in the lad who, like himself, had been born in the Old Country, but, unlike himself, had been unable to assimilate himself to the customs of a new and freer land.

Vere Beaulerc came and went, day by day, without exchanging a word with his schoolfellows.

Frank's one attempt at friendship had been rudely repulsed, and since then Frank had let him alone.

Frank grinned, and then frowned, as he looked at Beaulerc now. Some humorous fellow had attached a label to his back, evidently unknown to Beaulerc. It was the lid of an old cardboard box, and upon it was daubed in large letters:

"THE ONE AND ONLY!
GAZE AND ADMIRE!"

Quite unconscious of that label, Beaulerc walked towards the School House, looking neither to the right nor the left.

But the other fellows, as they sighted it, yelled with laughter.

"Gaze and admire!" yelled Eben Hacke. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"The one and only!" chortled Chunky Todgers. "He, he, he!"

It did not seem to occur to Vere Beaulerc for some minutes that the outburst of merriment was connected with himself.

As that fact dawned upon him his cheeks flushed, and he looked round with a flashing glance.

The black anger in his look only redoubled the merriment of the merry young Canadians.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's too bad!" muttered Frank, though he could hardly help joining in the laugh.

Bob Lawless sat up.

"What's the joke?" he yawned.

"Oh crumbs! Ha, ha, ha!"

Beaulerc gave the chums a fierce look.

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Eben Hacke. "Look at the only one—the one and only! Just escaped from the House of Lords! Haw, haw, haw!"

Beaulerc, with his brows knitted, strode up to Hacke. The big Westerner towered head and shoulders over him, though Beaulerc was tall for his age.

"What does this mean?" said Beaulerc.

"Haw, haw, haw!"

Beaulerc clenched his hands.

Frank Richards ran up hastily. He did not want to see Beaulerc's handsome face hammered by Hacke's huge fists.

"Mind your own business, Franky," growled Bob Lawless.

But Frank did not heed.

Even Bob's boundless good nature seemed to fail him when he came in contact with Beaulerc.

Frank hastily interposed.

"It's only a joke, Beaulerc," he said.

"There's something on your back."

"Oh!"

"Let him alone!" growled Hacke. "What do you want to spoil a good joke for, you jay?"

Beaulerc's flush deepened, and he groped behind him, and jerked off the card. His eyes glittered as he looked at it. There was a fresh burst of laughter from the schoolboys. Beaulerc's anger was nothing to them.

"Who fastened this on my back?" exclaimed Beaulerc furiously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Beaulerc's lips curled.

"If the fellow's afraid to own up—" he said scornfully.

"Oh, come off!" said Chunky Todgers at once. "I put it there!"

Beaulerc strode towards him.

The little, fat fellow was no match for him, but he stood his ground, and put up his fat fists coolly.

"Come on, my lord!" he grinned.

Beaulerc, if he had been cooler, would not have thought of touching the fat schoolboy. A fight with Chunky Todgers was rather absurd, for one thing. But he was too angry to reflect now.

In another moment the humorist of

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Cedar Creek would have been knocked spinning, but in that moment Bob Lawless stepped between.

Beaucherc's arm was knocked up at once.

"No, you don't!" said Bob grimly. "If you're spoiling for a fight, I'm your antelope!"

"Good man!" said Chunky cheerfully. "Give him a licking for me, Bobby. Why can't the silly chump take a joke?"

"Will you stand aside, Lawless?" said Beaucherc between his teeth.

"I guess not," said the Canadian schoolboy contemptuously. "I'm nearer your size than Chunky is."

"Beaucherc," muttered Frank, "don't be an ass! It was only a joke."

"I don't care for such jokes," said Beaucherc, "and I don't intend to allow them, either."

"He don't intend!" chuckled Hacke. "Hark to his lordship! This is the way we talk to our serfs in the old baronial hall."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you clear off, Lawless?"

"Oh, no!"

Beaucherc said no more, but he advanced upon Bob, with his hands up and his eyes blazing.

"Boys!"

It was Miss Meadows' voice.

The schoolmistress came out of the porch, her brows knitted.

"Cease this at once!" she said sharply.

"Go into the school-room, both of you!"

"Certainly, ma'am," said Bob Lawless.

He walked into the log house; and Beaucherc, after a second's hesitation, followed him. The fight was "off," at least, for the present.

When the fellows gathered in class, Beaucherc sat with a cold, grim face. But the rest of the class were grinning. Vere Beaucherc, poor and proud, wrapped himself in a cold reserve as in an armour of proof; but at the Cedar Creek School the pride of the remittance man's son was a standing joke.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Stopped on the Trail.

FRANK RICHARDS joined his cousin immediately school was dismissed that afternoon.

He was anxious that the threatened affray should go no further.

Frank, with his experience of public school life in the Old Country, could make allowances for Beaucherc that the other fellows never thought of making.

To the cheery young Canadians Beaucherc seemed nothing but a proud and snobbish duffer, but Frank knew that there was more in him than that.

Frank had not forgotten how the remittance man's son had risked his life to pull him out of the river after he had been swept over the rapids.

"Where are you goin, Bob?" asked Frank, catching his cousin's arm.

"I guess I'm going to speak to the Cherub," said Bob. "Let me go, Franky. I've simply got to punch his nose!"

"Leave his nose alone, and come home," said Frank.

"Oh, bosh! He'll think I'm afraid of him."

"Bother him! Let's get off!"

Bob Lawless shook his arm free.

"I'm going to punch his nose!" he said. "I tell you I can't stand the fellow, Frank, with his superior airs. What he wants is a jolly good hiding, and he wants it badly. He's simply yelling out for it, in fact."

"Lawless!"

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"Yes, Miss Meadows!" said Bob, touching his hat to the schoolmistress.

"You seem to have quarrelled with Beaucherc, the new boy."

"Ye-e-es, ma'am."

"Please do not let me see you carry the quarrel any further," said Miss Meadows severely. "I shall be very angry with you, Lawless."

"Oh!" said Bob.

"You may go home now," added Miss Meadows.

"Ye-e-es, ma'am."

Frank Richards grinned as he marched his cousin away to the gates. Bob looked crestfallen.

The two chums caught their ponies, and walked them down the path to the trail. Beaucherc was going the same way, and he paused as Bob and Frank came along.

"I waited for you, Lawless," he said, his well-cut lip curling.

Bob crimsoned.

"I can't hammer you here," he said.

"Miss Meadows has put her foot down. She seems to think it would be a pity to spoil your beauty. I think it would do you good myself."

Beaucherc shrugged his shoulders.

"If that is all you have to say, I may as well go home," he said.

"Go home, and be blessed!" said Bob.

"Miss Meadows is a good sort, and I'm not going to make her mad. But I'll pull your cheeky nose another time. Tomorrow's a holiday, and if you care to come along where I can meet you, I guess I'll knock some of the insolence out of you fast enough!"

"Anywhere you like!" said Beaucherc instantly.

"Bob!" murmured Frank.

"Oh, cheese it, Frank! You let Beaucherc punch you. I guess I'll make him squirm for that while I'm about it!"

"He saved my life," said Frank.

"Oh, bother it! Any fellow would have pulled you out of the creek, I suppose." Bob turned to Beaucherc again. "Come along to the Indian ford to-morrow afternoon. You know the place. I guess you'll find me there!"

"I shall be there!" said Beaucherc.

He turned away, and plunged into the wood, taking the shortest cut to the miserable shack on the creek that was his home.

Frank and Bob mounted their horses, and rode away on the homeward trail. Bob's usually sunny face was clouded, and Frank did not look cheerful.

The cousins rode on in silence. They were following the forest trail, on which the shadows were deepening as the sun sank lower towards the far Pacific.

Overhead the branches of the big trees locked, forming a deep shade over the trail. The path was roughly marked by hoofprints.

In the deepest and narrowest part of the trail the two schoolboys slacked down, riding carefully to avoid the overhanging boughs; and suddenly from the thick larches, interlaced with creepers, beside the trail, came a deep, sharp voice:

"Halt!"

A man sprang out into the trail.

The two schoolboys drew in their ponies at once in amazement.

They looked down at the man standing in the trail before them. He was a short, thick-set fellow, with curly black hair, and a dark, bronzed face, and glittering, black eyes.

They did not need telling that he was not a Canadian. He was plainly a Mexican, and equally plainly what was

known in Western parlance as a "bad man."

His black eyes scintillated over a revolver he held in his dirty, dusky hand.

"Get down!" The Mexican spoke in English, with the soft Spanish accent in his voice. "Get down, and pony up!"

"Why, you cheeky hound!" broke out Bob Lawless. "How dare you—"

"Get down!"

Bob eyed him savagely.

"You're in Canada now, my man, not in Mexico. We keep a rope ready for your sort here. Clear aside, and let us pass, or it will be the worse for you!"

The Mexican's revolver came up to a level.

"Get down!" he repeated.

Frank looked at his cousin. He was prepared to follow Bob's lead, but the Canadian had slid from his pony. There was no arguing with a six-shooter in a reckless hand.

Frank followed his example, and they dismounted, and stood beside their ponies, while the Mexican came nearer.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Rustler.

FRANK RICHARDS' heart was beating hard, though he was calm.

Bob did not look scared in the least. His brows were knitted with anger.

The ruffian evidently intended robbery, and it came as a surprise to the Canadian as much as to the English lad.

The Mexican had probably drunk his last dollar in one of the camp saloons, and taken to the trail to replenish his supplies of cash in a way that was not uncommon in his own country.

Whether the ruffian would venture to use his weapon in case of resistance was a question, but he looked brutal and reckless enough to do so.

His black eyes glinted at the two schoolboys over the barrel.

"I am sorry, senores," he said, with a mocking grin. "I must trouble you to pony up."

Bob gritted his teeth.

"Do you know what to expect for playing this game here?" he exclaimed.

The Mexican shrugged his thick shoulders.

"Vaya! I am not here to talk, senior. Turn out your pockets!"

The chums hesitated, and the trigger moved a fraction under the pressure of a dirty finger.

"You will do better to make haste, senores," said the Mexican grimly. "I am in a hurry."

Bob Lawless made up his mind, and turned out what money he had, consisting of two silver dollars and some small change. Frank Richards, without a word, followed his example.

"It is little enough, senores, but the horses, they are worth something." The Mexican pointed down the trail.

"Vamoose!"

There was no help for it.

The chums walked on down the trail, leaving their ponies in the hands of the "rustler."

Bob Lawless strode on with compressed lips and set teeth. His eyes were gleaming under his bent brows.

As soon as the intervening trees hid them from the sight of the rustler Bob stopped.

"Hold on, Franky!" he whispered.

Frank halted.

"That greaser thinks we've lit out," whispered Bob. "Are you game to come back? I guess he's not going to walk."

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off with our horses and leave us to sashay home on boot-leather. Goodness knows where he'll be by the time the M.P.'s get after him! Over the border, very likely, out of reach. Are you game?"

"Yes, rather!" said Frank, between his teeth.

Bob listened intently. There was a sound of whinnying from the direction where they had left the horse-thief with the ponies.

Bob opened his pocket-knife and cut a thick stick from the bush. He cut another for Frank.

"Now come on," he whispered, "and quiet."

The Canadian plunged into the trees.

Frank followed him, picking his way softly on Bob's track. Bob made no sound as he advanced.

He paused once or twice to listen, and then pressed on again.

To the English lad the forest was trackless, and he could not even guess what was Bob's objective.

But Bob led on with hardly a pause, evidently with a fixed destination in view.

He held up his hand at last.

Frank halted.

"Look!" whispered Bob, pulling his cousin to his side behind the trunk of a big tree.

Frank peered out from behind the tree, and to his surprise saw the trail before him.

"Bob—"

"Don't you see?" Bob grinned, with rather a grim look in his eyes, however. "The greaser's going back the way we came with our horses, towards Cedar Creek. The trail winds round here. We've cut across the forest and got ahead of him. He will pass this place."

"Oh!" said Frank.

He understood now.

Bob had heard enough of the movements of the horses to show him that the Mexican was going back up the trail, the way the boys had come from school. He had to follow the winding trail with the steeds.

Bob and his comrade had cut across the thick wood and struck the trail some distance ahead.

They were well ahead of the Mexican now, and had only to wait for him to pass with his plunder.

And then—

Frank Richards' grasp tightened upon his bludgeon. He was quite ready to put up a fight for his property.

"Follow my lead, old chap!" whispered Bob. "He will shoot if he gets a chance. I guess we're not giving him a chance. Don't show yourself till I do."

"Right!" muttered Frank.

There was a beat of hoof-beats on the trail. They were only a few minutes ahead of the rustler.

Peering from behind the tree they saw him coming up the trail, riding one pony and leading the other.

There was a grin on the Mexican's dusky face as he rode, and he was evidently totally unsuspecting of the fact that the schoolboys were not at a safe distance.

Bob's hand went up, with his bludgeon in it, but he stood quite still, waiting. Frank made no sound.

Clatter, clatter!

The horseman rode by.

Whiz!

Just as he came abreast, Bob's hand shot forward, and the heavy bludgeon whizzed through the air.

Before the rider even knew that it was coming it struck him upon the side of the head with a fearful thud.

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"Carambo!" yelled the startled Mexican.

He rolled helplessly from the saddle, yelling with pain, and crashed into the grass of the trail.

The startled horses reared and backed away, whinnying.

Bob Lawless rushed out into the trail like lightning, and Frank Richards was at his heels.

As the dazed Mexican struggled up to a sitting posture, grasping wildly at his revolver, Frank's bludgeon came down with a crash upon his head.

The blow smashed through the vaquero hat, and the Mexican sank back with a groan.

The next moment Bob Lawless' knee was on his chest, and his revolver was wrenched away and tossed into the thicket.

"I guess it's our win!" said Bob coolly.

And Frank Richards gasped breathlessly:

"Hurrah!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Turning the Tables!

THE Mexican struggled feebly under Bob's gripping knee.

His head was reeling from the blows he had received, and his black eyes were burning with rage.

"Carambo!" he muttered.

"Give me your stick, Frank!"

"Here you are!"

"Keep quiet, my merry greaser!" said Bob, flourishing the bludgeon over the savage, upturned face. "We've got you nobbled, my pippin. Do you want your silly head caved in?"

"Mercy, senor!" gasped the terrified Mexican.

"Oh, stop your howling!" said Bob contemptuously. "I guess I'm going to leave you for the hangman some day. Put a turn of the trail-rope round his paws, Frank, while I hold him."

"Right-ho!"

The two ponies, recognising their masters, had quieted down, and were cropping the grass by the trail. Frank cut a length from one of the trail-ropes and bound the dusky wrists of the Mexican together.

The man watched him with burning eyes, but with the bludgeon flourishing over his head he did not venture to resist.

Bob Lawless rose to his feet.

"I rather guess we're going to get our money back," he remarked. "Where have you shoved it, you black-jowled mongrel?"

"Carambo!"

"Speak up—sharp!" Bob's boot clumped on the Mexican's ribs, as a hint that time was being wasted.

The ruffian indicated the pocket, and Bob drew out the money. There were a Mexican peso and an American quarter there also, which Bob replaced. He handed Frank his money, and slipped his own into his pocket.

The Mexican, still lying in the grass, watched him, with deadly hatred in his scintillating eyes.

There was a huge bruise under his thick black hair, and blood was running down from a cut. Bitter hatred and revenge were in his looks, but his expression only drew a scornful smile from the Canadian lad.

"I guess you'd better chuck this game on this side of the border, my beauty," said Bob. "This isn't quite the same as Mexico or Arizona, you know." He picked a knife out of the Mexican's belt and snapped the blade under his heel.

"You're better without that, I guess. Come on, Frank!"

"You will not leave me with my hands bound, senores!" panted the Mexican.

"I guess so," said Bob. "You're less dangerous like that, my dusky charmer. You can work that rope off in about two hours. A merry little exercise for you."

"Carambo!" hissed the Mexican between his teeth. "If it shall be Pedro Garcia's lot to meet you again, Senor—"

"I shouldn't wonder!" grinned Bob. "I promise to come along and see you hanged, if you stay in this section. If you know what's good for you, you will light out prompt. The Mounted Police will be after you as soon as we can send them word of your little game here."

The Mexican staggered to his feet, wrestling with his bonds, as the schoolboys remounted the recaptured ponies and cantered away.

The ruffian, still muttering Spanish oaths, was left behind.

The chums of Cedar Creek rode homeward in great spirits. The victory over the Mexican rustler had afforded them a good deal of satisfaction.

They arrived at the ranch in a merry mood.

Bob Lawless at once informed his father of the encounter on the trail, and the rancher listened with a grim brow.

"You reckless young rascals!" he said.

"I guess we couldn't let a greaser from down South get the better of a Canadian, popper!" said Bob.

The rancher laughed.

"No; you've done well. But a stop will be put to that scoundrel's little game pretty quick. I'll send off a man at once to the Mounted Police post."

And in three minutes a Kootenay cattleman was riding away with the news that a Mexican rustler was loose in the section, and required "rounding-up" by the North-West M.P.'s.

"They'll have him by noon to-morrow, unless he clears out over the border," said Bob, when the chums sat down to supper. "That game doesn't pay in the Canadian West. Hallo, what are you thinking about, Franky? You look as glum as a remittance man waiting for the post to come in."

Frank Richards laughed.

"I was thinking of Beauclerc," he said.

"Oh, bother Beauclerc!" exclaimed Bob. "That chap seems to haunt you. Pass the salmon, and think about supper."

The next morning Frank Richards and his cousin were busy about the ranch, there being no school that day.

On a Canadian ranch there is no room for idle hands, neither did Frank have any desire to eat the bread of idleness. He was only too glad to make himself useful, and thus repay a little of the kindness he had received from the bluff old rancher.

Early in the afternoon, the cousins saddled their ponies for a ride. It was time for the appointment with Vero Beauclerc to be kept, and Bob rode away to keep it, carelessly and cheerfully. But Frank's face was not so sunny as usual as he cantered along with his Canadian cousin.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Fight!

"WHERE'S the place, Bob?"

"The Indian ford," said Bob. "It's on the river about five miles below Cedar Creek. It's a long ride for us, but it won't be far for the Cherub to walk."

"Won't Beauclerc ride?" asked Frank.

"I guess not. I don't think he has a gegee."

"Oh!"

The green prairie fled rapidly under the ponies' hoofs. The plain was left behind, and the cousins rode by a rough track through a belt of timber near the river.

The thud of the hoofs echoed on the rough turf and among the big, shady trees.

A man lying in the bush lifted his head and glanced at the trail as the two riders went by.

Two black, scintillating eyes blazed at the sight of Bob Lawless.

The two boys were past in a moment, riding on carelessly, unconscious of the fact that Pedro Garcia's dusky face was looking after them from the bush.

The Mexican gritted his teeth. "Carambo!" he murmured. "It is he—the nino of yesterday!"

The ruffian felt over his bruised head with a dirty hand, and his eyes gleamed.

He stepped out into the trail with the stealthiness of the panther of his native country, and stood staring after the

"Sorry to keep you waiting!" said Bob.

"I am ready!"

The two schoolboys stripped to their shirts. They faced each other under the shade of the big tree by the river, with the thick, silent timber behind. Frank Richards stood looking on.

Bob Lawless tied his braces round his waist. He disliked and despised the fellow he called the "Cherub," but he knew that the fight was going to be a hard one.

Slim and almost delicate as he looked at the first glance, Vere Beauclerc had a strong frame and muscles of steel. And nobody looking at his face could have doubted that he had pluck.

"Ready?" asked Frank.

"Yes."

"Time!"

And the fight began.

Frank Richards leaned against the tree and looked on. His face was clouded. He fully expected to see Bob Lawless the

to rise. The half-disdainful, nonchalant expression on Beauclerc's face had not changed for a moment; it seemed as if he knew that his opponent was not up to his weight and cared nothing for him.

Frank ran forward to Bob's assistance.

The rancher's son breathed heavily as Frank helped him to his feet. He gave Frank a rather queer look.

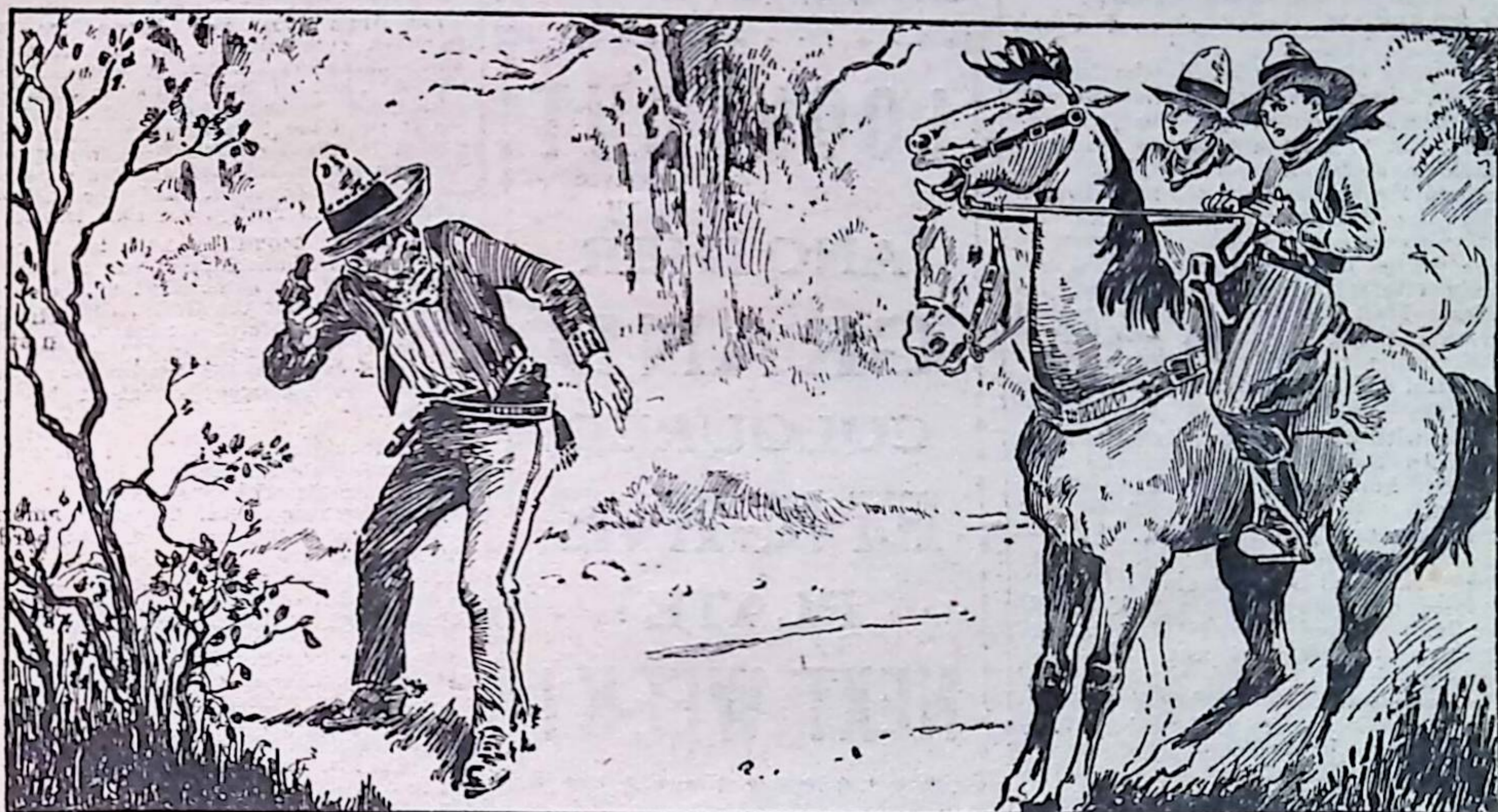
"More in the guy than meets the eye!" he murmured. "But I guess I'll lick him yet—hang him!"

Beauclerc stood waiting, calm and disdainful.

Bob Lawless came on again, and the fighting was resumed. Frank Richards looked on with knitted brows. He could see now that the fight was a foregone conclusion. His cousin was plainly getting the worst of it.

Crash!

Bob Lawless was down again, more heavily than before. Beauclerc looked down on him quietly, and then picked up his jacket.



HELD UP!—"Halt!" A man sprang out into the trail in front of the two schoolboys. He was a short, thick-set Mexican. "Get down!" he demanded. "Get down, and pony up!" Bob eyed him savagely. "Get out of the way and let us pass, or it will be the worse for you!" (See Chapter 2.)

riders. His hand fumbled with the pistol in his belt. There was savage hatred and revenge in the black eyes of the desperado. But the thick boughs swallowed up the riders from his sight.

Unconscious of the savage enemy they had passed, Frank Richards and Bob Lawless rode on through the timber at a leisurely pace.

The river was gleaming before them now through the openings in the trees.

A mile farther on they stopped.

Here the hoof-marked track down to the water showed that they were at the ford. It was a lonely spot, shadowed by trees.

Under a tree close by the river a figure stood erect, looking out over the shining waters.

Vere Beauclerc was first at the meeting-place.

He glanced round at the sound of beating hoofs and jingling bridles. The chums jumped down, letting the ponies run loose.

Vere Beauclerc raised his hat slightly.

victor, and he wanted to see him the victor, yet he did not like to think of Beauclerc defeated and humiliated.

There were no rounds in the fight; it was hammer and tongs from the beginning. But as it progressed Frank, looking on, had to revise his first opinion.

Beauclerc was by no means getting the worst of it.

Bob was stronger and sturdier, and had boundless pluck and determination. But in the matter of science Beauclerc had a very great advantage.

Bob found most of his drives stopped or warded, and Beauclerc's swift counters came home in nearly every case.

It began slowly to dawn upon the mind of the rancher's son that the slim and elegant Beauclerc was by no means booked for a licking. That thought made Bob angry and excited, and gave Beauclerc further advantage in consequence. The first to go to grass was Bob Lawless, and he fell heavily.

Beauclerc stepped back quietly for him

That movement, indicating that he thought the tussle was over, exasperated the fallen lad. With blazing eyes Bob Lawless struggled to his feet. But his head was swimming and dazed; his severe punishment had told upon him, and he sank back, panting.

"Bob!" muttered Frank, stooping over his cousin.

He did not hear a rustle in the timber; he had no eyes for anything but his cousin and chum, and did not dream of the fierce, savage eyes that were peering out from the thicket.

"Bob, old man!"

"I—I guess I'm done, Franky!" gasped Bob. "I guess the guy was too hefty for me. I'll try him again another time."

"You are welcome!" said Beauclerc coldly.

The thicket rustled again, and Beauclerc glanced towards the timber.

Frank Richards helped his cousin to his feet.

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Bob stood up, dabbing at his face with his handkerchief.

"Look out!" shouted Beauclerc suddenly.

"What?"

Crack!

Beauclerc ran forward.

The sudden shot from the timber rang with stunning noise by the silent river. For an instant Frank Richards' horrified eyes caught a glimpse of a fierce, dusky face and revengeful black eyes looking from the timber. In another instant the Mexican was gone.

Frank spun towards his cousin. He knew for whom that murderous shot was intended.

Bob Lawless stood unharmed.

But in the grass at his feet lay the son of the remittance man, his eyes half closed, and blood welling from under his shirt.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

In the Shadow of Death!

"THE Mexican!" shouted Frank Richards.

He ran towards the timber, hardly knowing what he did. Bob Lawless, collecting himself with an effort, ran to his pony, to the saddle of which a shot-gun was hanging. He grasped the gun and dashed after Frank.

But the Mexican was gone.

The desperado did not seem even to have waited to see the result of his dastardly attempt. His aim had been unerring. Had not Vere Beauclerc rushed between them, the bullet would have stricken the rancher's son down. The scoundrel had fled ere the report had died away.

Bob, with blazing eyes, fired the shot-gun into the thickets. But the lead whizzed harmlessly away among the foliage.

"He's gone!" muttered Bob. "But—but Beauclerc—"

They ran back to the bank.

"He—he's wounded!" said Bob dazedly. "Good heavens, Frank, that villain was firing at me; and—and Beauclerc—"

He broke off, his voice faltering.

Why had Beauclerc done this? Why had he sprung between the rancher's son and the deadly barrel that was levelled at him? It was not the act of the disdainful snob Bob had believed him to be. It was an act of generous courage that only a high and noble heart could have been capable of.

Frank was already on his knees by Beauclerc's side. The red was on his fingers as he tore open the jacket to get at the wound. The boy's eyes opened, and he smiled faintly.

"Beauclerc," muttered Bob huskily, "what did you do it for? You knew it was meant for me!"

Beauclerc nodded.

"Keep still," said Frank. "Keep still, old chap. Let me see it."

A terrible dread was tugging at Frank's heart. He could see where the ball had struck into the boy's breast below the shoulder. He felt over the shoulder carefully, and Beauclerc winced slightly.

The bleeding was not profuse, and Frank breathed more freely. Beauclerc's face was deadly white, but he was quite conscious and perfectly calm. His eyes rested on Frank's face inquiringly.

"I—I don't think—it's so bad—as I thought!" muttered Frank. "We must get it bandaged, and get you to the ranch!"

"I don't think it's serious." Beauclerc.

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clerc's voice was low but calm. "I should feel worse than I do if it were. It hasn't touched an artery, or there would be more blood. Has that man gone? If not—"

"He's gone," said Frank.

Bob touched his cousin on the shoulder.

"Stay with him, Franky. I'll leave you the shot-gun in case—you understand. I'll cut across to Simpson's and get the waggon."

"Right!" said Frank.

Bob Lawless dashed to his pony and scrambled on, and rode away at a gallop. He had three miles to ride to the nearest farmhouse to get a vehicle to convey Beauclerc away; but he rode like the wind.

Frank, half-blinded by tears, tore his handkerchief into bandages, and the sleeves of his shirt, and bound up the wound as well as he could. He did not think that it was fatal, but a terrible fear was in his breast.

Beauclerc lay quiet, his head resting

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upon Frank's arm, after the hurried bandaging was done.

Frank kept his eyes watchful, in case the Mexican should appear, and the shot-gun was at hand. He almost wished the desperado would return, so fierce was the desire for vengeance in his breast as he looked at Beauclerc's white face, handsomer than ever in its deathly pallor.

But there was no sign of the assassin. He had fled from the spot with the guilt of blood upon his soul—perhaps with remorse.

It seemed an age to Frank before he heard the beat of horse's hoofs on the trail.

Bob Lawless dashed up, and sprang from the saddle.

"They're coming!" he panted.

It was a roughly-built buggy that came dashing up after Bob, with a big, bronzed Canadian farmer driving. Bob had already explained, and, without a word, the big Canadian bent over Vere Beauclerc, lifted him in his powerful arms, and placed him in the buggy. He examined the bandages, nodded, and stepped in after the wounded lad.

"Where are you going?" muttered Beauclerc. "Take me home!"

"You must come to the ranch," said

(Continued on page 19.)

All about the Famous Engine which forms the subject of Our Free Plate.

"THE FLYING SCOTSMAN."

By A RAILWAY EXPERT.

EVERY boy has heard of the famous train that leaves King's Cross terminus every morning for Edinburgh. The "Flying Scotsman" has been a celebrated express train for sixty years or so. It runs over the G.N.R. from King's Cross to a spot four miles north of Doncaster, then on the metals of the N.E.R. through York and Newcastle-on-Tyne to Berwick across the Tweed into Scotland, and on the N.B. Railway's metals to the Waverley Station, Edinburgh.

The train was well known for the varnished teak coaches, the flat roofs of which have curved sides, of which it was composed, and for many years the train was aristocratic—1st and 2nd class only. In more recent years the type of carriage has been altered to the high, semi-circular roof now usual on several railways, the 2nd class has disappeared altogether, and the "Flying Scotsman" now conveys 3rd class travellers.

The G.N.R. locomotives work the "Flying Scotsman" between King's Cross and York, a distance of 188 miles. Part of the route is fairly hard, but the G.N.R. engines have always been celebrated for speed, and in the matter of power the modern engines are well able to haul the present-day heavy expresses at the speed demanded by the schedule.

Some twenty years ago, British railwayists were considerably excited by the introduction of the American "Atlantic" type of express passenger engine. This type has the 4-4-2 wheel arrangement, and although the dimensions of the type have been increased considerably since the "Atlantic" first made its appearance on the G.N.R., the type is still standard for G.N.R. expresses.

One of the modern G.N.R. "Atlantic" locomotives (No. 1404) is illustrated in facsimile colours by the plate presented in this issue. The heating surface is over 2,000 square feet, and the superheated surface is 427 square feet. The 6ft. 8in. coupled wheels are driven by two cylinders, each 20in. diameter by 24in. stroke. The peculiar shape of the fire-box-spreading out at the bottom to the width of the frames is noticeable by even a casual glance at the coloured plate.

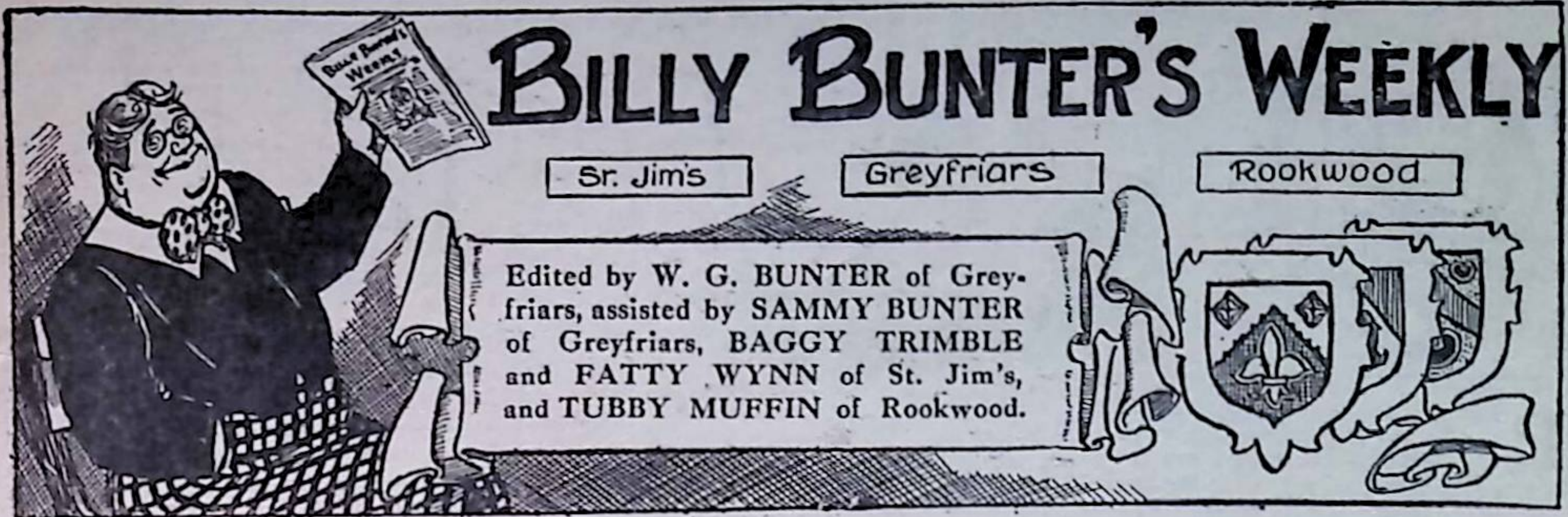
These big "Atlantics" weigh 69½ tons, whilst their tenders, with 6½ tons of coal and 3,500 gallons of water, total over 43 tons, so that engine and tender together weigh about 112 tons. If these engines are heavy, so are the loads they haul. During the war, when train services were much restricted, No. 1404 and her sisters were frequently to be seen hauling trains of well over 500 tons weight.

Not only do these engines perform fine work with the east-coast Scotch trains, but the G.N.R. train service to the West Riding—Leeds and Bradford—is also undertaken by them. The Great Northern Railway's pre-war record for a long non-stop run was on this service—Wakefield to King's Cross—175½ miles in 3 hours 9 minutes, or 55.7 miles an hour, whilst five runs daily at almost the same speed were made between London and Doncaster, 156 miles. The present longest non-stop run to the credit of the G.N.R. is between King's Cross and Grantham, 105½ miles at 52.3 miles an hour. In pre-war days the King's Cross—Grantham run was the G.N.'s quickest, only 110 minutes being spent on it, equal to 57½ miles an hour—something like railway speed! The present G.N. best is only 54.1 miles an hour, at which speed two trains travel over the 50½ miles that separate Grantham from Doncaster. G.N.R. enthusiasts look to see the G.N.R. expresses achieve the mile-a-minute mark.

NEXT FRIDAY:

"AT GRIPS WITH THE RUSTLER!"

A MAGNIFICENT STORY OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



Edited by W. G. BUNTER of Greyfriars, assisted by SAMMY BUNTER of Greyfriars, BAGGY TRIMBLE and FATTY WYNN of St. Jim's, and TUBBY MUFFIN of Rookwood.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By BILLY BUNTER.

My Dear Readers,—That long-haired poet Dick Penfold declares that he is overworked, and that he gets no pleasure or lezzure out of life. He has just written an ode to this effect.

To my mind, Penfold's got nothing whatever to komplain about. Overworked, indeed! What about the poor Editor?

Who prepares this paper for press every week? Dick Penfold? No jolly fear! William George Bunter—that's the chap who gets things dun! I am the Editor, the propprietor, and the soul manager of the flurrishing jernal. Without me it would fall as flat as a pancake. It would cease to eggst! W. G. B. is the man at the helm. W. G. B. does all the donkey-work. I am the life and sole of the paper.

The cobbler fellow in the play who sang:

"I sit and cobble with slippers and shoon,
 From the rise of sun to the set of moon,"

had a very easy time of it kompared with me! He could at least sit down all day, and that's more than I can do. I have to be konstantly on the move, keeping my kontributors up to the scratch.

During the last week I have had to make jernies to St. Jim's and Rookwood, and pay my own fair. I have had to visit Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble and Tubby Muffin, and lecture them on their slackness. A slacker set of subbeditors never eggst! Why, bless my sole, if the Editor was as slack as his subbs the paper would never appear at all!

And yet Dick Penfold begins to wine that he's overworked! Let him take my job on for a munth, and see how he likes it. I'll wager he would either go off his rocker—he's more than half-mad alreddy!—or develop a nervus brake-down.

It is your humbel servant who does all the work, and it is my subbs who draw all the pay. I never take so much as a three-penny-bit myself out of the prophets.

A hard-working, industrious, noble fellow—that's me! But it's all in a good cause, and I shouldn't drem of grumbling!

Your sinseer chum,

Your Editor.

THE SPRING POET!

By DICK PENFOLD.

In the spring a young man's fancy
 Lightly turns to thoughts of love.
 He will scribble odes to Nancy,
 And call her "peach" and "dove."
 How does she receive his ditties?

Why, she thinks the fellow mad!
 And from her heart she pities
 Him exceedingly, poor lad!

In the spring I scribble meekly
 Yards and yards of rippling rhyme,
 For a rag called BUNTER'S WEEKLY,
 At half-a-crown a time.

Do I ever get my money?
 No; for Bunter's out to flooce.
 I should think it jolly funny
 If I got a pennypiece!

In the spring the buds are sprouting,
 And sunshine floods the land.
 But I never get an outing;
 Such joys are strictly banned.

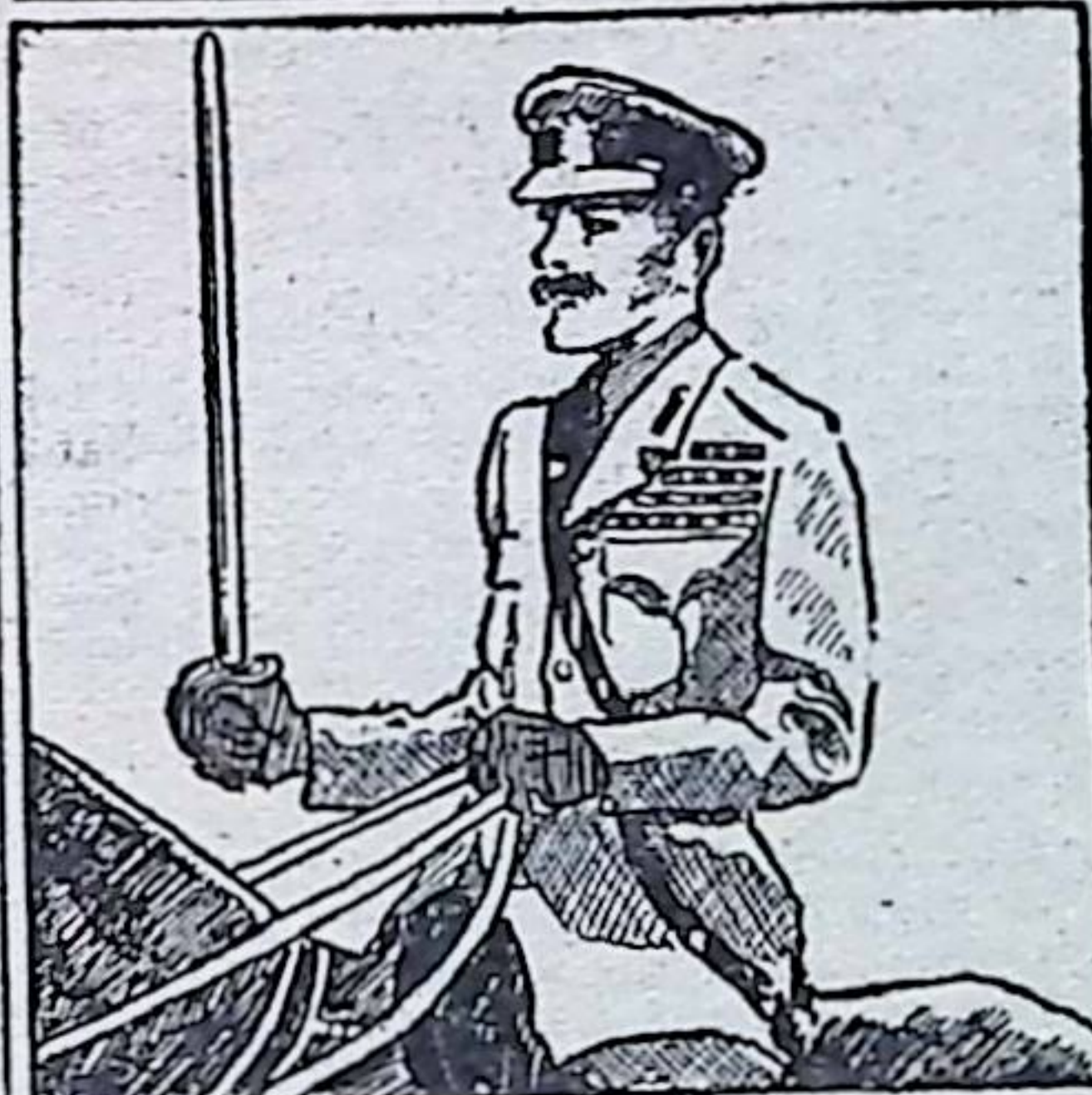
On the footer-field so muddy
 I seldom dash and shout.
 In the silence of my study
 I must get these verses out.

In the spring the chaps go rowing
 On that silver stream the Sark;
 But my busy pen is going
 From daybreak until dark.

Oh, a sad and struggling poet
 Gets no pleasure, ease, or fun!
 And, if only you did know it,
 His lot's a dismal one!

PEEPS INTO THE FUTURE!

By George Kerr.



HARRY WHARTON (Greyfriars).

PUNNISHED BY PROUT!

By SAMMY BUNTER
 (Subb-Editor).

"Bunter, my boy," said Mr. Prout, baring down upon me in the Close, "I want you to do me a faiver."

"Anything within reezon, sir," I replide.

"Very well. Go down to the village, and buy me a basket of froot."

"Sertainly, sir!"

"There are five-shilling baskets being sold by Messrs. Ripe & Mellow," Mr. Prout went on. "Hear are a cupple of half-crowns. Go and get me a basket." I trotted cheerfully away to the village.

It took me a quarter of an hour to go, and neerly an hour to come back.

You see, I found the froot so appetizing that I sat on a style by the roadside and gazed at it—the froot, not the style.

Do you know, dear readers, that froot seemed to hipnertize me; it looked so inviting—so fassinating.

"If I take one small apple," I mermered, "it won't be notissed."

Accordingly, I did so.

The apple was so nice that I took another—then another—and then another.

By this time I had made rather a hole in the basket of froot.

"Prout's bound to notiss it," I reflected, "so I mite as well be hung for a lam. I'll eat the lot!"

And I did.

Peeches, plums, pairs, pommygrannits—all disappeared into my inner regions.

I had such a heavy cargo of froot on board me that it was some time before I was able to walk.

At last I staggered back to Greyfriars—with an empty basket.

Prout was impatiently waiting for me in the skool gateway. When he saw that there was no froot in the basket he gave a roar.

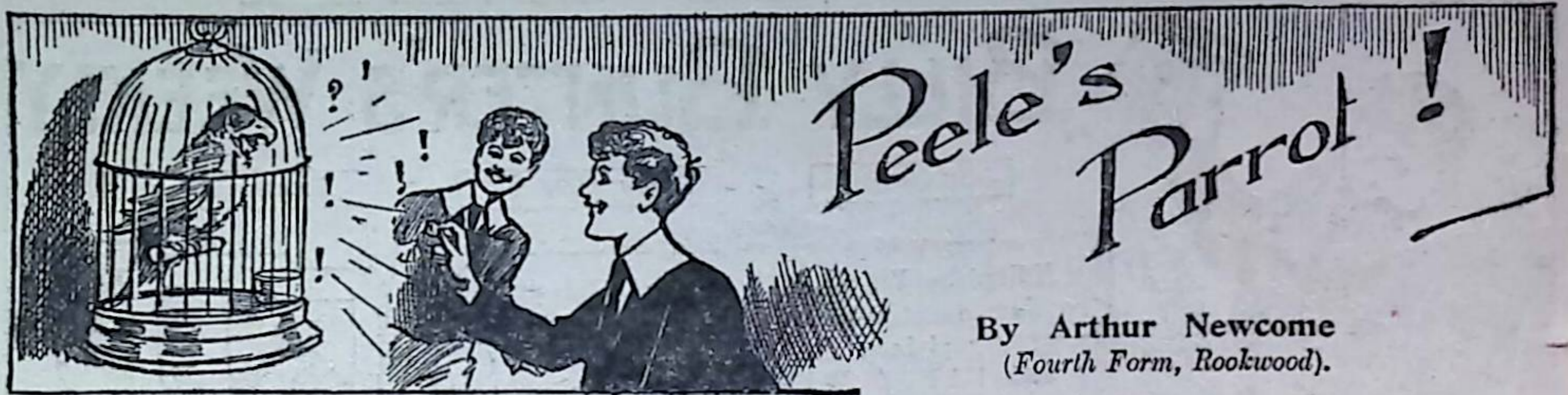
"Bunter miner, what does this meen?"

"I regret to say, sir, that I was attacked by savvidge hooligans on the way back to the skool. They put a pistle to my head, and cried: 'Your froot or your life!' I tried to shake them off, but in vane!"

"Falsehoods! Falsehoods!" thundered Prout. "Do not attempt to impose on my creddulity, Bunter! I am only too well aware of the fact that you demollished this froot yorself!"

And he led me away to the slawter.

I had a terribul time in Prout's studdy. He flogged me until he was out of breth.



By Arthur Newcome
(Fourth Form, Rookwood).

PEELE of the Fourth possessed a parrot. He got it in this wise. Peele's pater's second cousin had a pal who knew somebody in the Navy. The Naval johnnie picked up the parrot somewhere in the West Indies, and brought it home. He found the bird rather a nuisance, so he gave it away to his pal. His pal, in turn, gave it to the second cousin of Peele's pater, and Peele's pater gave it to Peele. So the parrot, after being bandied about from pillar to post, so to speak, eventually found a home at Rookwood.

Peele hung the parrot in his study. I don't mean to say that he executed it as if it were a criminal. He stuck the cage on a nail in the wall.

Polly wasn't very talkative at first. Its vocabulary consisted of "All aboard!" and "Right-ho, bo'sun!"

It soon forgot these nautical terms, however, and picked up fresh phrases.

On the day after Polly's arrival it so happened that Peele got into trouble with Mr. Manders.

Manders, sniffing around in the vicinity of the woodshed, caught Peele smoking. He took him along to his study, and walloped him with great vigour.

Peele crawled along to his own study, his face white with pain and rage.

"Tyrant, that's what you are!" he muttered, referring of course, to Mr. Manders. "Beastly tyrant! Prussian pig! Yah!"

By the time Peele had repeated these choice epithets about twenty times Polly the parrot "caught on."

When Lattrey strolled into the study some time later Polly said to him:

"Tyrant! That's what you are!"

"Eh?" gasped Lattrey, in astonishment.

"Beastly tyrant! Prussian pig! Yah!"

Lattrey looked at Peele.

"What have you been teaching Polly?"

he asked.

"Nothing!" snarled Peele. "I suppose I was muttering something about Manders, and the beastly bird took up the cry. Manders caught me with a cigarette, and lammed me, confound him!"

"Tyrant! Prussian pig!" screeched Polly.

"Oh, dry up!" growled Peele. "You make me tired!"

Realising that its owner was annoyed, Polly obligingly "dried up." And for the next week or so it went back to the old familiar phrases: "All aboard!" and "Right-ho, bo'sun!"

Meanwhile, Peele was growing weary of his new pet. The novelty had worn off.

Peele's study-mates, too, were fed up with Polly. They told Peele to his face that the parrot was a pest. It annoyed them with its confounded chatter, they said. They could not concentrate on prep or anything else with Polly in the study.

And then one day Mr. Manders had occasion to go into the study, and he made the acquaintance of Polly.

Manders was curiously attracted by the bird. All men have their weaknesses, and Manders' weakness was parrots. Polly interested and amused him.

"I suppose, Peele," he said, "you have no desire to part with this bird?"

"Well, no, sir!" said Peele, scenting a nice little business transaction. "That is to say, I shouldn't let Polly go except at a good figure."

"What would you be willing to take for the bird?" asked Manders.

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Peele hesitated.

"Three pounds?" suggested Manders.

Peele shook his head.

"If you made it a fiver, sir, I might consider the offer."

Manders hummed and hawed for a bit, and finally agreed to purchase Polly at the sum of five pounds. He paid over the money there and then, and carted Polly, complete with cage, along to his own quarters.

For some days all went well.

And then the calamity came.

Polly had been trying for a long time to recall some phrases which it had heard, and one day, when Manders came into the study, it remembered them.

"Well, Polly?" said Manders, squinting through the bars of the cage. "How is my Polly to day?"

The bird's answer came as a shock to Mr. Manders.

"Tyrant! That's what you are! Beastly coward, too! Hit somebody your own size!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Manders.

"Tyrant! Prussian pig! Yah!" screeched



Manders picked up an ashplant, and started to poke and prod the parrot between the bars of the cage.

Polly. And then, recalling another phrase, the bird added: "You ought to be jolly well mobbed, Manders!"

Mr. Manders flew into a terrible temper.

"Who has been teaching you to make use of these insulting epithets?" he demanded.

"Tyrant! Baldheaded old bully, that's what you are!"

"You—you—" spluttered Manders.

He picked up an ashplant, and started to poke and prod the parrot between the bars of the cage.

Polly, resenting this treatment, screeched wildly. Manders continued to poke and prod viciously, and Polly continued to flutter and screech.

"Hit somebody your own size!"

"Be silent!" spluttered Manders.

"Baldheaded old bully!" said the parrot. "You ought to be jolly well mobbed!"

Manders, unable to endure the insults any longer, tossed the ashplant into the corner, and swept out of the study.

From that time onwards Polly gave Mr. Manders no peace.

Every time the master went to his study he was greeted by a stream of insults.

It was no use punishing Polly. The more she was punished, the more she persisted.

The next day Mr. Manders held a little party in his study, a thing he very rarely did, and several of the masters were present. After dinner when the men were seated round a blazing fire, and smoking, Polly thought it time to show the company what she could do and say.

"Tyrant!" shrieked the bird suddenly.

The company, surprised and startled at the sound of the parrot's voice, turned round in Polly's direction.

"What—what!" gasped Mr. Bootles, blinking at the bird in the cage.

"Hallo! Is that your parrot?" asked one of the masters, in surprise. "I didn't know you were interested in such things!"

"Oh—er—quite so!" stammered Mr. Manders. "I'm— It is a little hobby of mine!"

"Bald-headed old bully!" said the parrot. "You ought to be mobbed!"

"Good gracious!" gasped Bootles. "Surely you have not been teaching that bird to say such insulting epithets?"

"I— No; I'm surprised at you, Bootles, for suggesting such a thing!" said Mr. Manders icily. "I purchased the bird from one of the boys in my Form. Doubtless he is responsible for that!"

Having caused a sensation, Polly was contented to remain silent for the rest of the evening, and sat looking through her cage, with her head cocked sideways, at the masters.

Manders' nerves—which were none too steady at the best of times—became completely shattered. He was a wreck. The parrot's voice haunted him, both in his waking hours and in his sleep.

And one evening when Cyril Peele was doing his prep in his study Manders rushed in, and practically hurled a birdcage at him.

Peele toppled backwards in his chair.

"What the thump—" he gasped.

"Take back your bird!" roared Manders. "It has been a perpetual source of annoyance to me! Morning, noon, and night, it has showered bitter insults upon me! I strongly suspect, Peele, that the parrot picked up its insolent phrases from you!"

"From me, sir?" said Peele, in tones of injured innocence.

"Yes, from you! You will take a thousand lines for inciting that feathered creature to insult me!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You will also take the bird back into your custody. And I demand the immediate return of half the purchase-money!" snapped Manders.

But he was unlucky.

Peele had already "blued" the fiver. So Manders went empty away.

And what became of Polly?

Peele made frantic efforts to sell the bird, but nobody at Rookwood would "bite."

Eventually, Peele actually gave Polly away to a bird-fancier in Latcham. And he wrote and asked his pater not to send him any more parrots.

"Next time you make me a present," he wrote. "I should prefer it in cash. That beastly parrot nearly drove me off my dot!"

Personally, I don't see what Peele had to grumble at. He was the richer by a thousand lines, certainly! But he also made the sum of five pounds; and five pounds is a jolly valuable acquisition!

**THE TRULY
"TERRIBLE THREE"!**

By **FATTY WYNN.**
(Of the New House, St. Jim's)

"Have a cigar?"
"No. I prefer a cigarette, thanks."
Baggy Trimble, with his ear glued to the keyhole of the door of Study No. 12 in the Shell passage, gave a violent start. The first voice he had heard was that of Tom Merry. The second was Monty Lowther's.
Baggy Trimble was horrified. Smoking! In a junior study! And such exemplary fellows as Tom Merry & Co.!

It was truly amazing.
Baggy continued to play the part of eavesdropper.
"And the cigs are prime!" said Monty Lowther. "I love the flavour."
After which there was silence.
Baggy Trimble's first impulse—he was given to such impulses—was to walk into the study, tax the 'Terrible Three' with breaking the law, and then proceed to extract a heavy bribe—the price of his silence.
Baggy would have acted upon this impulse, but he couldn't, for the simple reason that the study door was locked.
Baggy Trimble was about to call through the keyhole, when Knox of the Sixth came striding along the passage.
"What are you doing here?" he demanded, grasping the fat junior by the collar.
Baggy turned to the prefect in great excitement.
"I—I say, Knox! Tom Merry and his pals are smoking."
"What?"
"I distinctly heard Merry ask Lowther to have a cigar. And then I heard Manners say that the cigars were top-hole."
Knox didn't wait to hear more. He promptly grabbed at the door-handle.
"Door's locked!" said Baggy.
Knox looked grim.
"Merry!" he exclaimed.
"Hallo!" came the reply from within.
"Open this door immediately!"
There was a brief pause. Then the door was opened.
Knox strode into the study.
"I have reason to believe that you've got cigars and cigarettes in here!" he said sternly.
Tom Merry nodded.
"There's no harm in that—" he began.
"No harm in it? Why, you know jolly well that you're not allowed to have cigars and cigarettes in your possession!"
"Not chocolate ones?" asked Monty Lowther innocently.
And then, for the first time, Knox became aware of the fact that the "smokes" were merely sweetmeats.
"Why did you have the door locked?" he demanded.
"Because we were working on the 'St. Jim's News,' and we didn't want any interruptions," said Manners.
Knox had no reply to that. The explanation was quite reasonable.
The Sixth-Former realised that he had been made to look very ridiculous. He strode savagely out of the study.
Baggy Trimble was hovering outside. Knox promptly proceeded to use him as a football. And Baggy went rolling along the passage, yelling loudly enough to raise the roof.

**A STUDY-RAIDER'S
NOTE BOOK!**

Being Extracts from the
Diary of **TUBBY MUFFIN.**

MONDAY.

A very disappointing day. Knew they had plenty of grub in the end study, so went along to try my luck. Before I could get to the cubberd the door opened, and Jimmy Silver & Co. came in. I dived beneath the table and stayed there until the beasts went out again. They had tea in the meanwhile, and ate everything that was in the cubberd. I remained in a horribly cramped position under the table for three-quarters of an hour! Dash it all! Why couldn't the silly asses have come in to tea half an hour later?

TUESDAY.

Another day of disappointment. I heard that Hansom of the Fifth had a birthday cake, and I went to his study in search of it. But either the cake had been Eton, or—Harrow-ing thought!—it had been removed to a safer place. Anyway, I had a cakeless afternoon, and felt jolly mizzerable.

WEDNESDAY.

I was in clover to-day! While all the fellows were out on Little Playing Fields, watching the footer match, I made a tour of all the studdies, and got a rich haul. Plum cake from the end study; bag of jam-tarts from Study No. 3; tin of sardens and a jar of prezzerved peeches from Study No. 6; and a delishus rabbit-pie from Study No. 13. Took all the tuck along to the box-room, and had a stunning feed.

THURSDAY.

No grub in any of the studdies. Everybody appeared to be stony-broke. I vissited no less than twenty studdies in the course of the afternoon, but drew blank. If things don't take a turn for the better, I shall perrish mizzerably of starvation!

FRIDAY.

Although Friday is supposed to be an unlucky day, I was in luck's way to-day. Tip-toed into Townsend's study while he was snoozing on the sofa. The table was laid for tea, and I obliged Towner by clearing it! Finest feed I've had since Wednesday. I beleve I shall begin to put on flesh if things go on like this! Tuck wood!

SATURDAY.

Alas! The week came to a dizzastrus end. I was caught at the cubberd in Higgs' study. Higgs is a hefty fellow, with a tremenduss punch, and he showed me no mersy. I told him I had not come to steel, but he didn't beleve me. He chased me round the study, and nocked me about something crool. I'm a mass of bumps and broozes, and eggspect I shall have to stay in bed all day to-morrow, as a rezzult of Higgs' ill-treatment! Oh dear! What a life!

**BRIGHTENING
UP ST. JIM'S!**

By **MONTY LOWTHER**
(Of the Shell Form).

People talk of brightening cricket. My own pet ambition is to brighten the school in which I live, and move, and have my being.

I have several schemes for brightening the dull routine of St. Jim's. But I only propose to deal with one of them in this article. (Thank goodness!—Ed.)

Now, in various parts of the school you will find commonplace notices exhibited, such as "WET PAINT," "KEEP OFF THE GRASS," and "NO TALKING ALLOWED IN THE DORMITORY."

Nobody ever pays any heed to such notices. They ignore them, just as the average member of the public ignores the idiotic and hackneyed phrase, "TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED!"

Now, if these notices were displayed in a more attractive form, I warrant they would compel attention.

On the Head's lawn there is a board bearing the time-honoured and fungus-covered inscription, "KEEP OFF THE GRASS!"

Think how much more attractive this would be if it appeared in the following form:

"Any fellow who is seen
Tramping on my private green,
Will receive an imposition,
And a licking, in addition!"

Pretty smart—eh? I guess Dick Penfold, of Greyfriars, will have to look to his laurels!

Now, the fence at the lower end of the cricket-ground is being repainted, in readiness for the coming season. The usual futile notice is displayed: "WET PAINT."

To my mind, that out of date warning would attract far more attention if dished up as follows:

"If you wander to this fence,
Kindly have the common-sense
Not to touch paint with your fingers,
For in liquid form it lingers!"

If that verse didn't answer the purpose, I should be mightily surprised!

So far as the notice about talking in the dormitory is concerned, nobody heeds the warning when it is written in commonplace prose. Give a touch of romance to it—that's what I say. Inscribe on the door of the dorm, in bold, flourishing characters, the following little ditty:

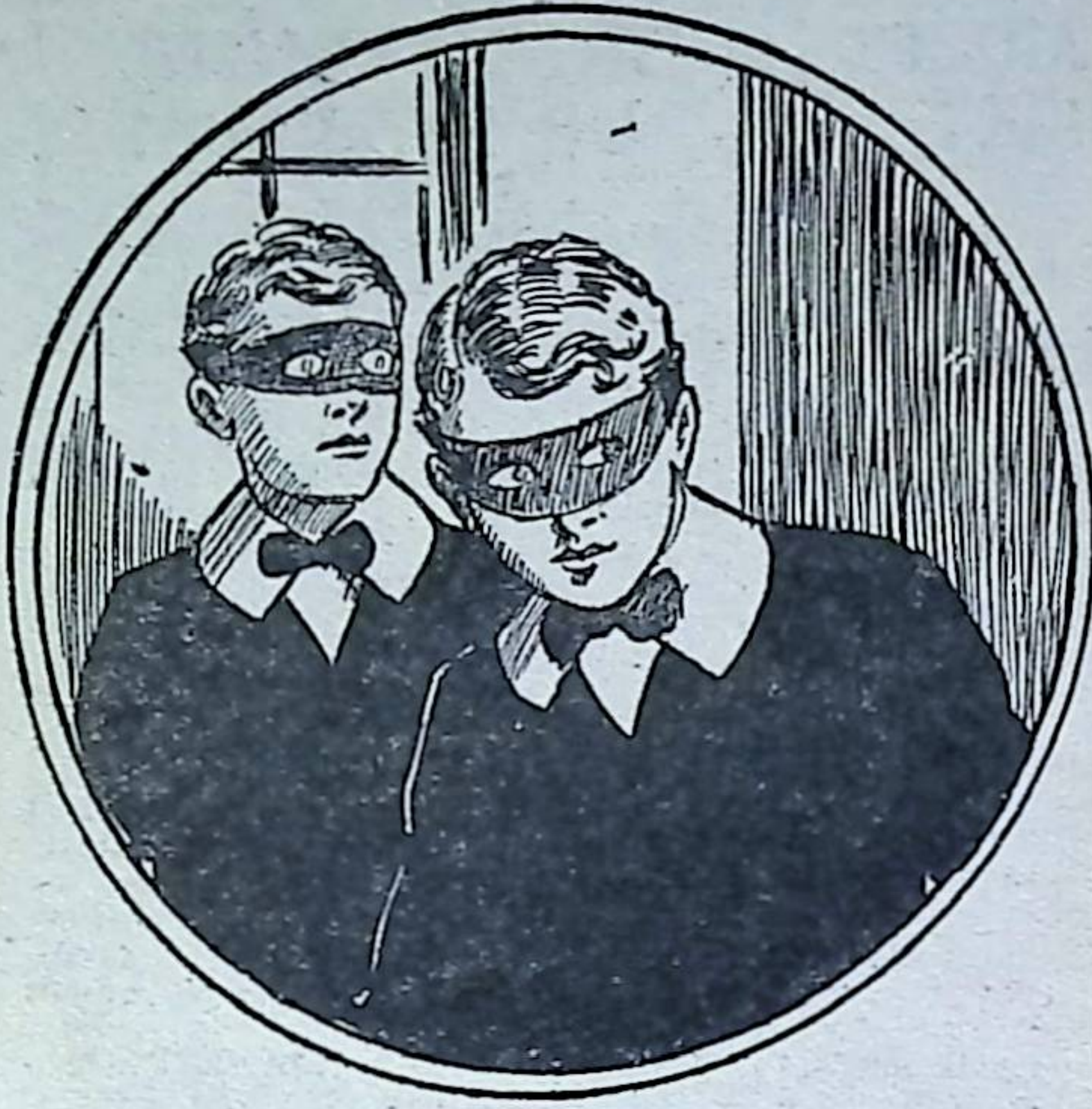
"He who dares to raise his voice,
From necessity or choice,
Is hereby ordered to take warning
That he'll be walloped in the morning!"

So far, so good.

The verses I have quoted would go a long way towards brightening St. Jim's. Originality and novelty—those are the things we want. Why, if I had my own way, I should even have the rules of the school re-written in choice verse.

There are lots and lots of ways to brighten St. Jim's, and this is just one of them, selected at random from the crowd of ideas which fills my fertile brain.

A STIRRING SCHOOL TALE OF THE FAMOUS CHUMS OF ST. JIM'S!



TOM MERRY'S VIGILANCE COMMITTEE!

A New, Long, Complete, School Story
of TOM MERRY & CO., the
Chums of St. Jim's.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Disgrace to St. Jim's!

LOOK there!" Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, the three famous chums of the Shell Form at St. Jim's, were returning from Rylcombe, where they had been treating themselves, for once in a way, to a sumptuous tea at the village bunshop. Suddenly a figure turned into the dusky lane a hundred yards in front of them, and, with a furtive backward glance, hurried along in the same direction as they were taking—that is, towards St. Jim's.

Tom Merry gave vent to an indignant snort as he pointed at the hurrying figure.

"Look at that! Did you see who it was?"

"Looked like a St. Jim's chap—a senior, I should say," said Lowther. "And he came out of the Green Man, too!"

"Looked to me like Cutts of the Fifth," said Manners.

Tom Merry snorted again.

"It was Cutts of the Fifth, I'm pretty sure!" he said. "So he's still haunting the Green Man—the most disreputable, low pub for miles round! A chap like that is a disgrace to St. Jim's!"

"Hear, hear!" said Lowther. "Cutts is a rotten black sheep, and the Head would boot him out of St. Jim's if he got wind of half his little games!"

"He's much too clever for that, though," said Manners. "Why, practically every junior in the School House knows that Cutts gambles and smokes and has card-parties in his study regularly, yet he never gets found out."

"It's a disgrace to St. Jim's, all the same," said Tom Merry, with knitted brows. "A blackguard like Cutts ought not to be allowed to have it all his own way, even if he is clever enough to steer clear of trouble with the authorities!"

"Well, that's so, but what can we do?" said Lowther. "We can't sneak about him to the masters, or to the prefects, either."

"Old Kildare would have bowled him out before now if he hadn't been such a decent chap!" growled Manners. "He's a topping captain, of course, but he's too blessed unsuspecting! A clever beggar

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NEXT
FRIDAY!

"CONDEMNED IN ERROR!"

like Cutts pulls the wool over his eyes quite easily."

Tom Merry's jaw set firmly.

"Well, my idea is that Cutts wants a lesson," he said determinedly. "His shady ways are a public scandal and the talk of the whole junior school! Well, we're the leaders of the junior school, aren't we?"

"We are!"

"We is!"

"Then we are the fellows to administer the lesson!" said Tom Merry. "And I've got a notion how we can do it, too. We'll form a junior Vigilance Committee!"

"A whatter?"

"A Vigilance Committee—a sort of private force of special constables, like the Klu Klux Klan in America," said Tom, warming to his idea. "The best fellows, like Blake & Co., will back us up like a shot. We don't want to be prigs, of course, or poke our noses into everyone's business. But where there's any real blackguardism going on which is a disgrace to the school—well, we'll chip in!"

"But—but Cutts is a Fifth-Former—a senior!" objected Manners. "And his blessed companions in crime are seniors, too—St. Leger and Gilmore of the Fifth, and Knox of the Sixth!"

"My dear chap, what does that matter?" said Tom Merry calmly. "We can't sneak about them—it isn't done—but we can go in for a little 'direct action' on our own. If there are enough of us, we can tackle anybody."

Monty Lowther slapped his study leader on the back.

"It's a champion idea, Tommy, me boy!" he said with a grin. "And the best of it is that whatever we do to 'em, and however mad we make 'em, the black sheep will have to keep it dark!"

"Quite so," said Tom Merry soberly. "That is the essence of the whole matter. We shall always have right on our side. Cheerio, Taggy!"

The three chums had reached the gates of St. Jim's and turned into them just as Taggles, the porter, emerged from his lodge in order to lock up the gates for the night.

Taggles, who was of a somewhat crusty nature, grunted at Tom Merry's cheery greeting.

"Which you was nearly late, Master Merry!"

"Which a miss is as good as a mile, Taggy!" retorted Monty Lowther solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Young rips!" snorted Taggles.

Leaving Taggles muttering to himself as he locked up the gates, the chums sprinted across the quad to the School House, and were soon discussing the great idea of the Vigilance Committee in the privacy of their study, No. 10 in the Shell Form passage.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Committee Gets to Work!

GENTLEMEN—

"Hear, hear!"

It was the first meeting of the junior Vigilance Committee in Study No. 10, some days after Tom Merry had first proposed the idea. The Terrible Three—as Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther were called—had invited six of their special friends to join the committee, and all were present at this, the first meeting. They were Harry Noble and Bernard Glyn of the Shell, and Blake, Herries, Digby, and D'Arcy of the Fourth Form. Tom Merry, as president, was on his legs.

"Gentlemen, we have banded ourselves together for the purpose of keeping an eye on certain parties whose proceedings have hitherto been a disgrace to the School House and to St. Jim's!" he began eloquently.

"Hear, hear!"

"Good old Tommy!"

"I have called you together to-day because occasion has now arisen for us to take action!"

Sensation!

"I have discovered, through Curly Gibson of the Third, that Cutts is having a card-party in his study to-night; it's going on now, in fact!"

"Shame!"

"Cutts makes no secret of it—all the Third Form know it. He sent young Gibson down to Rylcombe to get him some smokes—"

"Shame!"

"And a Second Form kid had to go across just now to the tuckshop to get change for a pound-note for him from

A NEW LONG TALE OF ST. JIM'S.

::

::

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Mrs. Taggles. He wants the change because they are playing cards for money, of course, and all the kids know it. A nice example to the fags, I must say!"

"Shame!"

"Disgraceful!"

"Let's rag him!"

Tom Merry held up his hand for silence.

"We are now going to Cutts' study in a body to interview him," he said grimly. "Members will all put on their masks, and we will take a form with us to break down the door with if necessary!"

"Hurrah!"

"Just one more word. We shall all be masked, but someone must speak, of course, and Cutts & Co. are bound to recognise voices. As your leader, I will do all the talking. I have had many a rub with Cutts already, and he doesn't like me as it is; but he knows I'm not afraid of him. If he goes for me over this, you chaps will have to back me up, of course. But there's no need for those rotters to recognise every member of the committee. So I want all you chaps to keep quiet; it will be all the more impressive if we work in silence."

"Hear, hear!"

"Yaas, wathah!" assented Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth. "But hadn't you better leave the leadship to me, Tom Mewwy? Cutts would nevah recognise me in my dinkay little mask!"

There was a roar of derisive voices at once.

"Ass!"

"Dummy!"

"Dry up, Gussy!" exclaimed Jack Blake impatiently. "Anyone would recognise your voice half a mile away! Besides, you know, you can never open your mouth without putting your foot into it!"

"Weally, Blake—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, gentlemen!" said Tom Merry, raising his voice. "To business! Get your masks on!"

Every member of the committee adjusted a black mask over the top part of his face, having slits for the eyes. The effect was grim and sinister.

"Follow me!" said Tom Merry tensely.

In silence, and with their hearts beating with excitement, the Vigilance Committee proceeded to the Fifth Form passage, only pausing to pick up a long wooden form as they went. Arrived at the door of Cutts' study, Tom Merry knocked.

After a second's pause, he tried the handle. As he expected, the door was locked.

There was a scuffling sound and muttered exclamations from within.

Tom Merry knocked again.

"Who's there?" came Cutts' voice.

"It's I—Tom Merry—Cutts! I want to come in, please!"

There was a furious exclamation from Cutts.

"Get away, you cheeky fag!" roared Cutts. "How dare you disturb me! I'm busy!"

"Let me in, please," repeated Tom Merry quietly.

"If you don't buzz off instantly, Merry, you young cub, I'll come out to you with my ashplant!" roared an unpleasant voice which the juniors recognised as belonging to Knox of the Sixth, the most unpopular prefect at St. Jim's.

"I wasn't speaking to you, Knoxy. I was speaking to Cutts," said Tom Merry quietly. "Will you let me in, Cutts?"

"No!" roared Cutts. "You young scoundrel, I'll—"

Tom Merry made a sign to his followers, and the heavy form was lunged forward like a battering-ram at the door.

Crash!

There was a howl of rage from inside.

"You young villain! What are you doing?"

Crash!

Tom Merry was evidently wasting no more words.

Inside the study four choice "blades," Cutts, Knox, Gilmore, and St. Leger, exchanged black looks.

The atmosphere of the study was heavy with cigarette-smoke, though the window had been flung open and all cigarettes extinguished immediately. Tom Merry's first knock had fallen upon the door, in case it should have been a master.

Likewise, all the evidence of the game of bridge, at a shilling a hundred points, which had been in progress had been swept instantly into the table drawer.

"Better let the young hound in before he brings a master on the scene with this infernal row!" muttered Cutts, between his teeth.

"But—" blustered Knox.

Crash!

The study door shook from the heavy concussion of the form.

With a muttered curse, Cutts strode to the door and flung it open.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Cutts Gives In!

"NOW, what is it you want, Merry?" exclaimed Cutts, suppressing his savage temper with an effort. "Why, what on earth—"

Cutts broke off, staring at the sight of the band of masked juniors. There was quite a crowd of other fellows, too, in the passage, attracted by the noise of battering.

Tom Merry stepped forward quickly. "We'll come in first, please, Cutts," he said, signing to his followers.

Before Cutts could make any movement to stop them, the whole band of nine had crowded into the study. Jack Blake, who was the last man in, locked the door again on the inside, and put the key in his pocket.

Cutts ground his teeth in helpless rage, while his three cronies gazed in wrathful astonishment at the masked invaders.

"What does all this nonsense mean?" demanded Knox roughly, starting to his feet.

Tom Merry made a gesture.

"Hold your tongue, Knox! We want to speak to Cutts first!"

Knox gave a roar, and jumped forward.

"You cheeky young hound! Why, I'll— Let me go, Cutts!"

Cutts grasped the furious prefect by the arm. Cutts was by no means a fool, and he could see that an appeal to physical force at the moment would be unwise—especially as it was his study, which would suffer in a rough-and-tumble. He gave Knox's arm a significant grip.

"Don't be a fool, Knox!" he said curtly. "Let's hear what the young— what Merry has to say!"

"First," said Tom Merry brusquely, "you four fellows were smoking—you can sniff that easily enough."

Cutts smiled.

"Since when has it been necessary for a senior to ask your permission if he wants an occasional whiff in his study?" he asked.

"Secondly," said Tom, taking no notice of the sarcasm, "you were playing cards—and for money, too. Gambling, in other words."

"There," said Cutts calmly, though his eyes gleamed savagely, "your High and Mightiness is wrong. As a matter of fact, I was just discussin' the footer with these fellows when you—er—blew along. We were talkin' over next Saturday's match, weren't we, Gilly?"

"We were, old man!" said Gilmore, taking his cue from Cutts.

Tom Merry suddenly stepped to the table and pulled open the drawer. In it were revealed a couple of packs of cards in a confused heap, two bridge-markers, and a quantity of silver, besides two Treasury notes, one for ten shillings and the other for a pound.

"There's the answer to that!" said Tom scornfully.

Cutts muttered something, and his face went livid. But still he held himself in check. St. Leger and Gilmore eyed him uneasily, uncertain how he would act. Knox appeared to be almost choking with rage.

"Well," said Cutts, between his teeth, glaring wolfishly at the silent band of masked juniors, "what do you intend to do about it?"

Tom Merry drew a deep breath.

"We intend to give you a lesson, Gerald Cutts!" he said deliberately.

"We have formed ourselves into a junior Vigilance Committee to put a stop to blackguardism that is a disgrace to St. Jim's! You are one of the worst offenders! We saw you leaving the Green Man just before locking-up time the other evening!"

"Spying!" hissed Cutts.

"No, not spying," said Tom Merry quietly. "Quite by accident, as it happened. You are a blackguard, Cutts—a smokey, gambling, pub-haunting cad, and a disgrace to the School House! And these other three—Knox, St. Leger, and Gilmore—are not much better!"

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NEXT FRIDAY!

"CONDEMNED IN ERROR!"

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BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Why, I—I'll smash you!" roared Knox, beside himself with fury. "I—I'll—"

"Shut up, you fool!" hissed Cutts, turning on the Sixth-Former with a snarl.

Gerald Cutts's coolness and self-control had pulled him through many a tight place, but he had hard work to control himself now. His face was like a demon's as he turned again towards Tom Merry.

"Well?" he managed to jerk out.

Speaking in a level, cool tone, and with the eight masked juniors ranged silently behind him, Tom Merry appeared to the four black sheep the embodiment of Justice, cold and relentless!

He felt a good deal like a judge himself, as he afterwards confessed, and the feeling gave him a new sense of dignity.

"We are going to punish you!" he said. "You must be taught that there is a limit, beyond which no fellow can go without getting it in the neck! It is for you to decide what form that punishment will take!"

Tom paused, and Cutts swallowed hard, but did not speak.

"There are nine of us here," went on Tom Merry, "and four of you. If it comes to a scrap, we are bound to come out top dog in the end. And a scrap means a lot of damage"—he glanced round Cutts' elegantly furnished study—"and also a big row. And a row will bring a master, or a prefect, at least, on the scene, as sure as eggs. Do you follow?"

Cutts, his face working, nodded. He followed the junior's reasoning perfectly—in fact, he had already worked it out himself, in his own mind, in exactly the same way.

"Well, you know best whether you want masters or prefects brought on the scene," continued Tom Merry relentlessly. "Personally, we don't care a button; but I rather think you do. The only alternative to a scrap is to submit to our punishment quietly and without resistance. You can please yourselves. Which is it to be?"

Cutts pulled himself together, and his self-control, which was almost deserting him, came back as he realised that the Vigilance Committee, whatever punishment they had in mind, did not intend to give him away to the authorities. That would only mean one thing—expulsion; and expulsion was the thing the reckless young rascal was really afraid of. Anything else he could bear—anything. And he made up his mind that he would do so. But what it cost the proud, dashing Cutts—a handsome, wealthy fellow, good at games, a great dandy, and a popular personality amongst a certain set at St. Jim's—to thus bow to the decision of a junior, can only be conjectured.

He threw a swift glance at his three cronies.

"We'll submit!" he said thickly. "Carry on!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Facing the Music!

TOM MERRY looked at Cutts for a moment, half in admiration. Reckless blackguard as he undoubtedly was, he possessed pluck, and knew how to face the music.

Gilmore and St. Leger, now looking thoroughly scared, said nothing, while Knox appeared incapable of speech, owing to suppressed fury.

Tom Merry looked round the study.

"Ah! I think I see Knox's ashplant over there in the corner. Very thoughtful of Knoxy to bring it!" he said.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"CONDEMNED IN ERROR!"

"Will you hand it over please, Cutts?" Cutts breathed hard.

"What for?" he demanded, in a strangled voice.

"To thrash you with," said Tom Merry cheerfully. "A dozen each—that's the sentence!"

Cutts went pale, and then flushed crimson.

"I—I—" he stuttered, and then stopped.

"Yes?" said Tom Merry pleasantly.

Cutts strode to the corner and grabbed Knox's ashplant—the symbol of the prefect's authority, which Knox had so often abused. He handed it to Tom Merry without a word.

Tom took it, and swished it suggestively through the air.

"I seem to remember that this ashplant stings more than a little," he re-

were beating a carpet, until the twelve strokes had been well and truly delivered, and Gerald Cutts had received the soundest thrashing of his career.

"That's your lesson, Cutts!" said Tom Merry quietly, when he had finished. And Cutts, with white face and burning eyes, straightened himself up. Hardened young rascal as he was, he had taken his medicine like a man.

"Now, Knox!" said Tom Merry briefly.

The big Sixth-Former glared at him as if he would eat him; but he did not move.

"Knox!" rapped out Tom Merry. "Your turn next!"

"You—you—" stuttered Knox furiously. "If you dare to lay a finger on me, you young ruffian, I'll thrash you within an inch of your life!"



THE VIGILANCE COMMITTEE GETS TO WORK!—"Why, what on earth—" said Cutts, staring with amazement at the nine masked juniors who crowded into the study after Tom Merry. "What does all this nonsense mean?" demanded Knox, starting to his feet. "Mind your own business, Knox!" said Tom Merry. "We'll deal with you later!" (See Chapter 3.)

marked. "I've felt it before now, haven't I, Knoxy?"

A choking gasp was the only reply from Knox.

"Bend over the table, please, Cutts," ordered the chief of the Vigilance Committee sternly.

Cutts' expression was positively Hunnish, as he glared at the juniors and hesitated. Then he squared his shoulders and did as he was told.

There was a gasp from Gilmore and St. Leger, while Knox gaped like a codfish. Here was humiliation indeed for the lordly Cutts!

Tom Merry took a businesslike grip on the ashplant.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

He laid into the senior right heartily, and Cutts gripped the table till his knuckles showed white; but no sound came from his lips.

Tom Merry whacked away as if he

"All wrong, Knoxy!" said Tom Merry cheerily. "It's I who am going to do the thrashing. Now, are you going to bend over the table, or must we make you?"

"No, I'm not!" shouted Knox. "I'm a prefect, and if you dare—"

"Quiet, you fool!" hissed Cutts. "Do as you're told—it's the only way! Can't you see?"

"I'm hanged if I do!" shouted Knox.

"You'll get Railton here, you crass idiot, if you don't keep quiet!" hissed Cutts furiously, all his savage temper now concentrated on his confederate.

"Will you get over the table, Knox?" repeated Tom Merry.

"No, hang you!"

Tom Merry made a sign, and four of the masked Vigilants stepped forward. But before they could grasp Knox, Cutts

had hurled himself at the prefect, and half dragged him over the table.

With this powerful assistance, the four juniors had no difficulty in holding Knox in position, in spite of his struggles. Someone jammed a handkerchief into his mouth, and his ravings died away in furious gurgles.

Knox was then well and truly beaten. Tom Merry flogged him as if he enjoyed it, for Knox was the worst bully at St. Jim's, and there was not a junior there who had not at some time or other felt the sting of his ashplant. And now Knox was getting a taste of his own medicine, with a vengeance.

Tom Merry ceased at last, and Knox was rolled off the table, writhing and struggling, and gurgling furiously, while Cutts still grappled savagely with him.

"Gug-gug-gug!" gasped Knox.

"Quiet, you fool!"

"I'll grooh—I'll smash them!"

"Dry up, you crass idiot!"

"This way, Gilmore!" called Tom Merry.

Gilmore came forward with ashen face.

"I—I say!" he faltered. "You—you're not really going to thrash me, Merry? I—I can't stand it, you know! I—I'm awfully sorry! I'll never do it again!"

The wretched Gilmore, who was not of the stuff of which heroes are made, fairly babbled.

Tom Merry eyed him contemptuously.

"Sorry, Gilly!" he said curtly. "You have been sentenced by the Committee, and you'll have to go through with it! Roll him over!"

Half a dozen pairs of hands grasped Gilmore and held him over the table. The ashplant rose and fell rapidly, and a handkerchief had to be brought into use to stifle the roars of the wretched Gilmore.

Then St. Leger was seized without ceremony, and the dust arose in clouds from his trousers as the good work went on.

St. Leger lost control of himself entirely.

"Help!" he yelled. "Ow! You young demons! Lemme gerrup. Yow!"

"Shut up, you ass!"

"Jam something in the fool's mouth!" hissed Cutts.

St. Leger's cries were quickly stifled, but that had evidently not passed unheard outside the study.

There came a sudden knocking at the door.

Knock, knock, knock!

There was a sudden dead silence in the study. Cutts ceased struggling with Knox, and pulled himself together, instinctively smoothing his hair and straightening his tie.

"Who's there?" he called, his voice in spite of himself, a trifle unsteady.

"It's I—Kildare! Let me in! Is that you, Cutts?"

"Yes."

"What's the row in here? I heard someone yelling. You're not bullying a junior in there, I hope?"

Tom Merry smiled grimly.

"It's all right, Kildare!" he called out. "I'm here, but I'm not being bullied!"

"Oh, is that you, Tom Merry? What are you doing there? Let me in, Cutts, at once, please!"

It was evident that the suspicions of the popular captain of St. Jim's were thoroughly aroused.

Cutts threw Tom Merry a savage glance.

"All right!" whispered Tom. "Let him in!" He whisked off his mask as he spoke, and signed to his followers to do the same. And in a moment the

relentless Vigilance Committee became a rather sheepish-looking party of ordinary Shell and Fourth Formers.

With a sigh of relief Cutts turned the key, which Jack Blake had hurriedly slipped into the lock.

Eric Kildare strode into the study, and stared in amazement at the crowd within. Thirteen people in a study—even a Fifth-Form study—made rather a crowd, and Kildare himself made the fourteenth.

He looked round with a puzzled frown.

"What's going on in here?" he demanded brusquely. "I don't quite understand. What was that row I heard, and what are all you kids doing in here?"

Tom Merry coughed deprecatingly.

"Ahem! It's all right, Kildare! We—we're a sort of committee, and—"

"A committee?"

"Yes, we came here to—to talk over various matters with Cutts, connected with—with the welfare of the School House you know!"

"Oh!" Kildare's rugged face cleared at once. "It's a sort of unofficial House Committee meeting, is it? I see there are representatives of the Fourth, Shell, Fifth, and Sixth here, eh? I didn't know Knox was here, or I wouldn't have disturbed you. But see that they don't kick up quite so much row, Knox, will you?"

"Yes!" gasped Knox.

Kildare turned to go.

"By the way, what's this form doing out in the passage?"

"We—we brought it with us, Kildare," said Tom Merry weakly. "There was rather a crowd of us, you know!"

"Ah, yes; there's hardly chairs enough for you in the study," said Kildare laughing. "Blessed if I don't think it's jolly good of Cutts to have a crowd of fags messing up his study!"

And Kildare disappeared in the direction of his study in the Sixth Form passage.

There was silence in the study for a few moments until the captain's footsteps had died away.

"Well, I think we had better be going!" remarked Tom Merry quietly.

"I think you had!" snarled Cutts.

"We'll just burn these first," said Tom, calmly gathering up the cards and bridge-markers from the drawer, and flinging them on the fire. "As for the money, each of you four had better take back what belonged to him, as the game was unfinished owing to unforeseen circumstances!" he added with grim humour. "Good-night, gentlemen! And don't forget that the Vigilance Committee has its eye on you!"

"Oh, go to blazes!" snarled Cutts.

All the same, Cutts did not forget it, and neither did Knox, or Gilmore, or St. Leger.

Cutts & Co., sore in body and mind, kept the story of that evening's happenings strictly to themselves, while they nursed dreams of a terrible vengeance. At the same time they went very warily indeed, and their doings were no longer a topic of common gossip among the juniors and a public scandal in the School House.

And so Tom Merry's Vigilance Committee felt that their evening's work had not been wasted.

THE END.

(Another new, long, complete tale of the Famous Chums of St. Jim's will be included in the splendid programme of stories next week.)

THE RIGHT STUFF!

(Continued from page 12.)

Bob. "I'm going to ride for a doctor. I'll let your father know as well. You must come to the ranch, old chap—you must!"

Beauclerc glanced curiously at Bob's stricken face, with the tears running down the cheeks. He nodded slightly.

"All right, Lawless! I—I say"—his voice was a whisper—"I—I'm sorry we had any trouble. Forget all about it."

Bob pressed his hand, and stepped back from the buggy. Mr. Simpson drove away up the trail.

Bob and Frank mounted their ponies, and rode after the buggy. Both were silent, full of fear for the wounded lad who lay in the buggy. The ranch was reached at last.

Mr. Lawless was in the saddle, at a distance, but he rode up as the buggy halted. A few words explained, and the rancher, with a grim brow, carried the wounded boy into the house. In a few minutes Vere Beauclerc was in Bob Lawless' bed, and Bob was riding hard for the doctor.

Frank Richards, silent, pale, sat near the bed waiting till, after what seemed centuries to him, the doctor arrived.

Then Frank Richards went down and joined Bob, who sat, pale and exhausted, on a settle in the porch, exhausted by hard riding.

"How is he, Frank?" Bob muttered.

"I don't know—yet."

"He did it for me, Frank!" Bob's voice was husky. "He saw that villain taking aim, and ran between. Why did he do it?"

"He's a splendid chap!" said Frank miserably.

"And I'd just fought him!" muttered Bob. "There's the marks on his face now. I'm glad he licked me, Frank—"

His voice died away, and the two boys remained in miserable silence, waiting for news.

They started up as the doctor entered. "How is he?" breathed Frank.

The big, bearded frontier doctor looked down at the pale-faced boys and smiled.

"Quite all right, I guess." He held up a fragment of lead. "There's the bullet! Don't worry yourselves; there's no serious damage done, though our young friend had a narrow escape. He will mend in a week."

Bob sank down on the settle again, almost overcome, unable to speak. Frank felt a weight rolled from his heart.

"Thank Heaven, it's no worse, Frank! He'll get over it. But—but he might—"

"Don't think of that, Bob."

"I can't help thinking of it. Frank, after this—" Bob hesitated. "After this we—we'll try to make friends—if he'll let us."

Frank Richards smiled. There was no doubt in his mind upon that point. A friendship that was to last through life dated from that terrible hour when Vere Beauclerc lay in the shadow of death.

Vere Beauclerc had proved himself to be the right stuff!

THE END.

(The Chums of the Backwoods School again meet the Mexican Bandit, but this time they have the Mounted Police to assist them. You must not miss this splendid story next week.)

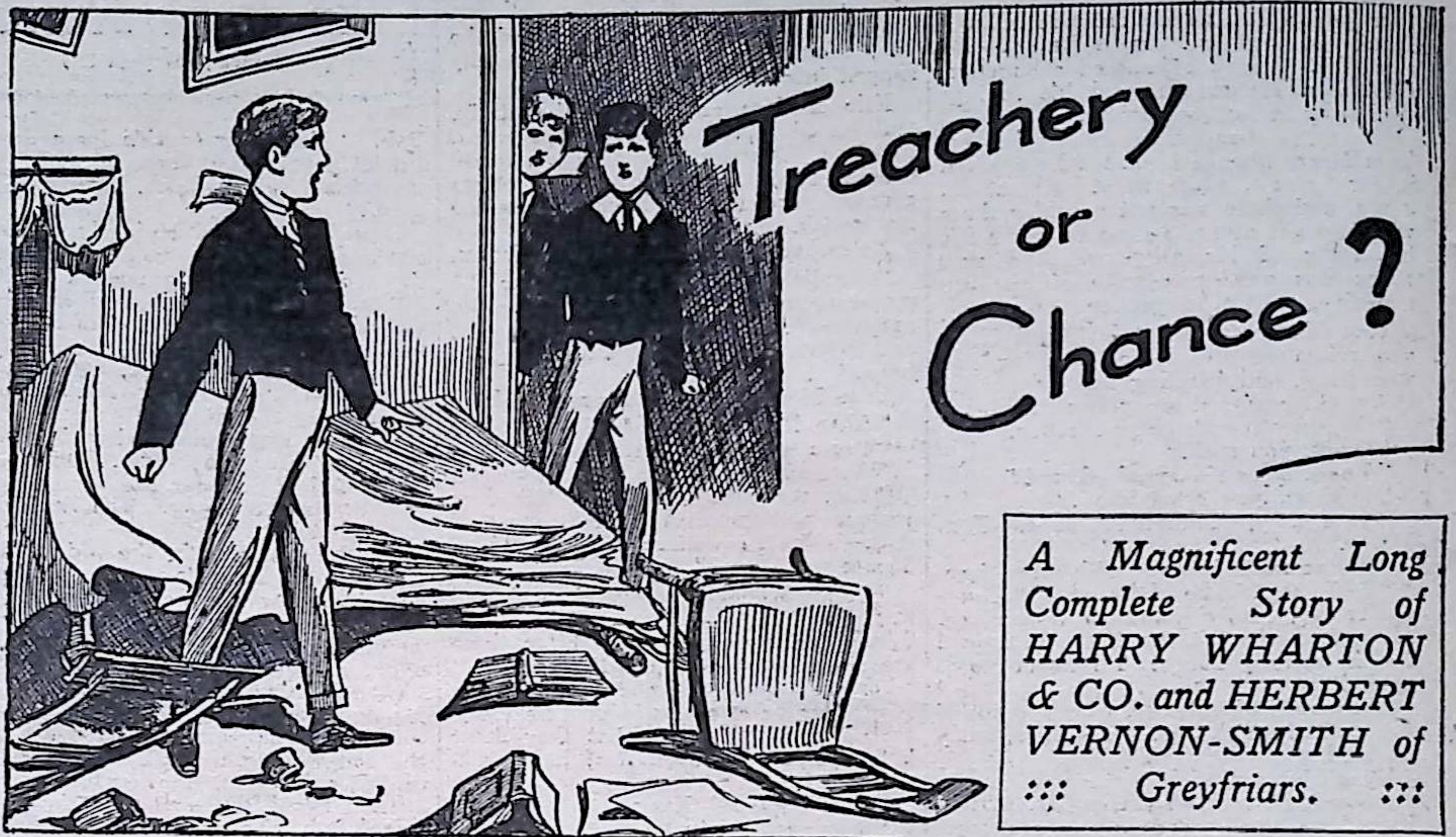
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By FRANK RICHARDS,
Author of the famous stories of Greyfriars appearing in the "Magnet" Library.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton's Throat!

THE cads! The rotters! They've wrecked the place! The utter rotters!"

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Hurree Singh, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, were very emphatic in those remarks. The scene of desolation before their eyes roused in them the greatest anger.

Mark Linley stood amongst the wreckage of his study—his face white and his lips quivering. Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, had brought it about. Mark Linley, the scholarship boy from Lancashire, had entered for the Noble Examination, not only for the honour of the thing, but because winning the exam would bring him a sum of money.

And Mark Linley badly needed the money. His father and mother were even more in need of money than was Mark. Hence his keen swotting, his great desire to pull off the exam.

But Vernon-Smith, in his campaign against the fellows who backed up Harry Wharton, had made up his mind that the surest way of getting rid of Mark Linley was to prevent his entering the exam. So the cad of the Remove had sown seeds of discontent amongst his Form-fellows.

Mark Linley had won many prizes, he pointed out. Why on earth should he be allowed to win them all? Why didn't they stop him from competing?

The result was seen when a dozen disgruntled fellows, not so clever as Mark Linley, protested to the Head against Mark being allowed to run off with every prize.

The Head, Dr. Locke, was a dangerous man to whom to make such a proposition. He had dismissed the deputation in no gentle manner.

Then Vernon-Smith had played his next card. He had insinuated that the proper thing to do was to rag Mark Linley and burn his books, so that every other fellow in the Remove would stand a chance to win the Noble Exam. The discontented, easily swayed Removees had excitedly acclaimed Vernon-Smith's idea, and the wrecking of the study had duly taken place.

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Hurree

THE POPULAR.—No. 165.

Singh, all that remained of the Famous Five, now that Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull had been driven from Greyfriars, had fought hard to get into the study. Some of the Removees had backed them up, but Vernon-Smith had drawn Temple & Co. into the web as well.

When the ragging was over, the chums of the Remove gathered in the study, and fumed with rage.

"The rotterfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "My esteemed chum, Marky, I am very sorry!"

"Have they hurt you, Marky?"

Mark shook his head. "They've mucked up the place," remarked Tom Brown. "We did our best to come in and lend you a hand, Linley."

"I know you did," said Mark dully. "It can't be helped. I know you did all you could. But—but they've done me in this time."

"Never say die!" said Bob Cherry, as cheerfully as he could. "We'll soon get the study to rights, Marky!"

Mark pointed to the grate.

"What have they been burning?" asked Wharton, in surprise.

"My Greek books and papers."

"Oh, the rotters!"

"Faith, and that's rotten intoirly!" said Micky Desmond. "Won't ye be able to do yer work for the exam now, Marky?"

"The rotters!" said Harry Wharton, drawing a deep breath. "It was a rotten thing to do! But that needn't make any difference to you, Linley. You can borrow the books. Lots of the fellows have books they can lend you, and Mr. Quelch will lend you his. If they can't be borrowed, we'll buy them. You're not going to be done out of the exam by a trick like this! Books can be replaced easily enough!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry, brightening up. "That's all right, Marky!"

Mark's face had a weary look.

"It's no good!" he said miserably. "The whole school seems to be against my trying for the Noble. I was a fool to come to Greyfriars! The best thing I can do is to get out!"

"Faith, and ye're not having a good time, Marky darling!" said Micky Desmond.

Bob Cherry clapped his chum on the

shoulder.

"Buck up, Marky! Never say die!"

"You're not going to give in, Linley!" said Harry Wharton.

Mark made a hopeless gesture. During the struggle, during the ragging, he had been defiant and unconquered. But the reaction had set in now.

"What's the good of sticking it out?" he said. "I'm done!"

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry, in great alarm. "You can't give in—you sha'n't! I'll jolly well wallop you if you do!"

"Don't give in, Linley," said Wharton.

"Can't you see that that's what the Bounder's been playing for all along? He worked up the fellows to do this—though he sneaked out of it before the ragging started. He won't even be punished, I suppose, if there's an inquiry, and the other fellows get caned. But it's his work—from start to finish. He knows you will have to leave Greyfriars unless you win the Noble prize—and he means to drive you out, as he's driven out Nugent and Johnny Bull! You can't let him do it! You've got to fight—fight to the last gasp!"

Mark's eyes gleamed.

"You're right," he said, his face flushing. "I will fight—if it's the last fight I put up at Greyfriars, it shall be a good one! I'll fight it out to the end, and I'll win the Noble prize, if it's in me to win it!"

"Bravo!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"But look here, something ought to be done about this!" said Tom Brown, looking round the wrecked study. "It's altogether too thick. And those books they've burnt—they ought to have to pay for them! How much were they worth, Linley?"

"A couple of pounds or more," said Mark sadly.

"They ought to be paid for!"

Mark smiled.

"Not much good telling them that."

"You are entitled to complain to the Head if they don't make good the damage they've done," the New Zealand junior exclaimed wrathfully.

"Can't be done, though!" said Wharton, with a shake of the head. "The fellows are wild enough now, and that would give them an excuse for calling Marky a sneak. And unless a complaint is made they certainly won't pay up!"

Tom Brown grunted.

Tom Brown grunted.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"COMBINING AGAINST WHARTON!"

A SPLendid STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREY-FRIARS. :: By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Well, it's rotten!" he said.
 "Yes, it's rotten enough."
 "It's all right," said Mark. "If I win the Noble prize, I can get a fresh set of books; if I don't, I sha'n't want them."
 "Oh, Marky!" said Bob Cherry wretchedly. "You've got to win it. You can't leave!"
 "I think I can win it," said Mark quietly.
 "Mr. Quelch thinks so, too, and he knows something about it. He had the drawing-up of the papers last year. If I get a fair chance I shall win it—and I'm going to pile in hard. If they begin ragging me again—"
 "You'd better work with your door locked," said Wharton. "But look here, Linley, you can't be ragged out of the exam. If you don't get a chance to work, you can't mug up the Greek, can you?"
 "I suppose not."
 "I think I can see Vernon-Smith's little game!" said Harry, with frowning brows. "If your books are destroyed, and your work interrupted, you'll lose at the exam. I fancy he's planning more raggings after this—a regular rag till after the exam, when your chance will be gone."
 Bob Cherry clenched his fists.
 "I'll smash him if there's any more raggings here!" he said, between his teeth.
 "What's the use? The Bounder works them up to it, and keeps out of it himself. If there's an inquiry into this row he'll be able to say that he tried to stop it—though we know he arranged the whole bizney."
 "That's true!" said Bob despondently.
 "There really doesn't seem to be any way of keeping one's end up against Smithy. He's too jolly deep for us."
 "I'm going to speak to the chaps!" said Wharton determinedly. "Come on, and back me up. The study can be cleared up afterwards."
 "Right you are!"
 The juniors followed Harry Wharton down to the Common-room. They did not know what he intended to do, but they had faith in their leader.
 There was a big crowd in the common-room. Most of the raggings had collected there, and they were talking and laughing over the raid of No. 13. There was a shout as Harry Wharton & Co. came in.
 "Hallo! Looking for more trouble?" demanded Bulstrode.
 Wharton took no notice of his old rival. He mounted upon a chair, and raised his hand for attention.
 "Fellows of the Remove—"
 "Yah!"
 "Go and eat coke!"
 "Go and pal with prize-grabbers!"
 "Gentlemen—"
 "Go home!"
 "Shut up!"
 "Gentlemen, I have a few words to say, and I mean to say them. You've listened to Vernon-Smith, and you can listen to me. Mark Linley's study has been ragged, and his books burnt!"
 "Oh, rather!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Down with scholarship rotters and prize-hunters!"
 Harry Wharton waited for a lull. Then he resumed calmly:
 "It won't make any difference to Linley. New books will be found, and he will go on working for the exam—and he'll win it, too!"
 "Booh! Go home!"
 "Yah!"
 "We'll jolly well see that he doesn't win it!" said Temple, with a grin. "We've arranged for the fellows to keep an eye on that study. Every time Linley is found swotting on Greek he's going to be ragged in the same way."
 "I thought as much," said Harry quietly.
 "Whose idea is that?"
 "Vernon-Smith suggested it, but we all back it up," said Dabney. "We're not going to have any more of Linley's swotting and prize-grabbing!"
 "Very well! You've ragged Linley's study, and you've burnt his books. You know he won't sneak to the Head—you know you'd be punished if he did. You're taking advantage of his being a straight chap who plays the game!"
 "Oh!"
 "Rot!"
 "If he sneaks, we'll scrag him!"
 "Yes, rather!"
 "He won't sneak," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Linley's not that kind. He won't say a word. But I will!"

"You?" yelled the Removites.
 "Yes, I!" said Wharton firmly. "As captain of the Remove, it's my duty to put down raggings in the Form. It's my duty to stop foul play!"
 "Foul play!" yelled Temple indignantly.
 "What do you mean?"
 "This is foul play—ragging a chap and interrupting his work so that he loses his chance of winning in an exam," said Harry.
 "Rats!"
 "Piffle!"
 "Bosh!"
 There was a roar of denial and angry dissent, but some of the fellows seemed struck by Wharton's remarks, and remained silent. Most of the fellows had acted thoughtlessly, not reflecting on the matter at all; they had left the thinking to their leaders. But Wharton's words went home to a good many of them.
 "There's going to be no more of it," said Harry. "Mind, I mean what I say! Linley won't sneak, but I'm not going to see him swindled!"
 "Swindled!" yelled Temple.
 "Yes, that's the word."
 "Why! You—you—"
 "If Linley is ragged again, in such a way as to interrupt his work—"
 "He will be, too!" giggled Snoop.
 "If he is, then I shall go directly to the Head and explain the matter to him, and ask for his protection for Mark Linley!" said Harry Wharton deliberately.
 There was a general gasp of astonishment. Many of the fellows held the view that a chap never knew what Wharton was going to do next. But nobody, certainly, would ever have dreamed that he would take this line.
 "You wouldn't dare!" yelled Bulstrode.
 "Wouldn't I?" said Wharton, his eyes gleaming. "Try me, that's all! Mind, a single fellow going into Linley's study to damage anything there—that will be enough! Then we'll have the whole business out before the Head!"
 "Sneak!" yelled Stott.
 Wharton shrugged his shoulders.
 "You can call me a sneak if you like," he said, "but I'm not going to see Mark Linley spoofed out of the prize if he can win it. I'm standing by him through thick and thin. There's going to be no more ragging. If you can beat Linley in the exam, go in and win; if you can't, take your licking like sportsmen. But there sha'n't be any foul play while I'm round the place to chip in."
 And Wharton stepped down from the chair and walked out of the Common-room. He left the room in a buzz. The fellows were angry enough; and yet Wharton's words had made an impression. If Linley had complained to the Head, the whole school would have condemned him as a sneak without hesitation. But it could hardly be called sneaking for the captain of the Form to appeal to the Head for protection for a Removite who was to be ragged without cessation to spoil his form for an exam. And whether it was called sneaking or not, there was no doubt that Harry Wharton would do it, since he had said that he would. He had passed his word, and all the Remove knew that he never broke it.
 "My hat!" said Fry of the Fourth. "This rather puts a damper on the bizney, doesn't it?"
 Temple grunted.
 "Come to think of it, it was a bit thick," he said. "Smithy rather led us away in this. Fry. I'd rather let the chap alone, as far as I'm concerned."
 And a good many fellows expressed the same views as Temple. Whether it was a case of reflection and repentance, or whether they did not like the prospect of having to explain the raggings to the Head, we cannot undertake to say. But there was no doubt that when the Lower School went to bed that night, Vernon-Smith's scheme of ragging the Lancashire lad out of the exam had, as Fisher T. Fish expressed it in the beautiful American language, "petered out." A fact which Vernon-Smith had to realise, and make the best he could of.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith's Trump Card!

DURING the next few days Mark Linley worked steadily. He had a gift for hard work, partly the result of his early training in hardship. And he had much at stake now. His whole career was staked on the winning of the Noble prize,

and it was worth the greatest efforts he could make. The ragging had not been renewed; the raggings' knowledge that Wharton would carry out his threat stopped that. It caused a considerable amount of bitterness towards Wharton, but he went on his way unregarding it. Some of the fellows, when they were cool, agreed with Wharton's views; and the Bounder affected to do so. He had opposed the ragging—in words which had urged the raggings on all the more. Now he announced that he was still opposed to it, and that he backed up Study No. 1 in putting down anything of the sort. Give every fellow a fair chance, that was the Bounder's view—so he declared. If Mark Linley wouldn't have the decency to stand out of the exam, let him win the money—and let the other fellows tell him what they thought of him. So the Bounder expressed himself. And the fellows were quite willing to take up that view, which saved them from the unpleasant consequences of falling foul of Wharton—which they certainly would have done if they had attempted any further ragging of the Lancashire lad.
 Most of the fellows took Vernon-Smith at his word, but the few who knew his secret plans were puzzled. Bolsover major fancied that the Bounder was regarding his wish that the campaign against the Lancashire junior should be dropped. A couple of days before the date of the examination he made that remark to Vernon-Smith.
 Vernon-Smith, Bolsover, and Snoop were in the Bounder's study at tea. The table was well spread, as it always was. The Bounder had plenty of money, and although he was very far from being a generous fellow, he spent money like water when it suited him. And he knew there was no surer means of rallying his party round him than by standing unlimited study "brews."
 "The Noble exam day after to-morrow," Snoop remarked.
 "Sorry you got out of it, Smithy," said Bolsover major, as he helped himself to ham and poached eggs.
 "No," said the Bounder. "It wasn't worth the sag, anyway."
 "Did you really think you'd get Linley to drop it?"
 "Well, he ought to have dropped it."
 "I don't see it," said Bolsover. "I say, this ham is prime; and that minor of mine poaches eggs a treat! Linley's entitled to enter if he likes, and to take the prize if he can."
 "The fellows don't think so," sniggered Snoop. "He will be pretty unpopular in the school if he does rope it in."
 "Yes; that Smithy's doing," said Bolsover.
 The Bounder smiled.
 "Yes, I think it's been worked very well," he said. "If Linley gets the prize, it won't be much satisfaction to him."
 "Excepting that he'll be able to stay at Greyfriars. He couldn't do it otherwise, if what Bunter said was true."
 "That will be a big satisfaction to you, too, I suppose," said the Bounder, with a sneer.
 "Well, I don't want him to be pushed out," said Bolsover obstinately. "He stood by me very decently once, when you left me in the lurch, and I'm not going to forget that. And if that ragging had gone on, as you meant it to, I should very likely have chipped in if Wharton hadn't."
 "As I meant it to!" said the Bounder in surprise. "I was against it."
 Bolsover major chuckled.
 "You can tell the fellows that!" he said. "It's not good enough for me. You meant that Linley should be ragged incessantly, so that he couldn't get any work done for the exam, and then he would have failed. It will be a twister for him at the best. Wharton has knocked your scheme on the head, and you've had to drop it. Now you're making the best of a bad job. What's the good of lying to a chap who knows you, Smithy?"
 "Oh, go and eat coke!" growled the Bounder.
 "I'll eat ham and eggs instead, thanks," said Bolsover major, with his boisterous laugh. "But I'm glad you gave up the idea, Smithy. I asked you to, and I think you were called upon to oblige a pal who's stuck to you pretty tight."
 "Well, that's why I did it, but I don't want to make a song about it," said Vernon-Smith, in his most agreeable tone. "I've dropped the whole bizney, and more to oblige you than
 THE POPULAR.—No. 165.

"I—I ought to wire," Mark gasped.
 "We'll send the wire for you," said Harry.
 "We know your address. Shall we say,
 'Coming at once.—Mark?'"
 "Yes, that will do."
 Bob Cherry threw open a carriage door in
 the express. Tom Brown put the lunch-
 basket and Mark's overcoat in.
 "Got your ticket safe, Marky?" asked Bob,
 in a choked voice.
 "Yes, Bob."
 Mark sank down in the corner seat, white
 as death. He shook hands with the juniors.
 "God bless you all," he muttered. "You've
 done your best for me. I sha'n't come back.
 This is good-bye. I'm done at Greyfriars, but
 I sha'n't forget you. God bless you all."

"Marky—"
 The engine shrieked; the train moved.
 "Write as soon as you can!" shouted Bob
 Cherry. "Let us know."
 "Yes, yes! Good-bye!"
 "Good-bye, Mark, and good luck!"
 The express vanished down the line.
 The chums of the Remove stood upon the
 platform, silent, dismayed, with a heavy
 sense of desolation upon them.

Mark Linley was gone! Fate had played
 into the hands of the Bounder! Mark Linley
 was gone home. He had missed the exam
 and without the Noble prize he could not
 come back to Greyfriars. His career there
 was closed.

Mark Linley, the brave-hearted Lancashire
 lad, had fought his last fight, and fought it
 nobly; but the luck had been against him.
 Defeated, crushed, and ruined, he was gone—
 gone to face, perhaps, a misfortune beside
 which even his ruined career, his ruined pro-
 spects, would be as nothing, or less than
 nothing.

"Poor old Marky," said Bob Cherry, fairly
 blubbering at last. "Oh, poor old Marky!
 It's too rotten!"

"Let's get out!" said Wharton huskily.
 They left the station. Harry Wharton
 sent the telegram to Mark's father in far-off
 Lancashire, and then they walked back to
 the school.

There was a gleam of winter sunshine on
 the old place. On the playing-fields the Fifth
 were playing the Shell at football, amid
 shouts from the crowd of onlookers.

In the Close Nugent minor of the Second
 was punting about a footer with a gang of
 fags.

In the exam-room the Noble Examination
 was going on—half over by this time. But
 the Noble Exam had no further interest for
 the chums of the Remove. Mark Linley was
 not there!

It was a black half-holiday to Harry
 Wharton & Co.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
 The Bounder Wins!**

THE day wore away. The Noble Ex-
 amination was over.

The competitors, looking tired and
 fagged, came out of the silent room.

Dusk deepened over Greyfriars. Football
 was finished; the fellows came in from the
 playing-fields and the Close.

The story of the telegram was all over
 the school now. All the fellows knew that
 Mark Linley had had to leave Greyfriars be-
 fore the examination started.

Most of the fellows who had taken part in
 the raggings looked sorry enough now. Even
 Temple and Potter, and the others who had
 been relieved of the Lancashire lad's
 dangerous competition, were sorry.

When Vernon-Smith appeared in the Junior
 Common-room a good many grim looks were
 cast at him. The fellows who were sorry
 they had been so hard upon the unfortunate
 scholarship junior were anxious to lay the
 blame upon somebody else, and most of them
 agreed that it was all the Bounder's fault.
 His own staunch follower, Bolsover major,
 was as bitter against him now as anybody.
 The Bounder looked perfectly cool, however.

"Here he comes!" said Temple. "Here's
 the rotter who made us all rag that poor
 chap! I hope you feel satisfied with yourself
 now, Smithy."

"Pretty well, thanks!" said the Bounder
 calmly.

There was a howl.
 "Faith, and it's ashamed of yereself ye
 ought to be, ye spalpeen!" yelled Micky
 Desmond indignantly.

"Rotter!" howled Bolsover major.
 "Shame!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.
 "It seems to me that you're laying your

own sins on my shoulders," he said. "I cer-
 tainly was against ragging Linley. I said so
 at the time."

"And you were lying, as you always are,"
 said Harry Wharton bitterly.

"The liefulness was terrific!"
 "Cad!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"I'm as sorry for Linley as anybody," said
 the Bounder coolly. "Only I'm reserving my
 sorrow till I'm sure it's wanted."

"What do you mean?" said Bolsover major.
 "You know what was in Linley's telegram
 from home."

"I know that fellows have had wires sent
 to themselves before now to call them away
 from things they had undertaken that they
 didn't feel like tackling," said the Bounder.
 "I'd rather wait for further news before I
 weep over Linley."

"Why, you frightful cad!" roared Bob
 Cherry, clenching his fists and rushing to-

covered, if it was one. It must soon be
 known at Greyfriars whether Linley's sister
 was really seriously ill.

Harry Wharton & Co. waited anxiously for
 news. They were down in the morning before
 rising-bell, and they waited in the Close for
 the postman.

There was a letter, as they expected—a
 letter addressed to Harry Wharton in Mark's
 hand, and bearing the Lancashire postmark.
 It was news, and the chums of the Remove
 gathered round eagerly as Wharton opened
 the letter. They read it over his shoulders—
 all at the same time.

"Dear Harry,—I've got good news—and
 bad. When I arrived home yesterday I
 found that my sister was quite well. She
 had not been ill, even. Your telegram arrived
 before me, of course, and it puzzled my
 people very much. My father had not wired
 to me at all. He was amazed when I showed



GOOD-BYE TO GREYFRIARS!—Mark Linley leaned out of the window
 as the train began to move. "You've done your best for me!" he muttered.
 "I sha'n't come back again. This is good-bye. I'm done with Greyfriars,
 but I sha'n't forget you fellows!" (See Chapter 3.)

wards the Bounder. "Do you dare to say
 that the telegram isn't genuine—that Marky
 had it sent by his people to dodge out of
 the exam?"

"I don't say so. I only say I've heard of
 such things, and I'd rather be certain before
 I begin shedding tears," said the Bounder,
 with a shrug of the shoulders.

"You—you scoundrel!"
 Wharton dragged his excited chum back.

"Don't touch him, Bob! He's not fit to
 touch! It would disgrace a polecat to touch
 him!"

"Faith, and ye're right!"
 Bob Cherry stamped out of the room. He
 felt that he could not remain there without
 laying hands upon Vernon-Smith.

With most of the fellows Vernon-Smith's
 cynical explanation of the telegram added
 to the unpopularity he had suddenly ac-
 quired. There were but few who were in-
 clined to believe there was anything in his
 suggestion.

A fellow who knew he was certain to be
 beaten in a difficult examination might avoid
 making a ridiculous failure by such a trick
 certainly, but it was well known that Linley
 had had, at least, a good chance of winning.
 Besides, the trick was certain to be dis-

him the wire I had received. He had not
 sent it; he knew nothing about its having
 been sent. We have made inquiries at the
 post-office. The wire was sent by a man with
 a beard—a stranger in the place. That is
 all we can discover.

"It was a trick, of course—a trick to get
 me away from Greyfriars. You can guess
 the reason—the Noble Exam. It made me
 miss the exam, and now I cannot return.
 My career at Greyfriars is finished. It's my
 business now to help my people in the only
 way I can—by working. I'm going to do it.
 There's nothing else for me to do."

"You will guess who worked this rotten
 trick. You know who was plotting and
 scheming to make me fail in the exam, in
 order to drive me from the school. I don't
 know how he worked it. He must have had
 a confederate in the North here to send the
 wire for him. But he has beaten me—beaten
 me by low treachery—and there's no way of
 bringing it home to him. He was at Grey-
 friars all the time, and we can't find the man
 who sent the wire—and if we could, we
 couldn't prove the connection.

"It's no good complaining. He has kept
 (Continued on page 27.)

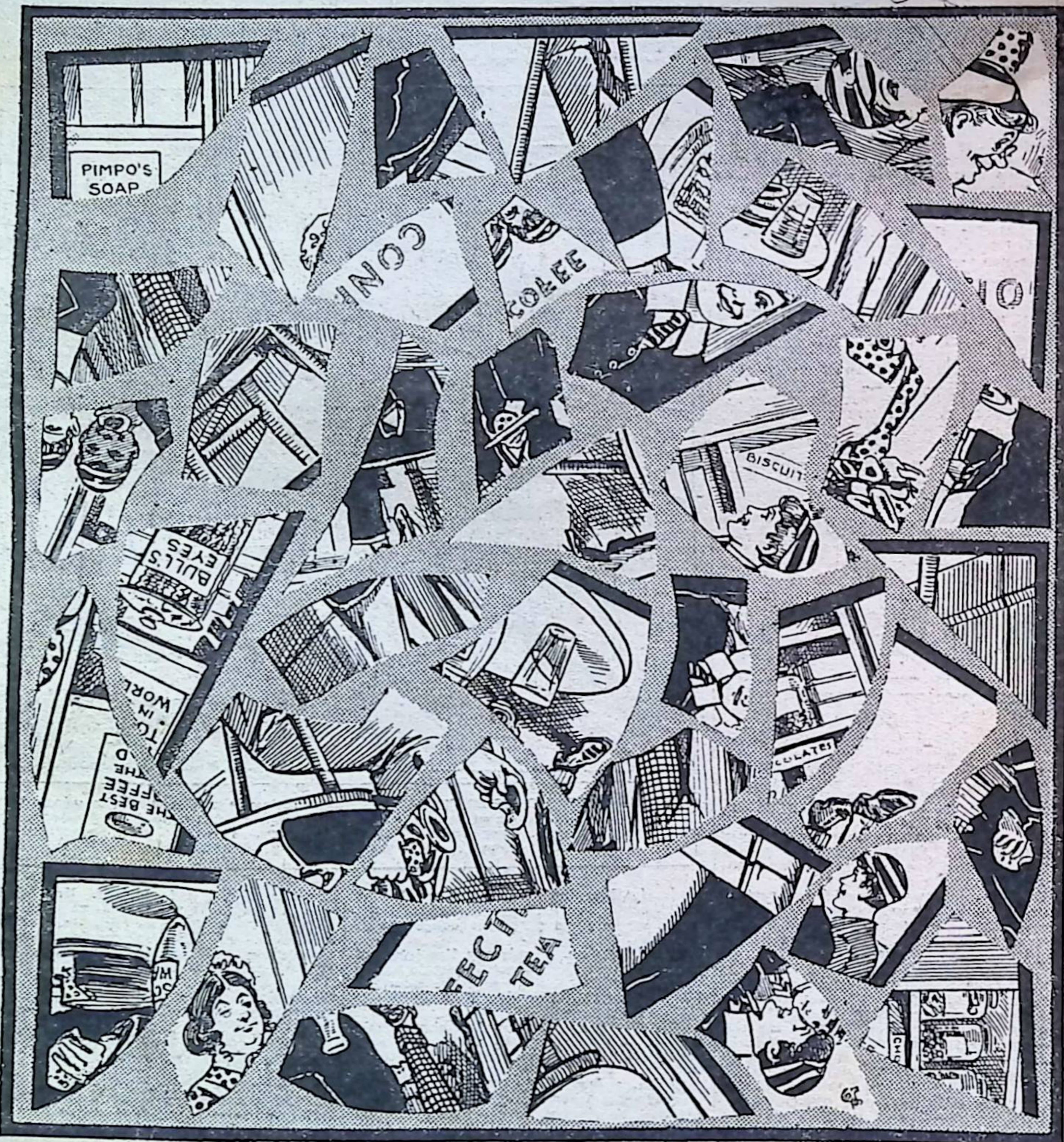
THE POPULAR.—No. 165.

JUST A GAME—BUT WITH MONEY PRIZES FOR SKILL!

It was the Editor's intention to present this jigsaw puzzle to readers solely for their amusement. However, he asked the artist to make a number of mistakes in the picture, and that has been done. So, to see how observant and skilful are readers of this paper, the Editor offers a Prize of FIVE POUNDS for the correct—or nearest correct—number of mistakes which appear in this and the three pictures already published. There will also be awarded TEN PRIZES OF TEN SHILLINGS EACH to the next nearest solutions.

Paste the sketch on a piece of cardboard, let it dry, carefully cut out the pieces, and fit them together to make a picture of an incident in Greyfriars Tuck-shop. Then look at it, and see how many mistakes you can discover in the picture. Sign the coupon at the bottom of the page, attach it to your solution, and send it, WITH THE OTHER THREE SOLUTIONS to "Jig-Saw Competition," The "Popular," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4, so that we receive the FOUR COMPLETE SOLUTIONS not later than March 30th, 1922.

SOLVE THE JIGSAW PUZZLE, AND FIND OUT ALL THE MISTAKES!

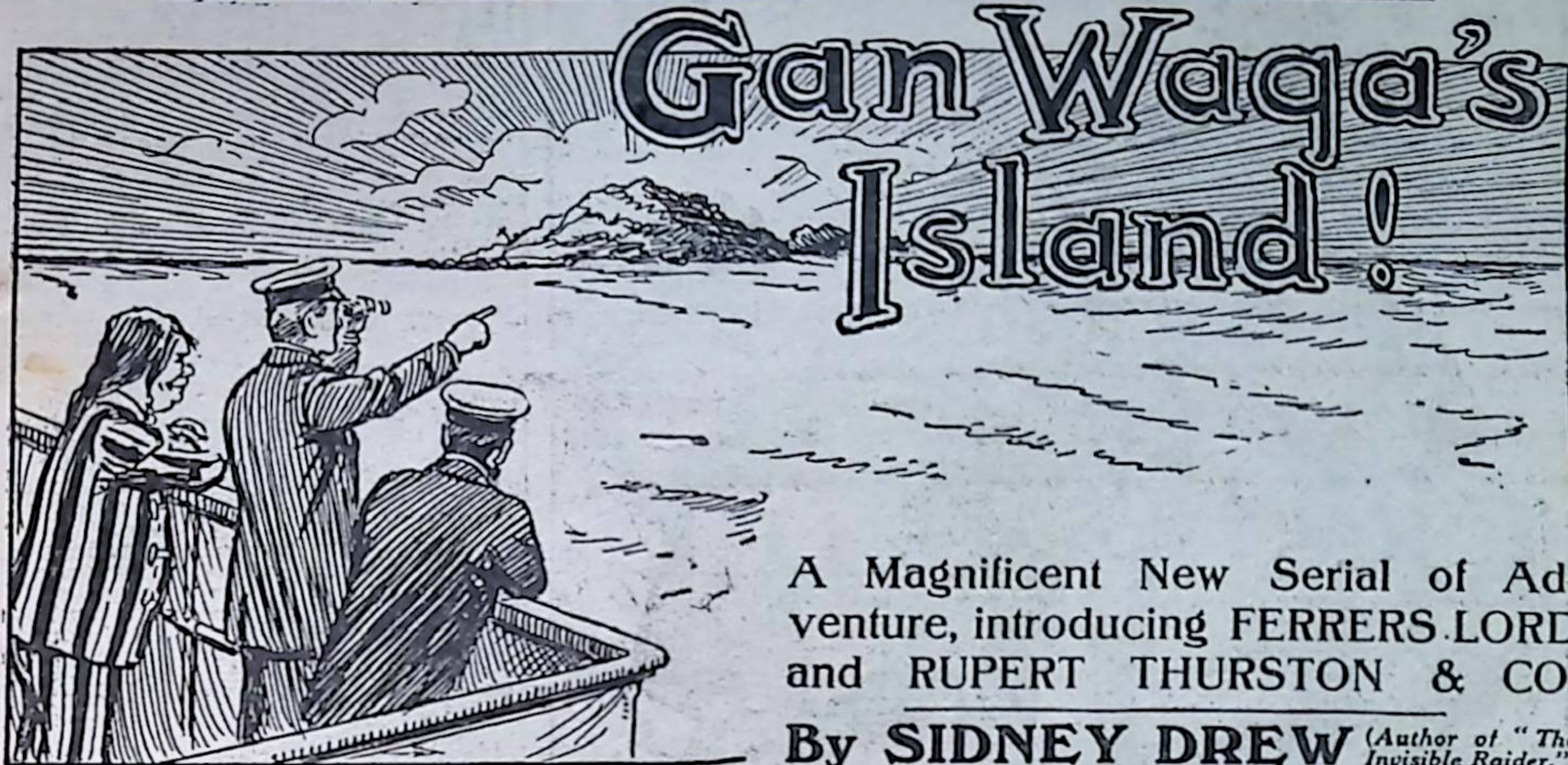


(Fill in this Form before sending in.)

Name..... Age.....

Address.....

YOU MUST TELL YOUR FRIENDS ALL ABOUT OUR WONDERFUL NEW SERIAL!



A Magnificent New Serial of Adventure, introducing FERRERS LORD and RUPERT THURSTON & CO.

By SIDNEY DREW (Author of "The Invisible Raider.")

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

FERRERS LORD, having cleared up the mystery of the great German treasure trove, decides to make tracks south for an island he has bought from the Portuguese Government. The island is named Desolatia, and the millionaire adventurer puts it up for sale between his friends, PRINCE CHING LUNG, RUPERT THURSTON, HAL HONOUR (his engineer), and GAN WAGA, a fat Eskimo attached to the crew of the Lord of the Deep.

The money from the four friends is given to Rupert Thurston's little hospital, and they agree to play "Put and Take" for the ownership of Desolatia. After once tying with Ching Lung, Gan Waga has the great luck to win the island.

On the way south, the yacht is overtaken by a terrific storm. They are swept far out of their course and the yacht runs foul of a gigantic iceberg in the intense darkness. The ship crashes through the side of the hollow berg and the entrance freezes up, imprisoning them. They discover a small tunnel leading out of the iceberg, and they find themselves on the shore of Gan Waga's Island. Ferrers Lord, Ching Lung, and Gan Waga are scouting on the island when the Eskimo suddenly shouts, "Someone's coming, Chingy!"

The Usurpers.

THE next moment the Eskimo grasped his spear and stood at bay, as an enormous dog, half mastiff, half wolfhound, came bounding up the path, baying savagely. Ching Lung and Ferrers Lord dropped to the ground. A voice called the dog back, and then a man turned the angle of the path. He was clad in furs of excellent sealskin and knee-boots of soft brown leather. He grasped the dog's spiked collar with one gloved hand, and whipped out an automatic pistol.

"I don't know who you are or where you come from," he said, giving the rifle Ferrers Lord had left leaning against the rock a neat back-heel that sent it behind him, "but you're such a mixed bunch that I don't like your looks. Beat it out of this, and beat it quick! We want none of your sort here, so slide out of it, my lads!"

The man had rather a high-pitched, rasping voice, and the cleverness with which he had got rid of Ferrers Lord's rifle proved him to be a person who had been accustomed to tight corners, where firearms were a good deal in evidence. Sealskin gloves covered his hands, but Ching Lung noticed that on the forefinger of the right glove the fur had been clipped away to enable the owner of the glove to obtain a quick and easy grip on the trigger of his weapon.

He was cleanly shaven, though in such latitudes most men quickly abandon razors and lather-brushes, and grow beards. As he released the dog, the animal lay down beside him, its back still bristling, and a rumbling growl in its throat. It was startling enough to find the lonely island even temporarily inhabited, but it was doubly startling to meet with such a reception and to be ordered off it at pistol's point.

"I have not the pleasure of knowing your name, and I am sorry that I cannot congratulate you on your manners," said Ferrers Lord, in a quiet voice.

"My name's Dan Govan, if that's any use to you, stranger. I come from Upper Mexico, though I'm not a greaser, as you can see, and they don't teach a lot of drawing-room manners up yonder. P'r'aps you may have heard of me. I led a bunch of guerillas up there in the last insurrection. At the finish I made a slight geographical miscalculation,

and got raiding on the wrong side of the frontier. That little mistake set fire to it. Me and my boys could have whipped any Mexican Government that was ever in power and all their one-hoss greaser troops, but that blunder fetched up a bunch of United States cavalry, and every American farmer on the frontier and for fifty miles behind loaded his rifle and climbed on his hoss or jumped into his car and came after my scalp. It wasn't any too healthy for Dan Govan, so, being wise, he quitted."

"Isn't it a pity you didn't leave some of the guerilla habits of Upper Mexico behind you?" said the millionaire, taking out his gold cigarette-case.

"You mean the gun, eh? Well, one of our fellows see you coming over the ice, and reported. It was the boss who told me to come along and show you the gun. I'm under particular obligations to the boss, for he smuggled me out of the country and saved my neck from being stretched by an American rope or my carcass filled with American bullets. And though I'm not in love with this darn hole and its darter climate, I guess it's up to me to take a bit of notice of the boss."

"And it is by his instructions that you are ordering us away," said Ferrers Lord. "It seems a high-handed proceeding. Who is this tyrannical gentleman?" He struck a match as he spoke and lighted a cigarette.

"Seems to me you're asking things, but it's no secret," said Dan Govan. "I call him Mexican Steve. His real name goes with a roll, like all those high-falutin Spanish names. When he's at home he's Don Esteban Jose Monterey Diaz Castaro. He's lucky in everything, barring having a name as long as a lariat, is Steve. He owns more land than you could ride round in a month, and more cattle than you'd round up in three. And he's struck it rich in oil. Guess he's worth millions."

Ching Lung shot a glance at Ferrers Lord, but the millionaire did not meet it. Ching Lung had heard of this enormously rich Mexican, but what was he doing so far away from his own sunny land? Dan Govan had lowered the automatic pistol, but his eyes were very alert and watchful.

"To all intents and purposes, we are shipwrecked, Govan, and are making a camp out on the ice-floe there," said Ferrers Lord.

"Leaving every suggestion of humanity out of the question, Senor Castaro has no right to order us off the island. Only a short time ago this island, which I have named Desolatia, was my personal property. I have transferred the ownership, but the owner is with me, and I can produce the title-deeds. It is a matter of life and death, and I must have shelter for my men and for myself."

"That's mighty unfortunate for you, boss," said Dan Govan. "You might own this rotten den ten times over, but Mexican Steve being in possession, I guess he's not the sort to get a headache reading title-deeds or any other lawyer's muck. My instructions are to tell you to light out of it quick, and not come back. You're not wanted, stranger."

"Is there any possibility of seeing Don Esteban Castaro?"

"Well, I dunno," said Govan hesitatingly. "Say, right here, stranger! I've not got too clean a name, and I may have done a few things in my time that I'm sometimes sorry for; but I'm white. If you're shipwrecked it seems a mighty cruel thing to shove you out yonder to starve or freeze, I allow that. I can't take you down to Mexican Steve for reasons that don't matter. If you've got a pencil and a notebook, and like to scrawl a message who you are and what you want, I'll send it along, and get back some sort of answer."

Ferrers Lord took out a leather-bound notebook, and pulled off his glove. He did not show the prince what he had written, but tore out the leaf and handed it to Dan Govan.

Without glancing at it the ex-guerilla leader held out the sheet to the dog, and the dog took a corner of it gently between its teeth and trotted away.

"A 'cute dog, that," said Govan, seating himself on a boulder. "He can take a man's throat out at one bite, or carry an egg two miles without smashing it. He'll fetch you an answer right enough, but I'm not gambling many dollars that it will please you much. Just around now the boss ain't extending the glad hand to strangers."

Dangling the automatic pistol, and keeping one foot on the barrel of the millionaire's rifle, Govan removed his fur cap and a cigar out of the crown of it.

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A GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS. By OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT FRIDAY!

"THE HEAD'S TRIUMPH!"



ORDERED OFF DESOLATIA!—A man turned the angle of the path and he grasped the great mastiff, just as the dog was about to spring at Ferrers Lord. The stranger held an automatic revolver in his hand. "I don't know who you are," he growled, "But you had better beat it off this island quick!" (See page 25.)

"A match?" asked Ferrers Lord, in his deep, quiet voice.

"Thanks; but keep your distance, and I'll smoke this feller dry," said Govan. "You may mean no trickery, but I like you a sight better a little further off. You've not done much starving yet, if that galoot with the spear is any sample of your crew. You were in that big shake-up, I guess. We got it here pretty bad. The old island rocked till I thought she was going to split. You smashed agin' one of them bergs, did you?"

"We ran under one, and were locked in," said Ferrers Lord. "We are compelled to abandon our vessel, and it will be death to all of us to remain out there on the open floe."

"You're unlucky," said Govan. "It's a pity you didn't locate another island. Mexican Steve don't like a crush. For such a pestiferous climate we're fairly comfortable, and there's no room for a crowd. I expect I shall get sworn at by the boss with every cuss word there is in English for not firing you out. It's rough on you, but it ain't me."

Ching Lung would have given a good deal to know what the millionaire was thinking, but Ferrers Lord's clear-cut, handsome face was as expressionless as a face of marble.

At last the dog came galloping round the bend of the narrow ravine, and laid an envelope on Govan's fur-clad knee. As his pistol hand was engaged, Govan tore the envelope with his teeth, and shook out the sheet of paper it contained.

"Gee!" he said, glancing at the message. "P'raps you ain't going to be so unlucky, after all! Anyhow, the boss is coming along for a palaver, so hold tight and wait a bit."

They waited in complete silence, Govan chewing at the cigar. At last they heard a shuffling sound, and four panting men came lurching round the corner, carrying a litter. On the litter, which was piled with costly furs, sat Don Esteban Jose Monterey Diaz Castaro. He was a comparatively young man, still on the sunny side of the forties, but he was immensely fat. He flung the rugs aside, and stepped out of the litter—a great human hog, with a hog's eyes and a hog's

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NEXT
FRIDAY!

"AT GRIPS WITH THE RUSTLER!"

A MAGNIFICENT STORY OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

With a grunt, Senor Esteban Castaro made himself comfortable in his litter, and pulled the fur rugs round his fat chin. Like Govan, the four bearers were armed with automatic pistols. They were typical greasers, swarthy and earringed, with the brutal faces of their type. Ferrers Lord took his rifle, a curious smile on his lips. He ignored Senor Castaro, but he gave the ex-guerrilla leader a nod.

"Good-day, Mr. Govan," he said, "and many thanks for my gun and for your somewhat gruesome remarks. If it comes to shooting, I hope I shall shoot straight. Come, Ching!"

"I'm a bit of a dandy at shooting, myself," said Govan, looking over his shoulder to make sure that Castaro was not within earshot. "See here, stranger, I'm not allowing that it's a white man's trick to turn you down like this; but a ship may happen along, or something to help you make good. I'm pledged to Mexican Steve, and, right or wrong, I'm going through sticking tight to him. Don't judge him by his looks, for if you'd lived in Mexico you'd know better than that. He's as fat as a hogshead of lard, but there ain't a streak of the coward in his whole fat body. He can be a cruel swine, but he'll get what he wants, not caring a cent how he gets it, or who goes under. I don't know how strong you are in numbers, but don't come back. It's bleak and desolate and perishing out there on that waste, but I'm wishing you no harm, stranger, when I tell you you'll be better off in the snow than if you get Mexican Steve's dander up, for a polecat ain't more cruel."

"I'm obliged to you again, Govan," said the millionaire, with another nod. "Good-day!"

All the time Gan Waga had worn an expression of intense bewilderment. To him Ferrers Lord and Ching Lung were the most amazing people on the map of the world. That any man should dare to level a pistol at them, and order them about, was staggering. That the millionaire and the prince should have obeyed the orders was almost a knock-down blow.

"Chingy," he said, as they walked across the snow, and his little black eyes were round and puzzled, "that my island, hunk, that I wanned at Tut and Pake, Chingy!"

"Every square inch of it, blubberbiter—all yours!" said the prince. "I know you'll allow the Chief and me to go on it and live on it if we like to, but don't worry yourself, my fat and fair one. Some sneak thief has bagged your island, but we'll have him out of it by the neck. In this sad world, Gan, there's one important thing you ought to learn, if you haven't learnt it already. If you haven't a gun yourself, and the other man has, always be nice and polite to him, especially when he has the thing pointed at you. If you're lucky enough to be holding the gun you can be as rude as ever you like. Unless he's anxious to attend his own funeral in a hurry, he won't answer back."

The millionaire paused.

"Perhaps we'll make a rich man of the Eskimo yet, Gan," he said, smiling. "As there are no pearls, and the seals and the greaser are things of the past, our friend Senor Castaro must have found gold on Desolatia. Unfortunately, the law of nations does not run so far south—only this law."

He tapped the breech of his rifle significantly, and then looked back at Desolatia. There was no frown on his face, only the same curious smile Ching Lung had noticed more than once that day.

The Warning of the Dial!

WHILE the men were at work preparing the camp, Rupert Thurston and Harold Honour climbed the iceberg. From its striking resemblance to one of those prehistoric monsters of the lizard kind, Thurston christened it Saurian Head. In the light, it was not difficult to detect the flaw in the great mass of ice. The neck had not grown up with the body of the iceberg, but was an accidental addition. Brown streaks of mud mingled with gravel showed that the neck had floated off the land. By what strange chance it had become frozen to the rest was a question they did not ask themselves. It was very unsound, and they could feel it shake as they climbed.

Hal Honour pointed downwards to the left, and then to the right.

"Bad—good!" he said, in his laconic way.

In two words the engineer had summed up the whole position. When the inevitable break came, it would come at the flaw, and send the neck of the berg crashing down on

the roof of the cavern, which would be disastrous for the Lord of the Deep, but the camp would be in no danger.

"M'yes; I get you, Hal!" said Rupert Thurston. "There are volumes of grief in that little word 'Bad!' the way you growl it out. It will be jolly bad for the underwriters who have insured the Lord of the Deep when that chunk of ice starts to wobble and does the high dive. At a guess, it will hit the cave right over the yacht's moorings. The whole lot ought to go to pieces at one bang, so don't you think we ought to shift the yacht back to the other end and take every precaution? The insurance people will want to know."

Honour's only answer was a quick nod. The scene below was a busy one. The men had thrown up a semi-circular wall of seaweed round the base of the iceberg to break the force of the wind. The long fronds were firmly frozen together to the depth of more than a yard, and they cut the weed out in blocks. The cement was sea water pumped out of the cavern. The water froze quickly, and bound the blocks together like strong cement. Honour had decided to build huts of the same material, the only substance available, and roof and line them with tarpaulin. To Thurston it seemed a waste of time and energy.

"As soon as a thaw comes, your wall and your huts will be a mass of slush and slop," he said. "They'll revert to their original slush. Is it worth while, Hal? We'll be trekking for Desolatia as soon as the fall of snow Gan Waga has promised arrives. This seems about as useful to me as making ropes of sand."

"The Chief's orders," said the engineer.

Whether he approved or disapproved, he did not say, for Honour rarely ventured a private opinion unless asked for one. He inspected the thermometer and barometer which Joe, the yacht's carpenter, had fixed to a stout piece of timber driven firmly into the weeds. The barometer was low, but steady; the thermometer had risen.

"By honey, I thought it felt warmer!" said Prout. "She's up nearly five degrees since Joe put her there. That's for snow, and piles of it, I reckon, Hal."

The sky clouded swiftly, and the first snowflakes were beginning to fall when Ferrers Lord, Ching Lung, and Gan Waga returned to Saurian Head. Much had been accomplished, and the millionaire nodded his approval. Unless an unexpected or alarming rise in temperature took place, or a hurricane sprang up, there was no need to spend the night on the floe. Ferrers Lord went aboard with Hal Honour. To Rupert Thurston, Prout, Maddock, and O'Rooney, the prince recounted their adventures on Desolatia.

"Phew!" whistled Barry O'Rooney. "Warned off the Chafe's own oisland by a fat dago and a Mexican cowpuncher, is ut? Bedad, bhoys, the blood of the last of the gallant O'Rooneys is growing hot widin me. Lade me to these blatherskites, and sure O'll tache thim phwat ut manes to insult an O'Rooney of Bullybunlon Castle!"

"Yo' nots falk through yo' hat'so muchness, Barry," said Gan Waga. "It not the Chief's island, it my island. I wonned it at Tut and Pakes, didn't I, Chingy?"

"Phwat d'ye mane you won ut at 'Tut and Pakes,' you fat haythen? Oi did hear something about that, but Oi thought ut was a joke. Av ut's your island, you oily walrus, go and punch the dago on the nose and get ut. Phwat's the dago's name again, sor?"

"Senor Esteban Jose Monterey Diaz Castaro," repeated Ching Lung. "He's a Mexican millionaire. Just now he's not very popular with the government, so it seems he has been taking a tour in his yacht, and not the first one for he must have struck Desolatia before, and liked it so much, tastes being queer things, that he has come back."

"Then, by honey, if he's at loggerheads with his government, why doesn't the government collar his property, sir?" asked Prout.

"That's the very question I put to the Chief, Tom, and the Chief knows more about Fatty Castaro than we do," answered the prince. "The chap is fat and wide both physically and mentally. His ranches and oil-wells and mines have been floated as companies with British and American capital behind them, so it's hands off! The Chief thinks he had struck rich gold-bearing quartz on Desolatia. Senor Esteban is taking an enforced holiday until things quiet down, but apparently not an idle one."

"Gould! Glittering, shoining, tinkling gold!" said Barry O'Rooney. "D'ye hear that, Ben, bboy? And that blubberbiter owns ut, phwat? Gan, acushla, Oi was always your pal, wasn't Oi? Sthick close to me, Gan, and O'll look after you. Live the dago to me, son! In the worrds of the poet, 'Thrimble, Senor Esteban! Whin we mate, you'll mate a man who'll make you quit for our ould Gan. Butther-fat may be that dago, but O'll smash him foine as sago. You'll be sorry, Esteban, pinching oislands from our Gan. Which," added Mr. O'Rooney, "was composed on the spur of the moment, and Oi ax for no applause."

"Souse me, and you'll get none!" said the bo'sun. "What you ought to get is fourteen years' penai servitude. This 'ere Mexican seems to have plenty of sauce. Even if there isn't any gold on the island, I can see good money in this if we catch him, lads—pots of money."

"Av ut's money, bboy, lade me to ut, bboy—lade me to ut!" said Barry. "Show ut me! But phwat d'ye mane, anyhow, bedad?"

"Travelling round with a caravan, souse me!" said Maddock. "Gan Waga and the dago, the two fattest men on earth, now showing, and really alive! If you can't believe your eyesight, stick a pin in them and hear them squeal. You can take the cash at the doors, Barry, if you'll let me hold you all the time."

(You must not miss reading next Friday's splendid instalment of the amazing adventures of Ferrers Lord & Co. on Gan Waga's Island.)

TREACHERY OR CHANCE?

(Continued from page 23)

his word, and driven me from the school. I'm sorry to leave—sorry not to see you chaps any more. Good-bye to all of you, and thank you a thousand times for all your kindness to me when I was with you!

"Always your pal,

"MARK LINLEY."

There was a dead silence among the Removites as they finished reading the letter. They looked at one another with blanched faces. Wharton was the first to speak.

"The Bounder!" he said.

"The Bounder!" said Bob Cherry. "The Bounder, of course! He's done this! Thank goodness, little Mabel isn't ill, but Marky's done in! Marky's not coming back! The Bounder has driven him out of the school!"

Harry Wharton clenched his teeth.

"Follow me!" he said.

He hurried into the House. Vernon-Smith had just come down. Harry Wharton & Co. walked up to him, and Wharton held out the letter.

"Read that!" he said.

"Certainly, if you like."

The Bounder read it. A crowd gathered round, attracted by the scene. The Bounder laughed cynically as he finished reading.

"The telegram was all spoof," said the Bounder calmly. Linley's sister isn't ill, as I guessed. He was afraid of the exam. He knew he couldn't pass against Fifth Form chaps, and this was his way of getting out of it—a spoof telegram from his father! He seems to be hinting in that letter that some chap did it to injure him. Of course, that's all rot!"

"You did it!" said Harry quietly.

"I?"

"You, you cad—you!" roared Bob Cherry furiously.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"All the fellows know that I was at Greyfriars all yesterday," he said. "Without having the gift of being in two places at once, I hardly see how I could have sent that telegram, even if I had wanted to."

"You had a confederate—"

"Draw it mild!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'll tell you what. I believe Linley made his pater send that spoof wire, to get him out of his scrape. He knew he couldn't pass the exam, and he wanted to save his face. But if he brings any accusations against me, I'll have them all out in the open. I'll put it to my father, and start his lawyers on it, and bring a libel action, and give Linley a chance to prove what he says in a court of law! If he can prove anything of the sort, he's welcome to! If he can't, I'll brand him as a liar and a slanderer; and you, too, for backing him up!"

Wharton put the letter in his pocket. Even he was staggered by the perfect coolness of the Bounder, and he did not know what to say. Bob Cherry did—or, at least, what to do! He made a rush at the Bounder, hitting out with both fists. They grappled, and rolled over in the passage, struggling furiously, Bob Cherry hammering away with all the strength of his powerful arm. They did not separate till Wingate came up with a cane, and dragged them apart, and by that time the Bounder was a sorry spectacle.

It was a nine-days' wonder at Greyfriars. Even the Head did not know what to think, though he did not hear all the matter. The Removites were divided in opinion. But whatever was the true explanation, one thing was certain—Mark Linley was gone from Greyfriars, and his old place knew him no more. The Bounder, whether by treachery or by chance, had won the last round, and still another of Wharton's champions was gone!

THE END.


(There will be another long complete story of the amazing "war" between Harry Wharton & Co. and the Bounder of Greyfriars, entitled "Combining Against Wharton!" by Frank Richards, next week.)

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