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A SENSATIONAL SCHOOL TALE OF A RAID ON AN ORCHARD AND OF A VERY GALLANT RESCUE!



A Splendid Long Complete Story, dealing with the Schooldays in the Backwoods of Canada, of Frank Richards, the Famous Author of the Tales of Harry Wharton and Co., of Greyfriars.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD,

Author of the Stories of St. Jim's, now appearing in the "Gem" Library.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Woes of Chunky Todgers!

"YOW-OW-OW!"
"Hallo, Chunky! What's the trouble?"

"Wow-wow!"
Chunky Todgers was dolorous and mournful.

Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc, the three chums of Cedar Creek School, came upon the chubby youth in the school ground, uttering sounds of woe.

Chunky was bent almost double, apparently with pain, and his usually chubby and cheery face was contorted into weird expressions.

He blinked dismally at the three. "What on earth's the matter?" asked Frank Richards.

"Woop!"
"Been eating too much maple-sugar?" asked Beauclerc, with a smile. "You should draw a line, Todgers."

"It isn't that! I never get enough," said Chunky Todgers. "It's that horrid beast Grimm!"

"You've been raiding old Grimm's apples?" grinned Bob Lawless.

"Well, they looked so jolly," said Chunky Todgers; "and he's got crowds of them—swarms—millions—"

"But they're his, not yours."
"Well, one wouldn't make any difference," said Chunky. "I simply got into the tree and sampled them. Old Grimm didn't know I'd eaten seven when he came up; he only saw the one in my hand."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"But who is Grimm?" asked Frank Richards.

"Yow-ow! A beast!" groaned Chunky. Bob Lawless laughed.

"Grimm's a fruit-farmer," he said. "His farm's the other side of the timber, towards Thompson town. He raises apples for export. I suppose you know British Columbian apples are the best in the world?"

Frank laughed.

Frank laughed.

Frank laughed.

"We get some rather good ones in England," he remarked. "But what has Chunky to do with Grimm's apples?"

"Nothing—except to scoff them when he gets a chance. Old Grimm is a Galician emigrant, and talks queer English, and he has the temper of an Iroquois Indian full of freewater. He keeps a cattlewhip for fellows who go on his land," said Bob. "He's a bit of a beast, really, and we generally give him a wide berth."

"Yow-ow-ow!"
"Well, you had the apples, Chunky, and you must balance that against the lying," said Frank.

"Yow-ow! The awful beast had me treed, and I couldn't vamoose!" groaned Chunky. "He sat down on a log to wait for me to come down. I couldn't stay up, as I had to get back for afternoon lessons. Yow-ow! He just sat there, with his whip across his knees, and grinned at me, and waited for me to climb down. Yow-ow! I—I had to chance it. Yow-ow! And he chased me along the Thompson trail for about a quarter of a mile, letting out with the whip— Yow-ow-ow!"

"Serve you right for bagging his apples," said Bob. "Keep your paws from picking and stealing, you know."

Chunky Todgers snorted.

"Any other farmer in the section wouldn't mind," he growled. "It's because he's foreign trash. Yow-ow!"

And Chunky wriggled painfully.

"Look here!" he added.

Chunky rolled back his shirt, and showed his shoulders, on which lay the red marks of the cattlewhip.

Frank's brow darkened as he looked.

"Dash it all, that's too bad!" he exclaimed. "The man must be a rotten beast!"

Bob Lawless burst into a sudden chuckle.

"I'll tell you what! We'll fine old Grimm for assault and battery on Chunky."

"Fine him?" said Frank.

"Yes."
"How are you going to fine him, fat-head?"

"We'll fine him two dozen apples, the fine to be paid to Chunky as compensation for damage," explained Bob. "That's fair! You fellows game, after school?"

"Yes, rather!" said Frank, at once. "Quite!" agreed Beauclerc.

"So cheer up, Chunky, and think of the feed you're going to have when the fine has been levied," said Bob consolingly.

And Chunky Todgers did cheer up. He looked quite happy and bright in class that afternoon, though he occasionally twisted very uncomfortably on his form.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

"Treed!"

AFTER school that day there were three fellows at Cedar Creek who were not thinking of taking the home-trail immediately.

Bob Lawless' peculiar scheme of fining the heavy-handed Galician farmer had to be carried out first.

The chums of Cedar Creek felt that they were quite justified in inflicting that punishment upon Mr. Grimm.

Certainly, Chunky Todgers had been in the wrong, in the first place, for raiding Mr. Grimm's orchard. But any other farmer in the district would willingly have spared a few apples from an overflowing orchard for the asking.

Be that as it might, Mr. Grimm certainly had no right to leave the marks of his cattlewhip upon a Cedar Creek fellow, and the chums felt that retaliation was justified.

After school was dismissed by Miss Meadows, Frank Richards and his chums sauntered away towards the timber.

Beyond the wood was the Thompson trail, which ran southward from the town, past the borders of Grimm's farm,

and far away over the plain towards Kamloops and the distant railway.

It was a dry, sunny day, and the trail was as hard as iron, and thick with dust. The three schoolboys sauntered along the trail, shaded here and there by big trees, and reached the Grimm clearing.

The farmhouse could be seen in the distance, surrounded by wide expanses of well-cultivated land.

The Galician emigrant, for all his crusty temper and heavy hand, was a good farmer, and his orchard was one of the best between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific.

"Here we are!" announced Bob Lawless. "Don't go near the gate. We'll get over the fence. No need to leave our cards on Grimm."

"Ha, ha! No."

"There's a rail loose here," said Beauclerc.

"Good!"

Bob Lawless dragged the loose fence-rail a little farther aside, and the three squeezed through.

Keeping carefully out of sight of the farmhouse, they scudded to the orchard, closely planted and thick with fruit.

"Safe as houses!" said Frank Richards, as he stood among the clustering trees. "We sha'n't be spotted here. Grimm will never know that he has been fined."

"All the better," grinned Bob. "He might come along and complain to Miss Meadows. That would mean trouble. He's complained at the school a dozen times before now, and it always makes Miss Meadows waxy."

"This tree will suit us!" remarked Beauclerc.

"Give me a bunk up!"

Frank Richards was quickly in the apple-tree.

Bob Lawless followed, with a hand from Frank above.

"You stand there and catch them, Beau."

"Right-ho!"

There was the sudden bark of a dog through the trees, and Bob Lawless uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"By gum! We're spotted!"

There was a heavy tread under the trees. A dog frisked into sight, barking, and he was followed by a heavily-built man, with a heavy, stolid, bearded face. His eyes, a pale blue in colour, glinted at the sight of Beauclerc. He did not see the other two for the moment.

"Ach! So I catch you vunce more!" he shouted. It was evident that the Galician had not quite mastered the language of the country. "I catch you vunce more in mine orchard, you rasgal!"

"Hop it, Cherub!" shouted Bob Lawless.

Beauclerc made a jump for the tree. Bob's hand caught him above, and he was dragged into the lower branches.

It was the only way of escape. Mr. Grimm's cattlewhip was lashing behind him, and the thong curled round the trunk with a loud crash as Beauclerc eluded it.

The fruit-farmer stood under the tree, glaring up at the three schoolboys in the branches.

"Ach! Tree of you!" he exclaimed.

"Gum down!"

"Catch us!" said Bob.

"Vill you gum down?" roared Mr. Grimm.

"I guess not."

"Young rasgals!"

"Rats!"

Mr. Grimm cracked the whip with

savage energy. But the schoolboys, perched on the thick boughs above his head, were out of reach, and they grinned down at him.

They were cornered, but they were not caught.

Mr. Grimm sat down on a log a few yards away, placed his whip across his knees, and watched the apple-tree with a grim expression, a good deal like a bulldog.

After a few minutes he took out a pipe and began to smoke. Evidently the farmer had settled down to watch.

Frank Richards and his comrades exchanged looks of dismay.

They were safe where they were—so long as they could stay there. But they could not stay there indefinitely. Frank and Bob had a long ride home before them, and Beauclerc's home was at a distance.

There would be anxiety at home if they did not turn up by dark.

And Mr. Grimm was evidently prepared to sit there all the evening rather than allow his victims to escape.

"My hat!" said Frank Richards, when half an hour had passed. "How long is the beast going to watch us?"

"We can't stay here all night," said Bob, with a nod. "We shall have to chance it and run. Get some apples—"

"Oh, bother the apples!"

"Ammunition, I mean!"

"Oh, good!"

The three speedily gathered in a dozen big apples. Mr. Grimm watched them, and his eyes glittered.

He could not save his apples, but he could visit condign punishment on the raiders as soon as they came within reach. And he waited.

But the schoolboys were not gathering the apples to eat.

"Fire!" shouted Bob suddenly.

Whiz, whiz, whiz!

"Ach! Ah! Oh!" yelled Mr. Grimm.

The first apple knocked his big Stetson hat off, the second caught him under his bearded chin, and the third landed on his chest.

The farmer rolled back over the log, and for a moment only his big, heavy boots could be seen.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the tree.

"Ach!"

The farmer scrambled up, red with rage, and brandished his whip at the schoolboys above.

"Ach! I skin you alive!" he roared.

"Oh! Ah! Ach!"

Biff, biff, biff!

The fusillade was too hot for Mr. Grimm, obstinate as he was. He beat a retreat through the trees, out of range, and stopped when the whizzing apples fell short. There he took up his stand again, grasping his whip, and breathing wrath.

"Now's our chance!" murmured Bob.

"We can run faster than that old-bobo!"

Frank nodded.

"We've got to race him to the fence," he said. "If he catches us we've got to tackle him, that's all."

"Good!"

There was a last whizzing of apples, keeping the furious farmer at a good distance, and then the three schoolboys suddenly dropped from the branches to the ground.

In an instant they were speeding through the orchard for the fence.

The flight was so sudden that for a moment or two Mr. Grimm stood where he was. But he was quickly in pursuit.

As they dodged and wound among the trees, the chums of Cedar Creek heard his loud tramping on their track.

"Gum pack!" he was roaring. "Gum pack and I skins you alive! Franz! Bill! Thomas!"

"Come on!" gasped Beauclerc. "We don't want to interview Franz and Bill and Thomas."

"Ha, ha. No fear!"

The chums of Cedar Creek plunged through the gap in the fence one after another. They ran their hardest up the trail, and the dusty road fairly flew under their feet.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

At the Risk of His Life.

CLATTER, clatter! Tramp, tramp! "Look out!" panted Bob. "That's the Thompson waggon: going top speed, too. Get aside!"

Ahead of the three running schoolboys the hard, sun-baked trail wound past a thick clump of timber. From beyond the timber came the clattering of wheels and the heavy tramp of dashing hoofs.

It was the store-waggon from Thompson town, and the pace at which the two horses were travelling showed that the driver was late, and anxious to get in at Cedar Creek Camp before sundown.

The chums could not see the waggon yet, though it was not more than fifty yards away, the thick timber hiding it from their sight. They heard the heavy grind of the wheels on the baked mud, the tramp of the hoofs, and the crack of the driver's whip.

They drew to the side of the trail to let the waggon pass.

Frank Richards was looking up the trail, at the bend round which the clattering horses would appear in a few moments.

His face suddenly became pale, and he uttered a startling exclamation.

"Good heavens!"

The next instant he was dashing up the trail at frantic speed towards the bend by the timber.

"Hallo! What's up?" exclaimed Bob.

Bob and Beauclerc had been looking back in the direction of Grimm's farm.

They stared after Frank in astonishment.

But the next moment they saw what it was.

In the bend of the trail a child had started crossing the road, with a bunch of wild-flowers in his little hand, evidently in complete disregard of the still unseen waggon.

Bob caught his breath.

"Cherub!" he gasped. "He—he'll be killed!"

He started running, with Beauclerc at his heels. But they were too far away. They knew all would be over before they were near the spot.

All depended on Frank Richards, who had seen the little fellow's peril first.

He was running hard—the hardest he had ever run.

The little boy—he was not more than seven—had seen him, and was standing looking at him with wide-open, blue eyes, his little back to the oncoming waggon from Thompson.

Could he reach him?

It passed like a flash now. Frank, with a final bound, reached the startled child, and grasped him by the arm.

Round the bend of the trail swept the waggon, with its two powerful horses crashing up the dusty road.

It seemed to Frank that the snorting nostrils of the horses were right upon him, as he grasped the child and leaped for the side of the trail.

One leap—another—the child in his arms—it was all he had time for. He

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plunged headlong into the grass, on his face, as the waggon thundered by.

The heavy wheels ground past, only a few inches from his boots, as he lay on his face in the grass beside the trail.

Thunder, thunder, the heavy waggon went on down the trail, the driver shouting something Frank did not catch.

He raised himself on his knees, feeling strangely sick and giddy. He had leaped just out of danger—only just! But for the mercy of Providence, he would have lain there on the dusty trail, with crushed limbs! A shudder ran through the schoolboy.

The child was blubbering, frightened, though not hurt.

Frank drew himself to his feet, panting, dusty from head to foot, his face red and white by turns.

Bob and Vere Beauclerc reached him, panting. The store waggon was already vanishing down the road.

"Frank!" panted Bob.

"Frank!" muttered the Cherub, pressing his arm. "Oh, Franky!"

Frank Richards pulled himself together. He laughed a little hysterically.

"My hat! That was a close shave, you fellows," he said, his voice husky. "I—I thought I was fairly under it!"

"You jolly nearly were!" said Bob Lawless. "Oh, Franky, old chap! You—you ass! You might have been killed!"

"The kid would have been," said Frank simply.

"I guess so! The kid oughtn't to be here, out on the trail alone," growled Bob. "Hallo! Dry up, young 'un! Nothing to howl about now!"

The kid was howling loudly, however. The fall in the grass, as Frank Richards pitched him out of danger had shaken him, and he was frightened and bumped.

"Hallo! Look out!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

He pointed down the road.

Within a dozen yards of them Mr. Grimm was charging up the trail at full speed. The chums had forgotten the farmer for a moment.

"Vamoose!" said Bob.

"But the kid—" said Frank, hesitating.

Bob grabbed his arm.

"Come on, you duffer! The kid's all right now. Do you want to be skinned? We can't tackle four of them, can we?"

"Stop!" bawled Grimm.

"Rats!"

The three schoolboys ran for it and fairly bolted. Mr. Grimm came charging on like a bull; but Frank, looking back as they rounded the timber clump, saw that the farmer had stopped where the child was standing.

"All serene!" said Bob. "Old Grimm will see to the kid. He must belong to the place, I should think; there's no other homestead near here. Put it on—we don't want to be trailed to Cedar Creek!"

The chums ran on, and did not stop until a mile had been covered.

There was no sign of further pursuit, and at last they dropped into a walk.

Vere Beauclerc left his chums, to walk home through the wood, and Frank and Bob caught their ponies in the school enclosure, and rode home to the ranch.

It was pretty certain that Mr. Grimm would guess that the raiders belonged to Cedar Creek school, and that he would come with a complaint to the schoolmistress. But the chums had a slight hope of escaping identification, and, at all events, they did not intend to worry about the morrow.

"Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof," Bob remarked, and Frank

Richards agreed with him. And they rode home to the Lawless Ranch in cheerful spirits.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Happy Anticipations.

CHUNKY TODGERS was on the look-out for Frank and Bob when they arrived at the school next morning.

The plump youth was very keen to learn whether the chums had succeeded in imposing that "fine" upon the crusty Mr. Grimm.

"Got 'em?" he asked eagerly, as Frank and Bob came in at the school gates, where Vere Beauclerc joined them.

"Got what, fatty?"

"Eh? The apples, of course!"

"Nix!"

"Oh, I say!" murmured Chunky.

"Didn't you go?"

"I guess we did, fathead, and I guess we had a row with old Grimm," said Bob. "And I guess we'd better say nothing about it, as we've got to keep it dark—see? You'll have to do without your apples, and I hope we shall be able to do without a row with Miss Meadows."

"Well, you fellows are duffers, and no mistake!" said Chunky disconsolately. "I was expecting those apples, you know!"

"Blessed are those that don't expect!" grinned Bob. "Mind you don't let on that we started for Grimm's farm yesterday. I expect Grimm here to-day."

"Oh, scissors!" said Chunky.

"And we've got to be as innocent as cheery babies in the wood," said Frank Richards. "We don't know anything about apples, or Galician emigrants, or anything at all, in fact."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The school bell rang and the Cedar Creek fellows went into the big school-room.

The chums took their places as usual in Miss Meadows' class.

That morning they were doing "History—British and Canadian," as it was called in the school curriculum. But it is safe to say that three in the class, at least, were thinking more of Farmer Grimm, and his expected visit, than of "History—British and Canadian."

Miss Meadows' eye was on them more than once, and she caught Bob Lawless several times in the act of trying to see out of the window, a difficult task, as the window was well above his head.

"Lawless!" she rapped out suddenly. Bob jumped.

"Yes, ma'am?"

"I was asking you a question, Lawless. Kindly give me at once the name of the French general at the battle of Quebec."

"Grimm, ma'am."

"Lawless!"

"I—I—I—" stammered Bob. "I was thinking of something else, ma'am—I'm sorry—"

There was a sound of wheels without, and the interruption came very fortunately. Black Sam put his head in at the school-room door.

"Missy Meadows!"

The schoolmistress turned to the black servant, and Bob dropped into his seat with a gasp of relief.

"Oh, you chump!" murmured Frank Richards.

"That's Grimm, ten to one!" said Vere Beauclerc, in a whisper. "Mind you look as innocent as you can when he comes in!"

"Mass' Grimm want to speak to missy!" Black Sam was saying, and Miss Meadows signed to him to admit the unexpected caller.

The class wondered what it meant. The three chums sat very quietly, assuming the nearest expressions they could to dove-like innocence and unconsciousness.

All depended now upon whether Mr. Grimm recognised them or not.

If they were pointed out by the farmer they could not deny the soft impeachment, so to speak; they did not intend to speak untruthfully. But they hoped sincerely that the crusty Galician would not be able to pick them out from the class.

There was a heavy tread, and the big farmer came striding into the school-room. All eyes were upon him.

Miss Meadows made him a curt bow, and eyed him with cold questioning. She was a little tired of Mr. Grimm's complaints, as a matter of fact.

But, oddly enough, the farmer did not look quite so crusty as usual.

His dark-bearded face was almost good-humoured in expression. He carried a large and heavy bag in his hand. What it contained and why he had brought it into the school-room puzzled the class.

"Well, sir"—Miss Meadows' voice was cold and clear—"I presume that you are aware that you are interrupting lessons?"

"Ach! Yes."

"Will you kindly state your business briefly?"

"Ach! Yes."

Mr. Grimm deposited his heavy bag on the plank floor, removed his Stetson hat, and puffed and blew a little.

"Ach! I haf come, Miss Mettows, to see tree poyts tat gum to mine farm last efening to take te apples from mine orchard."

Miss Meadows compressed her lips a little.

"Three boys of this school, Mr. Grimm?"

"Ach! I tink so, Miss Mettows."

"Very well. Kindly point out the three boys if they are here."

"Ferry goot, Miss Mettows."

The big farmer came along the class, his eyes glinting at them.

"Now for the merry ordeal!" whispered Frank Richards. "Sit tight!"

And the chums sat tight and hoped for the best.

But it was as much as they could do to keep up their expressions of simple innocence when Mr. Grimm halted before the three and raised a thick, stubby finger to point at them.

"Ach! I have found dem!"

"Richards, Lawless, Beauclerc! Stand out before the class!" said Miss Meadows.

And the three stepped out grimly.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Slight Surprise.

MR. GRIMM eyed the three schoolboys and nodded and stroked his big beard. He was quite sure of the three.

"Ach! Dey are te tree!" he declared. "Dey come to mine orchard to take mine apples, and dey pelt me from mine own tree, isn't it?"

"Is that the case, Lawless?"

"Ahem!" murmured Bob.

"You were in Mr. Grimm's orchard?" asked Miss Meadows.

"Ye-e-es."

"You went there to take his apples?"

"Yes, because—"

"Never mind why. You did so?"

"Well, yes."

"And you pelted Mr. Grimm with his own fruit?"

"Ahem! Yes."

"Mr. Grimm is quite right in

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

NEXT TUESDAY! "THE CEDAR CREEK COCKNEY!"

complaining in that case," said Miss Meadows severely. "I am sorry, Mr. Grimm that this has happened, and the boys will, of course, be punished."

"Ach! Bunished, Miss Mettows?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Ach! But it is not tat I vish dose poys to be bunished tat I haf come to see you dis morning, isn't it?" exclaimed Mr. Grimm.

Miss Meadows looked at the farmer in astonishment.

"You do not wish them to be punished?" she exclaimed, while Frank Richards & Co regarded one another in blank wonder.

"Ach! No," exclaimed Mr. Grimm, "not at all, Miss Mettows! I haf gum here dis morning to find dem, so tat I can tank zem wif all mine heart!"

"To thank them for robbing your orchard and pelting you with apples?" exclaimed the astounded schoolmistress.

Mr. Grimm grinned slightly.

"My hat!" murmured Frank.

He understood now. The child whose life he had saved on the Thompson trail was "little Josef," the son of the Galician fruit farmer. That was why Mr. Grimm had come to Cedar Creek that morning.

Bob Lawless squeezed his arm ecstatically. He understood, too. Mr. Grimm was making his meaning clear at last.

Miss Meadows was listening with great interest now.

"I wa. too far away to help," resumed Mr. Grimm, "but I sees it all, Miss Mettows. Vun of dose poys—tat poy"—he pointed to Frank Richards—"tat poy, he run in front of te hosses, and he save leedle Josef, and I tink for a minute they are both killed. Ach, ach! But when to waggon pass I see it is all right. I come up ferry fast, but dose

for you, mine poy. They are a present from Karl Grimm, and as many more as you shall offer vish. Giff me your hand vunce more mein prave poy!"

And Mr. Grimm wrung Frank Richards' hand again, and bowed to Miss Meadows, and tramped out of the school-room.

"Well, by gad!" murmured Beaulerc. "Who'd have thought it!"

"Richards"—Miss Meadows' voice was very soft—"you appear to have performed a very brave action, my boy!"

Frank crimsoned.

"I—I—I yanked the kid out of the way, ma'am!" he stammered. "I—I didn't know he belonged to Mr. Grimm. Of course, it wouldn't have made any difference if I had. It was nothing."



DENOUNCED!—It was as much as Frank Richards & Co. could do to keep up their expressions of simple innocence when Mr. Grimm halted before the three and raised a thick, stubby finger to point at them. "Ach! I have found dem! De, are the tree boys who robbed mine orchard!" he growled. (See Chapter 4.)

"No, no! I gum to tank zem for safing the life of mine leedle poy—mine poor leedle Josef!"

"Great Scott!" murmured Bob Lawless. "He's been filling up on tangle-foot—so early in the morning, too! Rotten!"

"I will explain," said Mr. Grimm. "Perhaps I do not make minself quite clear, Miss Mettows?"

"You certainly do not!" said Miss Meadows dryly.

"Dose tree poys gum into mine orchard, and I goes after dem, isn't it?" said Mr. Grimm. "I chases dem on te trail mi. mine big' whip, I tink, and den"—the farmer's voice trembled a little—"den comes tat big waggon from Thompson, mit hosses going full speed, and mine leedle poy Josef is in der trail. I stops wif me dead, tinkng tat Josef he is killed. Miss Mettows, mine leedle poy he was right in front of tat waggon Ach!"

His voice broke.

poys tink I am still after dem mit mine whip, and dey vamoose. So dis morning I drive in mine cart to find zem."

"I understand" said Miss Meadows softly.

"I forgives dem mit all mine heart!" said Mr. Grimm. "If they shall want some apples, mine orchard he is open to zem always. Mine leedle Josef, I lose him if tey have not gum to take mine apples. And dis poy—giff me your hand, mine poy!" He grasped Frank Richards' hand, and wrung it with a grip that nearly made Frank yell. "Mine poy, I neffer forget. I zank you from mine heart tat you have risk your life to safe mine leedle Josef!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Frank.

"And here," continued Mr. Grimm, opening the big bag on the floor—"here is plenty apples vich I have brought

"It was a very great deal to the child and his father, Richards. You may go back to your places, my boys."

Which was very agreeable to the three.

Chunky Todgers stood up in his place, his fat face beaming. The sight of the big bag of apples had brought joy to Chunky's heart.

"Three cheers for Frank Richards!" he shouted.

And Cedar Creek gave them with a will, and Miss Meadows only smiled at that unusual demonstration in the school-room. After lessons Chunky made a bee-line for the bag of apples, and was happy.

THE END.

(There will be another grand, long, complete story of the Backwoods Chums next Tuesday. Order your POPULAR now.)

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NEXT TUESDAY:

"THE CEDAR CREEK COCKNEY!"

A DRAMATIC SCHOOL STORY, TELLING HOW HARRY WHARTON FALLS INTO THE BOUNDER'S DEEP-LAID PLOT, AND IS EXPELLED FROM THE SCHOOL!



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**THE FIRST CHAPTER,
Struck Down!**

IN the dim, misty road, not far from the gates of Greyfriars, Wharton waited, pacing to and fro.

Harry Wharton was waiting for Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of the Remove Form—the junior who had declared he would drive the Famous Five out of Greyfriars. He had succeeded—Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Mark Linley were already gone.

That day there had been a football-match with Redclyffe, and sooner than play Vernon-Smith, who could not be relied upon to do his best, Harry had resigned the captaincy of the Remove eleven.

The Remove won that match, and Harry had had a lot to put up with from the Removeites. The victory had been badly needed; the Remove eleven had lost match after match since the departure of Linley, Bull, and Nugent.

Harry Wharton, missing his chums, completely down at heart, waited.

The Bounder, returning from the village, must pass him there on his way home.

And then there would come a reckoning.

A long reckoning, for all the harm the Bounder had done; a reckoning that should pay off the score in full.

Wharton was not of a revengeful nature. His temper was not unforgiving. But the Bounder had piled injuries upon him; and all the time, with subtle cunning, had made it appear that Wharton was in the wrong.

Wharton had lost his chums, he had lost his position, he had lost the good opinion of the Form he was in; and he owed it all to the Bounder.

It was time there was a reckoning. Wharton clenched and unclenched his

hands as he waited; the Bounder was a long time coming!

Footsteps on the misty road at last.

Wharton stopped, and peered through the mist, and drew a sharp, quick breath.

It was the Bounder.

Wharton stepped into his path.

Vernon-Smith stopped.

"Who's that?" he asked. "Hallo, Wharton!"

"Yes," said Harry, between his teeth.

"What do you want?"

"I want to settle with you!"

Wharton's tone of menace warned the Bounder what to expect. He made a step backward.

"Have you come out to look for me?" he asked coolly.

"Yes."

"What for?"

"To thrash you, or else to take a licking from you!" said Wharton, his voice trembling with anger and resentment.

"It's better out here, where there's no one to interfere. I can't equal you at cunning and trickery; but face to face I can stand up to you, and let the best man win. Are you ready?"

"No!"

"I shall not wait!"

"I prefer it quietly, in the gym, with the gloves on," said Vernon-Smith, with an irritating drawl in his voice.

"You will have it quietly enough—but here, without the gloves on," said Harry Wharton.

"I tell you—"

"Put your hands up!"

"I won't!"

"Then take that!"

Vernon-Smith reeled back from the blow. He did not speak again, but with a snarl he sprang at Wharton.

The next moment they were fighting.

The Bounder was no coward. Cowardice could not be reckoned among his many faults. He preferred more sly and

safe methods than fighting; but he was not afraid.

And his temper was up now. Wharton's blow had called up all the evil in his nature.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

Their footsteps rang upon the frosty road as they tramped to and fro in fierce conflict. Heavy blows were given and received; but the fighting juniors seemed hardly to notice them.

Crash!

Vernon-Smith went down at last, on his back, on the hard road. He lay gasping and panting, his eyes gleaming up in the dusk.

"Are you done?" panted Wharton. "You cur! Get up and finish!"

"Yes, I'll finish!" muttered the Bounder. "Either I sha'n't be able to walk away from here, or you won't, Harry Wharton!"

"That's what I want."

The Bounder leaped up. His face was stained with a red stream from his nose, and it flowed over his collar and tie. His left eye was closed; his right was blinking painfully. But he seemed to be scarcely conscious of pain.

He attacked Wharton with savage fury; and Wharton met him more than half-way.

With gleaming eyes and gritted teeth and panting breath, they renewed the conflict.

It was five minutes before the Bounder went down again.

But he did go down!

And then Wharton, standing over him, reeled as he stood, with lights dancing before his eyes, and a buzzing in his head. His punishment had been almost as terrible as the Bounder's.

"Have you had enough?" said Wharton thickly.

The Bounder groaned.

"Are you done?"

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"Yes," muttered the Bounder thickly. "Hang you! Yes! Leave me alone!" Wharton reeled against a tree beside the lane. He drew in thick, gasping breaths of the misty air.

He was nearly done himself. The Bounder lay groaning. Wharton leaned against the tree for full five minutes, waiting for his strength to return.

The Bounder did not rise. Wharton staggered towards him at last. Vernon-Smith put out a feeble hand.

"Let me alone! I'm done, I tell you! I give you best! Let me alone!" "I'm not going to touch you," said Harry quietly. "Only to help you! Smithy, I—I'm sorry I hit so hard!"

The Bounder snarled. "Don't begin any of that rot with me!" he said. "Get away, and let me alone!"

"Can't you get up?" "Yes—when you're gone." "Let me help you."

"Get away!" "Let me help you back to Greyfriars, Smithy."

"If you touch me I'll hit out!" "Very well!"

Wharton turned and left him. There was nothing else that he could do.

The groan of the Bounder rang in his ears as he went.

Wharton walked unsteadily back towards Greyfriars. He was aching from the conflict, aching in every bone, in every nerve. And repentance had already come to him. He had been blind with passion; but the fight seemed to have driven the mists from his brain, and he knew that he had done wrong.

He paused at the wayside brook to wash the blood from his face, and make himself as tidy as he could. He did not want to excite general remark when he went into the school. Not that his state was likely to escape notice.

He walked slowly and unsteadily. Back in the misty lane, under the shadow of the trees, the Bounder lay.

His strength was spent. Every ounce of strength had been put into the fight, and it was gone now. He was weak as a baby—too weak to rise. His head was swimming, and he groaned as he lay. At last he dragged himself to a sitting posture.

Footsteps in the lane! He set his teeth; if it was Wharton returning to help him, he would refuse his help. But it was not Wharton; the footsteps came from the direction of the village. It was a man's form that loomed up in the mist.

"Help!" muttered the Bounder. The man stopped.

He had heard the faint voice, he had seen the dim form by the roadside. He stopped, and peered through the mist towards Vernon-Smith.

"Who is it?" The Bounder shivered. He knew that soft, foreign voice, with its lisping Spanish accent. It was the South American!

Diaz came closer, and peered at him. "Ha! It is you, *senorito!*"

Vernon-Smith groaned. "I saw you in the village," said the South American, with a ring of savage satisfaction now in his voice. "I followed you—you had the great kindness to stop for me, *senorito!*"

"Don't you touch me, you villain!" muttered the Bounder, in fear. "Can't you see I've been through it? Help me to the school, and I'll give you five pounds."

Diaz laughed. "Five pounds—and your father has robbed me of five thousand!" "I can't help what my father does!" muttered the Bounder.

"Carambo! And you told me that in his place you would do the same, and that I could go and starve!" said the South American.

"I—I did not mean it!" "You spoke as if you meant it, *senorito!*"

"Let me alone!" muttered the Bounder faintly. "Villain! You can see how I am—I cannot help myself!"

"I could not help myself when I was ruined by your villain father—I could not help myself when you called to the policeman to take me in charge," said Diaz. His black eyes rolled and glittered, and a terrible fear came upon the Bounder. It was only too evident that the man's wrongs had preyed upon him until he had lost his balance of mind—that he was scarcely responsible for what he did.

"Keep—keep away!" panted the Bounder. "I'll speak to my father—you shall have your rights! I—I swear!"

Diaz laughed. "How long would that oath bind you, *senorito*, if you escape me now?" he said.

Vernon-Smith groaned. The promise would not bind him after he was once in safety; he knew it, and his enemy knew it.

"Let me alone!" he muttered again. The South American laughed—a laugh that was full of fearful menace.

"Si, *senorito*, si; I shall show you as much mercy as your father showed me," he said. "He rob me, and he give me in charge to police—you say the same! You are your father's son! I fly from England—but before I go—" He gripped his cudgel.

"Keep off!" shrieked the Bounder, mad with terror.

But blows were already raining upon him. The wretched boy struggled feebly, till the light of consciousness died from his eyes, and he lay still and inert under the rain of blows from the heavy cudgel.

Suddenly the South American started—and held his hand.

It was as if reason had returned for a moment to his maddened brain, and he realised what he was doing.

"*Senorito!*" It was a husky whisper.

The South American bent over the insensible boy with a scared look.

"Dios! What have I done? *Senorito!* *Senorito!*"

But no answer came from the still form on the ground. The South American sprang to his feet, and, with a frightened look round, fled into the mist.

His footsteps died away. The Bounder remained alone—still—silent—with blood upon his face, blood upon his clothes—silent—still!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Return!

"HERE he is!" The exclamation burst from the group of juniors in the doorway of the School House.

Across the misty Close they had heard the ring of the bell at the gate; Gosling had opened the gate to admit the returning juniors—or junior. It was only Harry Wharton who came through the mist towards the lighted doorway.

Bob Cherry gave a gasp of relief. His uneasiness had been growing keener and keener, he hardly knew why.

"Harry! Thank goodness you've come back!"

"The thankfulness is terrific!" muttered the nabob.

"Where's the Smithy?" demanded Bolsover major.

"What have you done with Smithy?" shouted Snoop.

"What has Smithy done with him, you mean?" chuckled Bolsover. "Look at his chivvy!"

"My hat!"

"He's been pasted!"

"Faith, if Smithy's worse than that he must be a sight!"

"Well, Smithy is worse," said Wharton, with a bitter smile. "If you want Smithy, you can go and look for him in the lane."

"What have you done to him?"

"I've licked him!"

"Why doesn't he come in?" asked Bulstrode.

"He can't—yet."

Wharton passed into the house. Wingate met him in the hall. He eyed Wharton's darkened eyes and bruised face sternly.

"Where have you been, Wharton?" he said abruptly.

"Out!" said Harry.

"Have you been fighting with Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes."

"Who began it?"

"I did!"

"Have you hurt him?"

"Yes."

Wingate's eyes gleamed.

"Then you'll have to answer for it," he said. "No, I don't want you to come to my study; I shall leave this to your Form-master when Smith comes in."

"Very well!" said Wharton.

And he passed on upstairs, and went to his study. Bob Cherry followed him there. Bob was looking perplexed and worried.

"It must have been an awful mill, to leave your chivvy like that, Harry," he said uneasily.

"It was!" said Harry briefly.

"Smithy got the worst of it?"

"Yes. Not much—but he gave in."

"Good! But—but why doesn't he come in?"

"I left him on the ground."

"Harry!"

Wharton flushed.

"I offered to help him," he said.

"But he wouldn't have it."

"Just like Smithy!" said Bob, with a nod. "But I—I say, I wish he'd come in. You must have given him an awful pasting!"

"I did!"

"I—I say—" Bob Cherry hesitated.

"You fought with your fists, I suppose?"

Wharton stared at him.

"Of course!" he said. "What on earth—"

"Oh, all right!" said Bob. "All serene. Smithy can't be so very much hurt, if you fought with fists."

"He will be in in ten minutes, I expect."

"I hope he will."

Bob Cherry left the study. Wharton threw himself into the armchair. He was feeling too exhausted by that terrible fight, and too sick with the reaction after it, to think of attempting to do his preparation.

Bob Cherry rejoined the crowd of fellows at the door of the School House.

"Smithy come in yet?" he asked.

"No!"

"Why doesn't he come?" growled Bob Cherry uneasily. "He can't be so much hurt as all that. I wish he'd

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8 Our Ninth Grand Coloured Engine Plate will be Given Away Next Week!

come in! He's hanging it out to make us alarmed, very likely!"

"The likefulness is great, my chum," said Hurree Singh.

Bolsover grunted.

"More likely he's badly hurt," he said.

"You know what Wharton's temper is like when he's got his hair off!"

"Faith, and that's so, too! But——"

"Why doesn't he come?" growled Bob miserably.

But the Bounder did not come.

The minutes crawled by.

Half an hour—an hour! Wingate of the Sixth joined the juniors. His face was anxious and a little pale.

"Hasn't Smith come in?" he asked.

"No!"

"That's jolly queer!"

"He must have been badly hurt!" said Snoop. "Perhaps some of us ought to go and look for him, Wingate."

"He can't be disabled by a fight with Wharton!" said the Greyfriars captain, staring. "He can come in by himself when he chooses."

"Then it's jolly queer he doesn't come!"

Wingate compressed his lips. He stared gloomily out into the misty Close. Where was Vernon-Smith? What did the delay mean?

Nine o'clock sounded from the clock-tower of Greyfriars.

"Nine!" said Bob Cherry, with a shiver. "Where's Smithy?"

Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth, and Coker of the Fifth, came out with their coats and caps on.

"Going to look for Smithy?" asked Bolsover major.

"Yes," said Wingate shortly.

"Can we come?"

"No!"

And the three seniors disappeared in the mist.

The juniors waited.

Half the school seemed to be crowded in the passage and round the doorway now. The masters were as anxious as the boys. Unless Vernon-Smith was playing a trick, something serious must be the matter. It might be some trick of the Bounder—and yet it was hardly likely.

But what could be the matter? Had Wharton, in his temper, struck too hard—had the Bounder been seriously hurt? Such things had happened—an unlucky blow might have done damage that the assailant never intended, never dreamed of. Was that the explanation of the Bounder's strange absence?

The gates were open—Gosling was there with his lantern, waiting, too. Footsteps in the Close at last—and there was a cry from the waiting boys:

"Here they come!"

Forms loomed up in the mist, lighted by the glimmer of the porter's lantern. But—but what was that the seniors were carrying—why did they come with slow and heavy steps? A hurdle, with a coat spread over it, and upon the coat a still form—and over that another coat! What was that still, silent figure upon the hurdle?

The Greyfriars fellows gathered round with bated breath.

"Wingate—what is it?"

"What's happened?"

"Is it—is it——"

"It's Smith!" said Wingate, as the hurdle was carried in. "Quiet, all of you!"

Bob Cherry gave a cry.

"But he's not—he's not——"

"No, you young ass! But he's badly hurt—he's been beaten insensible with a stick—and the young villain who did it will have to pay for it!"

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And the seniors passed in with their burden.

The juniors remained silent—horror-stricken!

"Oh, good heavens!" muttered Bob Cherry, pale to the lips.

"It's Wharton's doing!" said Bolsover major. "Who'd have thought he was such a murderous villain?"

Bob Cherry turned upon him fiercely.

"Hold your tongue, you cad! Wharton fought him with his fists—you know he did!"

Bolsover sneered.

"How did Smithy come into that state, then?"

Bob Cherry was silent. What could he say?

"We shall know when Smithy speaks," said Russell.

"But when will he speak?"

That was a question there was no answering. Dr. Short arrived from Friardale to take charge of the patient, and he shook his head over him very seriously. The Bounder was insensible, and he remained insensible. The juniors went to bed on tiptoe, and when they spoke, they spoke in hushed voices. It was as if the dark wing of Azrael, the Angel of Death, had passed over the old school in the misty winter night.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Guilty or Not Guilty?

WHARTON!

"Yes, Wingate?"

"You're wanted," said Wingate abruptly, "in the Head's study."

"Yes."

Wharton left the Removites, as they were going up to the dormitory, and followed the captain of Greyfriars.

Wingate's face was very hard and grim.

Dr. Short had examined Vernon-Smith and left; the Bounder was lying in bed, insensible, with the House-dame watching by his bedside.

Harry Wharton did not yet know what had happened. He knew that the Bounder had been carried in by the prefects upon a hurdle, and he marvelled. He could not understand how Vernon-Smith was so injured as all that. He could not help thinking that it might be one of the endless tricks of the Bounder, to make capital out of the affair.

He tapped Wingate on the arm, and the Greyfriars captain jerked his arm away.

"Don't touch me!" he said.

Wharton flushed.

"Wingate! What do you mean?"

"I mean that I don't want to be touched by a murderous young scoundrel!" said Wingate deliberately.

"That's what I mean."

"Wingate!"

"Oh, hold your tongue!"

"But—but what has happened?" cried Wharton, in bewilderment. "Why are you speaking to me like that, Wingate? What have I done?"

"You know what you have done."

"Is Smithy much hurt?"

"You know he is."

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"He was hurt a little more than I was," said Wharton. "I offered to help him to Greyfriars, and he refused my help. But it was a fair fight—he would have done as much to me, if he could have done it."

"A fair fight?" said Wingate bitterly.

"Yes," said Wharton fiercely. "Do you think I fought him unfairly?"

"I know you did."

"Wingate! Are you mad?"

"Here we are," said the Greyfriars captain. "Tell your yarns to the doctor, not to me."

He tapped at the door of the Head's study and opened it.

Dr. Locke was there, with Mr. Quelch, the Remove master. Both of them were looking very grave.

Their glances fell accusingly upon Harry Wharton as he entered the study with Wingate. Wharton drew a deep, hard breath. He could understand that something serious was the matter now—something more than a fist-fight—and he wondered, in bewilderment, what it was! Had anything happened to the Bounder after he had left him out on the misty road?

"Here is Wharton, sir," said Wingate.

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Have you anything to say?"

Wharton compressed his lips.

"Am I accused of anything, sir?"

Dr. Locke bent his eyes searchingly upon the boy.

"You know that Vernon-Smith was found on the road, and brought in by the prefects, Wharton?" he said.

"I know he was brought in, sir."

"And that he is still insensible," said the Head.

"I heard the fellows saying so, sir; but I did not believe it."

"You did not believe it?" said the Head, raising his eyebrows.

"No, sir. I think it must be some trick; the Bounder—I mean, Vernon-Smith is deep enough for anything. He was not insensible when I left him, and he was only fagged out. He was not much more hurt in the scrap than I was. He could have walked home if he had chosen."

"Wharton, do you know what you are saying?"

"I think so, sir."

"You went out specially to find Vernon-Smith, and force a fight on him, I understand?"

"I did, sir. He has injured me, and I wanted to be done with his cunning tricks; I wanted to have the row out and done with."

"You know it was wrong."

"I—I'm afraid I lost my temper, sir; but I told Smithy I was sorry I had hit so hard before I left him. But he had hit me hard, too. You can see that I didn't come through the fight without being hurt."

"I can see that," said the Head.

"I suppose it was carried too far, sir," said Wharton. "I'm sorry for that. But you don't know how that fellow has driven me to it. It's impossible to keep level with him; he's deep—too deep for any of us. That's why I went for him. But I'm sorry I hit so hard, now."

The Head's gaze was still intent upon the face of the captain of the Remove. He seemed perplexed and puzzled.

"If this had been merely a fist-fight, Wharton, I should not take a very serious view of it," he said. "Even if carried to a savage excess, there might be excuses. But I fail to see what excuse there can be for your infamous treatment of your Form-fellow."

Wharton started.

WHARTON STARTED.

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"But it was a fist-fight, sir," he said.
"Do you mean to say that you used no weapon?"

"Weapon, sir?"

"Yes."

"Of course I didn't!" cried Wharton.
"Does Smith say I did? The lying cad—"

"Silence!" said the Head sternly.

"But if Smith says—"

"Vernon-Smith has not spoken a word; he was insensible when he was found in the road, and he is insensible still; and Dr. Short says he will probably not recover consciousness before the morning."

Wharton staggered.

"I—I can't understand it, sir," he said.
"He spoke to me just before I left him; he refused my help to get back to the school."

"Are you telling the truth, Wharton?"

"Dr. Locke!"

"Either there is some horrible mistake, or you are the most unmitigated young scoundrel and liar I have ever met," the Head exclaimed.

"Dr. Locke!"

"Are you unaware, Wharton—do you pretend to be unaware—that Vernon-Smith was not injured by fist blows, but by a cruel attack with some heavy weapon—a bludgeon of some sort?"

Wharton's jaw dropped.

"A—a bludgeon!" he stammered.

"Yes."

"It's not true!"

"Vernon-Smith is covered with black bruises—his head and shoulder and arms," said the Head quietly. "He has been beaten into insensibility. The doctor even fears that concussion of the brain may follow."

"Impossible!"

"Do you dare to question a medical man's report, and the evidence of our eyes, sir?" the Head exclaimed angrily.

"But—but—but I can't understand it, sir!" gasped Wharton, feeling as if his head were spinning round in his bewilderment. "I never touched Vernon-Smith, excepting with my knuckles, and he was conscious when I left him, and did not look at all likely to faint."

"And you expect me to believe that statement?"

"Yes, sir," said Wharton, with spirit; "I do!"

The Head glanced at Mr. Quelch.

"What is your opinion of this?" he asked.

Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"I cannot understand it, sir. I know Wharton has a very hot temper, and I can understand the fight, certainly. It was wrong of him, but I can understand it. But a cowardly assault—I cannot understand that of Wharton. It is not like him—not like the character he has always borne. Wingate will say so, too."

"Quite true, sir," said Wingate.

"Thank you, Mr. Quelch," said Wharton gratefully. "It's a horrible mystery. If Smith has been injured in that way, I didn't do it. Somebody else must have done it after I left him. That's the only thing I can think of."

"That is barely possible, of course," said the Head dryly. "You say that you left Vernon-Smith in possession of his senses?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"Then if he was attacked by another person, he will be quite aware of it?"

"Of course!"

"Then I shall leave the whole matter over till the morning," said the Head.

"It shall remain in abeyance until Vernon-Smith can speak. By what he

says you stand or fall! You may go to your dormitory."

And Harry Wharton went, his brain in a whirl!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Sentence!

DR. LOCKE was waiting in his study. The medical man from Friardale had been and gone, and had come again. The morning was wearing away, and the Head of Greyfriars was waiting anxiously for news. Until the Bouncer was able to speak, the Head was hopeless to deal with the matter. What to think the Head hardly knew. For Wharton's sake, and for the sake of the good name of the school, he would have been glad to learn that Harry was innocent, that it was by another hand that the cowardly assault had been perpetrated. But it seemed too much to believe. Wharton had gone out specially to find Vernon-Smith; he had attacked him; he admitted leaving him lying in the road, too spent to return to the school. That another person, unknown, had found him in such a state and attacked him again seemed incredible. But as soon as the Bouncer could speak the point would be cleared up.

There was a tap at the door, and Dr. Short entered. The little medico came into the study with a grave face.

"The patient has recovered consciousness," he said.

"Thank goodness!" said the Head, in great relief. "Has he spoken?"

"Yes."

"And he has said—"

"That he wishes to speak to you."

"I will go to him at once.

"I have sent you a nurse," said the doctor. "The boy will need great care for some days. He has had a most terrible beating; indeed, if he had not a constitution of iron, the results would have been very serious indeed. Whoever attacked him in that manner was a scoundrel lost to every sense of humanity!"

The Head sighed.

"I fear that it was a boy belonging to my school," he said.

"Then the sooner you send him away, sir, the better it will be for your school and for the other boys," said Dr. Short.

"You are right."

Dr. Locke made his way to the sick-room.

The Bouncer was awake.

He lay in bed, bandaged, so that only his eyes were showing. But his eyes were very bright, and they gleamed as the Head came in.

Vernon-Smith was in full possession of his senses now, and he had been thinking. Dr. Locke advanced to the bedside.

"My poor boy!" he said. "I am very sorry to see you in this state! Dr. Short tells me that you wish to speak to me, Vernon-Smith."

"Yes, sir."

"You can tell me who has used you in this way?"

"I do not wish to do so, sir."

"It is known that you and Wharton were fighting last night on the Friardale road," said the Head gently. "Wharton has admitted it. It is impossible to conceal that, Smith."

"I did not want to mention his name, sir," said the Bouncer. "I don't want



DRUMMED OUT OF GREYFRIARS!—Harry Wharton, surrounded by a crowd hissing and groaning, was hurried towards the gates. "Hands off the cad!" shouted Bolsover. "He's not fit to touch!" Harry walked on steadily, his face as pale as death, his brows contracted, and his lips set in a line. (See chapter 5.)

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to get him into trouble. He was very wild about the football affair yesterday, and getting put out of the eleven. He has put all the blame on me, though it was Wingate who did it all, as Wingate will tell you. I never meant to do him wrong."

"I am sure of it, my boy," said the Head, deeply affected.

"I—I wanted to ask you to overlook what he has done, sir," said Vernon-Smith, in weak tones.

The Head compressed his lips.

"Do you mean the fight, Vernon-Smith?"

"All that he did, sir."

The Head's heart sank.

"You mean that Wharton did this, Smith—that he left you in this state?"

"Hasn't he owned up, sir? I thought you said he had."

"He has admitted fighting with you, Smith. But nothing else. He says that somebody else must have done this to you after he had left you."

A sneering smile—quite his old smile—crossed the Bounder's lips.

"Is his statement false, Smith?"

"I hardly like to say anything about him, sir. I know he was furious, and I do not bear malice. Goodness knows I'm not in a state now to bear malice against anybody," said the Bounder, with a groan.

"Smith, it is your duty to tell me the truth."

"Yes, sir, but I don't want to get a chap expelled from the school."

"If Wharton did this, Smith, he deserves to be expelled—indeed, he deserves to be sent to prison!" said the Head warmly.

"Yes, sir, but—"

"Vernon-Smith, I must ask you to put all other considerations aside and tell me the plain truth," said the Head gently but firmly. "Did Wharton do this?"

"Yes, sir."

"He beat you in this way with a bludgeon?"

"Yes, sir."

"That is enough!"

"But—but I don't want you to be hard on him, sir—"

"That is for me to decide," said Dr. Locke gently. "Such a boy cannot be allowed to remain at Greyfriars. He is a disgrace to the school."

"Very well, sir. I suppose you know best. But—but you'll tell Wharton that I didn't want him to be punished?"

"I will tell him, certainly!"

"Thank you, sir!"

And the Head left the bedside.

His face was very grim and stern when he went. Not for a second did the slightest doubt cross his mind. Wharton's tale had been improbability itself; and now the victim of the outrage had utterly denied it. Could anything have been more clear? How could the old doctor suspect that chance had played so strange a part in the affair, and that the Bounder, with almost demoniac cunning, had taken advantage of it to fix a disgraceful charge upon his rival?

Morning lessons were just over, and the Forms were coming out.

Dr. Locke, as he returned towards his study, came upon the crowd of boys in the passage, and he paused.

The boys were suddenly silent.

The expression upon Dr. Locke's face was hard, cold, and stern as he turned his eyes upon Harry Wharton.

"Wharton!" he said. And his voice was like ice.

Wharton faced him steadily.

"Yes, sir!" he said.

"I have just seen Vernon-Smith. He has recovered sufficiently to speak," said the Head.

"Yes, sir!"

There was a slight buzz, and then silence. The boys hung upon the Head's words. All the Forms were crowding round, seniors and juniors, eager to hear.

Wharton's face was as pale as chalk.

He knew from the doctor's look what had happened. The Bounder had lied!

But he stood as firm as a rock, facing his fate like a brave lad as he was, and the son of a soldier. He knew what was coming, and he faced it—as his father had faced the foe when he had found his death in the far-off Afghan passes.

"Vernon-Smith has told me all!" said the Head.

"If he has told you the truth, sir, I am not afraid," said Harry.

"This effrontery will not serve you, Wharton! Vernon-Smith first tried to conceal the fact that it was you who had attacked him, from a sense—a mistaken sense—of honour. When he found that I knew the truth he asked me to pardon you. That is impossible."

"And he knew it," said Harry bitterly. "He knew it, or he would not have asked."

"Boy!"

"Has he told you that I attacked him—and injured him in that way—with a weapon?"

"Yes."

"Then he has lied, sir!"

There was a shout from all the fellows, unrestrained even by the doctor's presence.

"Shame!"

Dr. Locke's calm old face flushed with anger.

"I do not wonder that your school-fellows cry shame upon you, Wharton!" he said, his voice trembling. "I am ashamed—ashamed that such a boy has ever entered my school! You are a disgrace to Greyfriars!"

Wharton stood silent.

Dr. Locke raised his hand.

"You have acted like a ruffian—like a criminal!" he said. "Harry Wharton, you are expelled from Greyfriars! Go immediately and pack your box. In half an hour at the most I shall expect you to be gone. I shall send a telegram to Colonel Wharton, warning him to expect you. You shall not soil this old school with your presence an hour longer. You

have brought disgrace upon your school, disgrace upon all of us, and disgrace upon the honourable name you bear! You are expelled! Do not let me see you again!"

The Head passed on. The rustle of his gown died away.

Wharton stood silent—stunned.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Drummed Out!**

GREYFRIARS was in a turmoil. Harry Wharton has been expelled.

Before the whole school the sentence had been passed, and Wharton, the captain of the Remove, was to go.

Bob Cherry and Inky, faithful to the last, had gone to the dormitory with him to help him pack.

Meanwhile, the other fellows had gathered in the Close.

Wharton had been expelled. But that was not enough! That his departure from the school should not lose any element of shame and humiliation, that was what his enemies desired; and all the other fellows who were not his enemies fully concurred in that.

Almost the whole of the Remove, and the Fourth, and the Shell, and many of the Fifth and the Sixth, had gathered in a crowd, and there was a swarm of fags of the Second and Third. They were all ready for him when he appeared, and among all that crowd there was not one to raise his voice for the condemned junior.

"He's going," said Bolsover major, "and he's going to be drummed out! That's the way to give him a send-off! Drum him out!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Faith, and ye're right!"

"Oh, let him alone!" said Tom Brown miserably. "He's going—and he's disgraced! No need to rub it in much deeper, I think."

But a howl drowned the voice of the New Zealand junior.

"Shut up!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"He's going to be drummed out—drummed out by the whole school!"

The juniors had made their preparations.

The idea of a drumming-out had caught on like wildfire; it was an unmistakable way of showing the expelled junior what the school thought of him.

Dr. Locke had feared that the unfortunate junior might be attacked as he left, so strong was the feeling against him, and he had given the prefects instructions to see that nothing of the kind took place.

But any shame and humiliation that did not take the form of actual violence was not likely to be interfered with. Wharton was condemned as much by the seniors as by the juniors. The whole school was against him.

Tin cans and pails, toy drums and sticks and cricket-stumps were in the hands of the drummers-out, all ready for the moment when Harry Wharton should appear—and the crowd watched the doorway with almost wolfish eyes.

There was a sudden roar:

"Here he is!"

"Here's the cad!"

Harry Wharton appeared in the doorway of the School House.

Bob Cherry and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, their faces pale and wretched, were with him. They could not help their chum now, but they stuck to him to the last.

The roar from the crowd made Wharton start. In that sea of faces he read only

(Continued on page 23.)

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



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THE POPULAR.—No. 163.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"FIGHTING FOR HIS CHUMS!"

WHEN LESLIE OWEN RECEIVES NEWS OF SERIOUS TROUBLE FROM HOME HE FINDS IT VERY DIFFICULT TO FACE HIS CHUMS AT ST. JIM'S!



OWEN OF THE NEW HOUSE!

A Grand New Long Complete Story of TOM MERRY & Co., the Famous Chums of St. Jim's

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Chum in Heavy Trouble.

"WHAT'S the matter, Les?" It was Edgar Lawrence who asked that question.

He and Dick Redfern had just come in from the footer field, ruddy and warm and hungry, looking for tea, which they expected Leslie Owen to have ready by this time.

Owen had said that he did not feel up to footer that afternoon, and they had naturally thought he was not quite well. His face had suggested that notion, though he had said nothing about being out of sorts.

Now Lawrence and Redfern found the fire dead in the grate, no preparations for tea, and their chum with his arms on the table and his head upon his arms, as if he were in the depths of woe.

He was actually in the depths of woe, but he did not feel inclined to admit the fact.

"Oh, nothing," he replied, looking up. "I'm not exactly the thing, and I didn't hear you fellows coming, or you wouldn't have found me like this. Don't bother, there's good chaps!"

"Can't help bothering a bit—about tea, you know," said Redfern, giving Lawrence a nudge.

Dick Redfern thought that the best way to treat Owen was to let him take his time for telling what he had to tell.

There was something, no possible doubt as to that. And it could be no slight matter to trouble Owen in this way, for he was cheery and plucky.

But it was sure to come out. The three scholarship boys of the New House, who had come to St. Jim's together, had stuck together ever since, and it was the rarest thing for one of them to keep a secret from the other two.

"You move, Les, and I'll get tea," said Lawrence. "There isn't a fat lot to get, but what there is we may as well have. I do believe I could eat dog sausages!"

At that Owen grinned, though the grin was half-hearted.

"You needn't do that," he said. "You're invited to a spread, and it includes sosses, as it chances."

"Good egg!" said Redfern. "Who's our esteemed benefactor?"

"Fatty Wynn. He came in just now. You can bet your boots Fatty's sosses won't be dog, and he says he's got some."

"You can also bet your boots that they will be done to a turn, the most beautiful brown, all sizzling from the pan," Redfern said, clapping Lawrence on the back. "I thought our respected Fatty a bit of a renegade for cutting footer this afternoon. Now I perceive the true inwardness of his absence, and I take back what I never said."

"Inwardness is a good word, Dick," returned Lawrence, patting the region a little lower than his chest. "I am as empty as a drum. My inwardness is the merest void. But very shortly all that will be remedied. Cut along and tell Fatty that we'll be with them directly we've changed. Owen, you needn't come back here. The sight of the sosses will dispel your blues; and if you ask him very nicely, Fatty may let you help him to cook."

"I'm not going. I told Wynn I didn't care about it to-day."

Redfern and Lawrence stared at their chum in amazement.

It must be a heavy weight of trouble that made a fellow refuse an invitation to tea with Figgins & Co., the friendly foemen whom all three of the scholarship boys liked better than anyone else in the House except one another.

"Not when it's sosses?" inquired Redfern, in a tone that almost suggested awe.

"No. What do sausages matter?"

"What does anything matter if sausages don't?" Lawrence asked.

"I dare say you'll find out some day that there are other things in life besides grub that matter," answered Owen.

"I've found that out already. Most fellows have. Don't be ratty, old chap!"

"I'm not ratty."

No, not ratty. Only utterly miserable. Somehow Redfern and Lawrence began to feel that they did not care so very much about tea with Figgins & Co., after all.

They might not be able to do Owen any good by having tea with him in their own study. But it seemed like desertion to leave him.

Redfern looked at Lawrence, and Lawrence looked back at Redfern.

"I don't know that—"

So Redfern began to voice the thought in the minds of both. But Owen cut in across his speech.

"Shut up, Reddy, do! And clear out, both of you, for if you don't I will. I want to be alone."

They went without another word. Owen looked after them fondly, almost remorsefully.

"I wish I could tell them. But I can't," he muttered.

Then his arms went down on the table again, and his head went down on his arms.

But he was not crying. Even when his shoulders shook with sobs there were no tears in his eyes. His grief was more like the hard grief of a man than that of a mere boy.

He got up and paced up and down the little study.

"Mother says it's no good my going home, that I can't do anything, and that, above all things, nobody here must guess the trouble we're in," he said to himself. "But I can't stay—I can't stay!"

It was to the grief-stricken junior as though invisible ropes were dragging him.

The homes of the three scholarship boys were naturally not quite of the same type as those of the majority of their schoolfellows, though these varied greatly, from the palatial residence where Aubrey Racke's father spent the wealth which profiteering had brought him, down to the modest villa in a modest street on the outskirts of a little country town in which Baggy Trimble's folk lived. For "Trimble Hall" existed only in the fertile imagination of Baggy.

That modest villa, however, boasted more of luxury than Owen's home.

Until lately the people of the three chums had lived close together. But within the last few months the Owens had moved to a town more than a hundred miles farther north. It was not a pleasant town, but Mr. Owen had got a better job there, and they had thought themselves in luck.

In luck! Leslie Owen groaned as he remembered how bucked they had been.

If they had never gone to Sarlbridge

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"THE MYSTERY OF OWEN!"

A NEW LONG COMPLETE TALE OF ST. JIM'S. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

12 Our Ninth Grand Coloured Engine Plate will be Given Away Next Week!

this terrible thing might never have happened. And it would have been better that they should all have starved than that it should have happened.

"I must go—I must go!"
Then a thought took him suddenly aback.

The Head would not let him go without a request from his parents, or at least some explanation of the urgency of his going.

And he must not explain. Above all things, his mother wanted their disgrace kept dark. That in this she was thinking chiefly of him Leslie Owen knew. But the fact made no difference. He might prefer to come out into the open with his trouble, sure of the support of at least two staunch chums; but for her sake he must lie low.

Better than she, he knew that the secret could not long be kept. Mrs. Owen was a simple woman, without much education, and she failed to realise that such things will out. Her son had brains, and he had learned at St. Jim's much outside her ken.

All that did not matter, though. He must do what she wanted. It might be useless, but it was up to him to do it. He thought of it all in a curiously practical way, almost as if it were a mathematical problem to be solved. And yet inside him there was a heart that ached as though it would burst.

He must bolt!
Then in a flash there came to him the certainty that even this would not do. For if he bolted everyone would be asking why.

He had as clean a sheet as a boy can well have. He was not at that moment

in the smallest school trouble. There was not even one of the frequent rows with Mr. Ratcliff that helped to vary life for these three, as for Figgins & Co. After Figgins & Co., the New House tyrant disliked the scholarship boys more than anyone else in his House.

They would ask "Why?" And when no answer to that question was found at St. Jim's, the answer would inevitably be sought for at Sarlbridge.

Was there any way out?

While his chums, putting aside their anxiety about him, after the light-hearted manner of boys, did full justice to the beautifully-browned sausages sizzling from the pan, and the rest of the good things that went to make up the spread in the study of Figgins & Co., Leslie Owen wrestled with that problem.

And at last he made up his mind to a desperate course.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Owen Runs Away.

"FEELING any better, old chap?" asked Redfern, half an hour or so later.

Redfern himself felt very much better. He had had an excellent tea, and to him the world seemed quite a good place. Lawrence was in like case with Redfern. But there really was no particular reason why the cheeriness brought about by the satisfaction of robust appetites and the friendly atmosphere in which those appetites had been satisfied should extend to a fellow who had been alone with his troubles all the time, and had not eaten a scrap.

"No. And I'm not likely to," replied Owen.

"You're sure that—well, that you can't tell us?" said Lawrence.

"I'm quite sure about that."

"A fellow doesn't like seeming inquisitive," Redfern said. "But we've been pals a long time, and we always have told each other things. You're sure that you haven't anything up against us, Les?"

That query Owen could reply to frankly, and he was very glad to reply to it.

"Not a thing, Dick!" he answered. "Not a thing against you or Edgar. No chap could have had better pals."

"Then, that's all right," said Dick Redfern.

But he did not feel that it was really all right. And Owen had a lump in his throat as he thought of what bolting would mean. He would not be able to come back. A fellow who had done what he meant to do would not be taken back. Dr. Holmes was long-suffering and merciful, but he drew the line at theft.

The three got to their prep. Owen sat with his books in front of him, to all seeming working as usual. And these three did work. There were plenty of St. Jim's juniors who were apt to look upon class-work as a beastly nuisance, a thing that interfered altogether too much with games and rags. But those were such fellows as, for the most part, knew that their ways would be smoothed for them.

The three scholarship boys knew that for them life would be a fight. They must make their own way in the world without help from their folks. Redfern was determined to be a great journalist, and Lawrence and Owen had likewise their ambitions.

But Leslie Owen was not thinking of the distant future to-night, and he was not working, though he pretended to be. What was the use, when he knew he would be far away by the time the work being prepared to-night was gone over with Mr. Lathom?

From time to time his chums cast anxious glances at him. Beautifully-browned and sizzling sausages may afford consolation for the present or the future. But once they have gone the destined way of sausages, once they are a part of the past, their power of consolation vanishes completely.

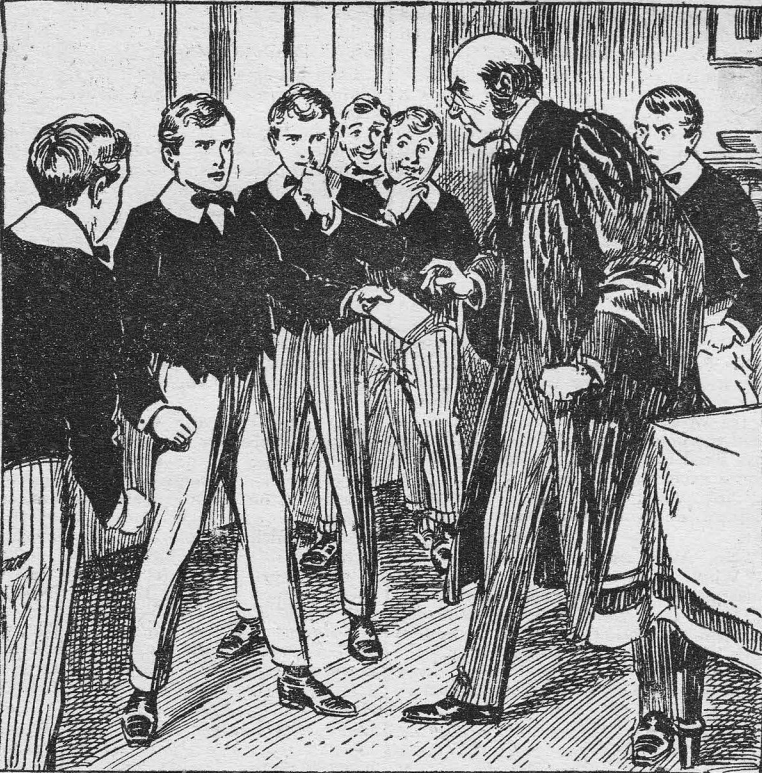
So Redfern and Lawrence found. If Owen had been the weeping sort, he would have cried then. He was conscious of those looks, and he was conscious as never before of how much those two good chums meant to him. Always hitherto he had been able to think of the life beyond school as shared to some extent with them. But now it was as though this must be the end of their friendship.

Their last evening together!
To-morrow they would be thinking him an utter rotter. They would go on together, those two. Possibly they might talk of him at times, and ask one another how a fellow who had always seemed so straight should turn out such a rotter.

Even that, it seemed to Owen, would be better than their blotting him out completely and never mentioning his name.

Lawrence finished first. He got up and went out without speaking a word, trading softly, as though someone was ill. A few minutes later Redfern followed. But he spoke.

"We're after a game of coon-can in



ACCUSED OF GAMBLING!—"I can prove to you that we were not gambling, sir!" said Kerr gravely. "I have a note book with the total scores of every game we have played!" "Produce it!" grated Mr. Ratcliff, glaring. Kerr took a small note book from his pocket and handed it to the Housemaster. (See Chapter 3.)

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NEXT
TUESDAY!

"THE MYSTERY OF OWEN!"

A NEW

LONG COMPLETE TALE OF ST. JIM'S.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

(Continued on page 17.)



BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

Sr. Jim's

Greyfriars

Rookwood

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,—The other day a volume came into my hands, entitled "The Book of Etiquette; or, How to Become a Little Gentleman."

I won't tell you who I borrowed the book from, because it was borrowed without permission. But I was very interested in the subject of etiquette, so I took the book along to my study and devoured it. (No, don't misunderstand me. I didn't chew it up on the mat!)

Now, there were lots of rules laid down in this Book of Etiquette. I've tried to put them into practiss, but I konfess I have failed in some dismally.

One of the rules was as follows:

"If you arrive at the door of a room simultaneously with another person, and that person is your senior, stand aside, and let him pass into the room first."

Sounds jolly simple, doesn't it? And so it is—in theory! But when a situation of that sort cropped up shortly afterwards, I was helpless.

I was about to enter Studdy No. 1, to interview Wharton, when Coker of the 5th arrived at the same time.

"Coker is my senior," I thought, "so I'll step aside and let him pass."

But I was already in the doorway, and I took up all the space. It was impossible to step to one side. I could only go forward or backward. So I went backward—and axcidentially cannoned into Coker, and sent him sprawling! Bother that beestly "Book of Etiquette!"

Another rule stated that you should never make a noise while taking your soup. For weeks I've been trying to accomplish this feat, but without much success. I simply can't take my soup quietly—or my gruel either, when I get a licking!

Then there was a rule about eating jelly with a fork. This is supposed to be done in the best circles—at the Hotel Sizzle and the Ritz. Well, they can go on doing it, if it amuses them. Personally, I consider it the height of absurdity to try to balance a lump of slippery jelly on the end of a fork.

There were several other rules which interested me somewhat; and I have

THE SLACKER'S CREED.

(With apologies to the Lanky Poet—in other words to Long-fellow.)

By

LORD MAULEVERER.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is sorrowful and sad.
Happy is the youth who slumbers
On his study couch, begad!

Life is topping! Life is ripping!
Let its praise be told in rhyme.
How delightful to be slipping
Into slumber half the time!

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to lay in bed to-morrow
One hour longer than to-day!

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
Always dodge the din and rattle
And avoid the storm and strife.

Lives of slackers all remind us
We can make our lives sublime
By putting work and play behind us,
And simply snoozing all the time!

Trust no future, grey or yellow,
Let the dead past go to sleep.
Then do likewise, my dear fellow,
And a merry heart you'll keep.

Everywhere there's trouble brewing,
Quelchy makes his pupils dance.
Let us, then, be up and doing
Nothing—while we've got the chance!

"IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!"

(Continued from column 1.)

tried to put them into practiss. In some cases I have failed, but in others I have been wonderfully successful.

But, I am sorry to say, I shall not be able to continue learning all of the rules in the "Book of Etiquette," as the owner has turned up and brutally confiscated his property.

Your sinseer pal,

Your Editor.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MY COUSINS!

By

Mr. WALTER BUNTER
(Master of the First Form.)

Dear William and Samuel,—I am not at all satisfied with the manner in which you have been behaving of late.

Your manners are truly shocking, and you are utterly lacking in respect.

You seem to imagine that because I have the misfortune to be your cousin you may treat me with easy-going familiarity. You repeatedly address me as "Wally, old man." I would point out that I am not Wally to you. I am Mr. Bunter. As to my being an "old man," I am not yet out of my teens.

In your "Weekly," William, you have published several articles of a libellous nature concerning me. If any more of these articles appear you will be taken very severely to task.

You, Samuel, have aided and abetted your major in libelling me, and I must warn you to tread warily in future.

Now, there is another matter to which I feel bound to give publicity.

On Saturday afternoon last I got in fresh supplies of food, including a rabbit-pie and a cherry cake. During my absence at Highcliffe with the Greyfriars First Eleven the pie and the cake disappeared from my study. Suspicious crumbs were afterwards found on the bench in the Close, on which bench several juniors inform me they saw you sitting.

It is perfectly obvious that the pair of you carried out a raid on my study cupboard. On this occasion I shall take no action, but if there is a recurrence of such conduct it will be my painful duty to take you both before the headmaster.

I have been very patient with you both, but I do not propose to tolerate this sort of thing any longer. That is why I am giving you a public warning. If you disregard it, the consequences to yourselves will be extremely painful.

You will kindly digest the fact that I am a Form-master here, and as such I am entitled to be treated with proper respect. Defy me, and you will find yourselves in Queer Street!—Yours grimly,
WALTER BUNTER.

(All right, Wally, old top. Don't get huffy. We hearby prommiss to be as good as gold in future.—Ed.)

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A Matter of Discipline!

BY
Herbert Vernon-Smith.

IT was Sunday afternoon. The slackers slacked; the energetic mortals tramped the countryside.

Among those who were taking an afternoon walk was Mr. Wally Bunter, the master of the First Form.

It was a relief to Wally, after the work of the week, to get out into the country lanes.

Wally swung along the road to Pegg Bay, with the freshening breeze from the sea blowing into his face. He was elegantly attired in his Sunday best. A certain dignity sat upon him. Young though he was, there could be no mistaking the fact that he was a person in authority.

Four juniors, however, did not seem to recognise that fact.

Coming along the road, with their hands in their pockets, were Skinner, Snoop, Stott, and Bolsover major, of the Remove. They walked jauntily, as if they were feeling very bucked with life.

They saw Wally Bunter—Wally was difficult to miss, on account of his huge bulk—but they did not remove their hands from their pockets.

As they passed the master of the First they grinned expansively, and their salutations took the following form:

"Hallo, old top!"

This from Bolsover.

"Cheerio, old bean!"

This was Skinner's contribution.

"Afternoon, Wally!"

This was Stott.

"Chin-chin, old fruit!"

The last was the greeting of Sidney Snoop. Mr. Bunter frowned. The four juniors walked on, and appeared surprised when they were called back.

"Stop a minute!" commanded Mr. Bunter grimly, "you think you are very funny?"

"Oh, no, sir!" said Skinner.

"Not at all, sir!" said Snoop.

"Perish the thought!" murmured Bolsover major.

"Two of you, at any rate, have discovered that I am entitled to be addressed as 'sir,'" said Mr. Bunter. "A few moments ago I was referred to as 'old top,' 'old bean,' and 'old fruit.' I greatly resent it!"

"No need to get huffy, sir," said Skinner. "They are terms of endearment."

"However endearing such phrases may be, they smack of familiarity," Skinner," said Mr. Bunter. "I must ask you not to address me in that manner again. I must also ask you to take your hands out of your pockets."

The juniors obeyed rather sullenly.

"You've got your own hands in your pockets!" growled Bolsover.

"Quite!" agreed Wally. "But you're not to do as I do; you're to do as I tell you to do. There's a difference."

Skinner & Co. started to walk on. They were again called back.

"One moment," said Mr. Bunter. "I haven't finished with you yet. Now, what is the customary thing to do on meeting a master outside the school?"

"Bunk!" said Skinner promptly.

And there was a titter from Snoop and Stott.

"That will do, Skinner!" said Mr. Bunter sharply. "The correct thing to do is to raise your cap."

"Pardon my ignorance, sir," said Skinner impudently. "I'm not very well up in etiquette. What else do we have to do? We're not supposed to lick your boots, by any chance?"

"Or bend ourselves double in making a graceful salaam?" murmured Stott.

"Enough!" said Mr. Bunter. "You four boys will report to me to-morrow morning after breakfast. I will then endeavour to

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teach you your manners—though I fear I have set myself a hard task!"

Skinner & Co. passed on. And this time they were not called back.

Had Wally Bunter glanced back over his shoulder he would have had several sorts of a fit. For the rascals of the Remove were gazing after his retreating figure, with their thumbs pressed to their noses, and their fingers outspread, to signify their contempt for Form-masters in general, and for Mr. Wally Bunter in particular.

Blissfully unconscious of the dumb-show that was being enacted behind his back, Wally Bunter walked on.

Rounding a bend in the road, he encountered the Famous Five of the Remove.

Harry Wharton & Co.'s actions were in marked contrast to those of Skinner and his cronies.

Instantly five caps were whisked off five heads, and five voices chanted in a respectful chorus:

"Good-afternoon, sir!"

Wally Bunter acknowledged the salutations, and passed on.

He was entering the little fishing-village of Pegg, when a figure of equal plumpness to



As Skinner & Co., passed the fountain in the Close, Mr. Wally Bunter, their instructor, rapped out an order: "Raise caps!"

his own loomed up before him. It was that of his cousin, Billy Bunter, of the Remove. Billy gave a sickly sort of smile as he rolled past.

Mr. Bunter stopped short.

"Bunter major!" he exclaimed.

"Ow! Yessir?"

"What is the usual thing to do on meeting a Form-master?"

"Haven't the foggiest notion, sir!" said Billy.

"Then I will tell you. You raise your cap in salutation."

"My hat!"

"No, your cap. I want to see you do it."

Billy Bunter's hand went to his cap. But he did not raise it.

The Form-master frowned.

"You evidently do not know how to perform such a simple operation, Bunter," he said. "Report to me after breakfast to-morrow morning, and I will instruct you!"

"Pip-pip-pip-please, sir—" stuttered Billy.

"Well, Bunter?"

"I kik-kik-kik—"

"No, you don't!" said Wally grimly.

"Sunday football isn't allowed."

"I kik-kik-can't raise my cap, sir!"

"Why can't you?"

"I've just remembered, sir," faltered Billy. "When I was making some toffee yesterday I put the stuff straight from the frying-pan into my cap."

"I see. And your cap has adhered to your head, in consequence?"

"Yessir."

"Very well, Bunter. I will exonerate you from reporting to me in the morning; but do not, in future, use your school cap as a utensil for holding newly-made toffee. How are you going to get your cap off eventually?"

"I shall steam it off when I get back to Greyfriars, sir."

Wally Bunter nodded, repressed a smile with great difficulty, and went on his way. He encountered no more Greyfriars fellows in the course of his walk.

Next morning, after breakfast, Skinner & Co. were given a salutary lesson.

Wally Bunter's method of dealing with them was novel in the extreme.

Under his direction they were made to march to and fro in the Close.

As they passed the school fountain, their instructor rapped out the order: "Raise caps!"

Skinner & Co. were compelled to turn their eyes towards the fountain, gravely raise their caps to it, and exclaim, in chorus:

"Good-afternoon, sir!"

It wouldn't have been so bad if nobody had been looking on. But all Greyfriars seemed to have assembled in the Close.

The onlookers nearly wept with merriment at the absurd spectacle of four juniors making their salutations to an inanimate, unresponsive fountain.

"Oh dear!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "I'm sure I shall burst a boiler in a minute. This is too funny for words!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mr. Bunter's giving Skinner & Co, a lesson in good manners," said Harry Wharton. "They won't want to go through an ordeal like this again, so I reckon they will profit by it."

Wharton was right. They did!

A Great Journalistic SCOOP!

DR. CHISHOLM, the Head-master of Rookwood, will contribute a

WONDERFUL ARTICLE

to next week's issue of
"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY!"

You must not miss it!

W. G. B.

THE ST. JIM'S SLANG!

(Being Extracts from the "Dictionary of Slang.")



By that Comic Card MONTY LOWTHER

(Shell Form.-St Jim's).

"BEAK."—One who is set in authority; a master or prefect. A person we avoid when breaking bounds, or playing midnight pranks.

"BEANO."—A beanfeast; a dormitory celebration; a banquet; a glorious spread. Sometimes the beaks happen to find out that we intend to hold a beano, and then Tom Merry issues the mournful proclamation: "There will be no beano to-night!"

"CAT'S LICK."—An apology for a wash. Baggy Trimble performs a cat's lick every morning. It consists of moistening the face very slightly with a teaspoonful of cold water, and then drying vigorously with a towel.

"CHUMP."—A dolt; a fool; an imbecile; an arrant duffer. George Alfred Grundy provides an excellent example.

"DOPE."—The name applied to the quinine and other horrible concoctions given us by Miss Marie Rivers when we go to the sanny.

"FATHEAD."—A first-rate idiot.

"GORGER."—One who feeds to excess; one who is guilty of orgies. The biggest offenders in this respect at St. Jim's, are Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble.

"JAMMY."—The nickname of Koumi Rao, the Indian junior in the New House.

"JABBERWOCK."—A jay; a foolish person; a prize duffer.

"KNUT."—One who keeps abreast of the fashions, and dresses extravagantly. One who swaggers and swanks, and gives the impression that he has just stepped out of a hand-box. One whose conversation is chiefly confined to "Haw!" and "Bai Jove!" and "Yaas, wathah!" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy is a perfect example of the complete knut.

"LICKING."—A defeat; a form of chastisement. The result of an interview with an angry "beak."

"MY HAT."—An ejaculation denoting surprise, or some similar emotion. Tom Merry has been known to use this expression two hundred and fifty-five times in one day! If considered too blunt, the ejaculation may be varied as follows: "My only summer chapeau!"

"MIDGIES."—A term meaning "marbles." This expression is confined to the babes of the First and Second.

"MONEYBAGS."—A fellow who is rolling in money. One who worships the golden calf. Aubrey Raeke is the "Young Moneybags" of St. Jim's.

"MUGWUMP."—See "Jabberwock."

"OLD BEAN."—A term of endearment or familiarity. It is varied in many ways, such as "My perfectly priceless old grape-fruit!" etc.

"PORPOISE."—A tub; a barrel; a fellow of unwieldy dimensions. Baggy Trimble is our choicest sample.

"POTTY."—Mad; "up the pole"; having bats in the belfry.

"RATTY."—The nickname of Mr. Horace Ratcliff, the sour, ill-tempered master of the New House.

"RIPPING."—Splendid; excellent; grand; delightful.

"SOUP."—That which a fellow often finds himself in, after a misdemeanour.

"STINKS."—The science of chemistry.

"STUNNING."—See "Ripping."

"SCRAP."—A fight; an affray; a display of fisticuffs.

"SHELLFISH."—A member of the Shell Form—the most honourable and esteemed Form at St. Jim's!

"SUICIDE DUFF."—The name given to a certain boiled pudding which is served every Saturday. It is regarded as suicidal to tackle more than one portion.

"TRAPS."—Luggage; parcels.

"TORTURE-CHAMBER."—The Head's study.

"TOPPING."—See "Ripping."

"WHEEZE."—A jape; a lark; a stunt; a scheme whereby we hope to put it across our rivals.

(The author wishes clearly to point out that the foregoing are merely extracts. The complete dictionary of slang may be seen in Study No. 12, Shell Passage.)

PEEPS INTO THE FUTURE!

By GEORGE KERR.



FRANK NUGENT
(The Greyfriars' Cartoonist).

"MANNERS"!

By MANNERS.

Broadly speaking, there are two classes of manners—good and bad. There are table manners—and stable manners.

It's largely a question of early environment and upbringing.

Some fellows are hopelessly spoilt as kids, and they are never corrected when they are guilty of a breach of etiquette.

Take Aubrey Raeke, for instance. I could never imagine Aubrey saying "Please" or "Thank you." It simply wouldn't occur to him to do so. But I can well imagine him saying "Sha'n't" or "Won't." That's Raeke's little way. He's about the most churlish bounder at St. Jim's.

What a terror Aubrey must have been at the age of three or thereabouts! Can't you imagine him, when dinner was served, making a grab at everything on the table, and paying no heed to the mild reproaches of his parents? Can't you picture him throwing a soup-plate at his pater when he couldn't get his own way? A charming little chap—I don't think!

I love to see good manners. Not because my name happens to be Manners, but because I can't stand a rude fellow.

The person who picks up a bone and gnaws it voraciously is little better than a dog. He ought to be made to take the bone on the mat.

Then there's the irritating individual who talks with his mouth full.

"M-m-m-m!" he says. What he really means is "Pass the salt."

But stay! A bad-mannered fellow doesn't always go out of his way to ask for the salt. He nudges you violently in the ribs, and points to the salt-cellar. Then he jerks his thumb in the direction of the mustard-pot. After which he proceeds to bolt his food in a disgusting manner, as if he were eating against time.

We are all familiar with this type of person. Happily, he is not greatly in evidence at St. Jim's. Our worst-mannered specimen, I should say, is Baggy Trimble.

The best-mannered fellow of my acquaintance is Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Gussy is a stickler for good manners. He believes implicitly in the time-honoured slogan, "Manners makyth man." One might almost say that Gussy carries good manners to excess.

I'm no prig, but I like a fellow to be decent and chivalrous, and to do the right thing in the right way. I like the fellow who never fails to lift his cap to a young lady acquaintance. I also like the chap who in a crowded railway carriage jumps up and offers his seat to a member of the other sex, or to a man whose years entitle him to the privilege of a seat.

There are many who will say that this sort of thing is all rot—that the age of chivalry is past. Well, it isn't rot. It is, as Arthur Augustus would say, "the weally wight an pwopah thing to do." As for chivalry being dead, I am inclined to think it is as much alive as ever.

It isn't often that I voice my views in the columns of "Billy Bunter's Weekly," and I am jolly glad to get this opportunity of having a little chat about manners.

FALSE PRETENCES!

A Short Story of Rookwood School.

By ARTHUR NEWCOME

(Fourth Form, Rookwood).

GOWER of the Fourth tapped on the door of the Head's study. The deep voice of Dr. Chisholm bade him enter.

"If you please, sir," said Gower, advancing into the dreaded sanctum, "I want to go to London to-morrow."

"For what reason, Gower?" asked the Head sharply.

"My eldest sister's getting married, sir."

"Oh!"

"I shouldn't like to stay away from my sister's wedding sir," said Gower. "It would look very bad."

"I agree," said the Head. "You have my permission to take the day off, Gower."

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

Gower chuckled to himself when he was out in the passage.

"It worked like a charm!" he muttered.

Next morning he was early astir. Before the rising-bell rang out, he was up and dressing, and humming the gay old song, "Soon we'll be in London Town!"

"Lucky dog!" said Jimmy Silver enviously. "Wish I had a sister who was getting married."

Mornington chuckled softly.

"This story of a sister gettin' married," he said, "is on a par with the office-boy's story of an expirin' grandmother, when he wants to go to see a footer match!"

"What do you mean?" flashed Gower.

"What I say," replied Mornington coolly. "I believe your story of a sister gettin' married is a pure invention."

"Look here——" began Gower.

But Mornington turned his back on him, and declined to argue.

Gower travelled up to London that morning. His departure was followed by envious eyes.

"I'd give a month's pocket-money to be in Gower's shoes!" said Lovell.

"Same here!" said Raby. "A day in London would be top-hole."

Cuthbert Gower set out to enjoy himself. And he spent a perfect day. But the ending thereof was far from perfect.

On Gower's return to Rookwood, at nine o'clock in the evening, he was summoned to the Head's study.

Dr. Chisholm was seated at his desk, looking very grim.

"I trust you have spent a pleasant day, Gower?" he said dryly.

"Yes, rather, sir! The wedding went off first-rate!"

"Do not lie to me, boy!" thundered the Head. "You know perfectly well that you have not attended a wedding!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"You told me this morning that your eldest sister was getting married, Gower."

"That's so, sir," said Gower looking very uneasy.

"It was not so!" snapped the Head. "What is the Christian name of your eldest sister?"

"Enid, sir."

"Ah!"

The Head picked up a copy of the "Times" which lay on his desk. A paragraph had been marked with blue pencil.

"I will trouble you to read that, Gower," said Dr. Chisholm.

Gower stared at the printed words in great confusion.

The paragraph ran as follows:

"The engagement is announced between Major Hartley Knott, D.S.O., the distinguished cavalryman, and Miss Enid Gower, who is well known to London Society. It is understood that the engagement will be a lengthy one, in view of Major Knott's departure on foreign service. The marriage will take place about the end of next year."

Gower uttered a deep groan. He had been utterly unprepared for this.

"You have lied to me, Gower!" said the Head sternly. "The story of your sister's marriage was a pure fiction. Have you anything to say?"

Gower stood tongue-tied.

"I think I can understand why you wished to go to London," said the Head, after a pause. "Had you been honest with me, I do not believe I should have refused your request. A big sporting event took place in London to-day. I refer to the University Boatrace."

Gower gave a start.

"You have been to the Boatrace," said the Head. "Do not attempt to deny it."

Gower didn't—for the simple reason that he couldn't!

"I have been grossly deceived!" Dr. Chisholm went on. "You have behaved abominably, Gower!"

The junior was silent.

"Late though the hour is, I shall administer a severe flogging; here and now," said the Head.

And he kept his word.

Gower was commanded to touch his toes, and the Head's cane came down with tremendous force. Gower afterwards remarked to his friend Peele that carpet-beating wasn't in it!

The yells of the victim floated through the study. And Dr. Chisholm didn't desist until he was short of breath. Then he tossed the cane into a corner, and pointed to the door.

"Go!" he rapped out.

Gower crawled away to the Fourth Form dormitory.

The fellows were in the act of undressing, and the manner of Gower's entry surprised them. He came in groaning, and looking as if he were trying to tie himself into knots.

"Hallo, Gower!" said Mornington, with a chuckle. "How did the wedding go off? Did the bridegroom row on the Surrey side of the river, or on the Middlesex side?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You know all about it, then?" muttered Gower.

"We can guess," said Jimmy Silver. "You've been to the Boatrace! Dashed if I thought a slacker like you would have been keen to see such an event! I suppose the Head twigg'd?"

Groan!

"Did you get a lamming?"

Groan!

And the groans went on unceasingly until after midnight!

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"BREATHING EXERCISES." By Wun Lung.

OWEN OF THE NEW HOUSE!

(Continued from page 12.)

Figgy's study, Les," he said. "I suppose you don't care to come?"

Kerr had brought coon-can back to the New House after the holidays. It is not a gambling game; there is plenty of interest in it without stakes. Cards were not taboo at St. Jim's. Of course, Mr. Ratcliff was a most unlikely person to believe that anyone with cards in his hand was not gambling; but most of the Fourth-Formers in the New House were ready to argue a point with their Housemaster if they could see a fair chance of coming out on top.

The three scholarship boys were among those who had been playing the game pretty often, and Owen had been the keenest of the three. The lowest score is the best score in this particular game, and Owen had been so very keen that every time the trio had played he had set down the totals of himself and the other two, and had kept their averages. He now stood 3.5 better per hand than Redfern, and 5.7 better than Lawrence. Kerr, whose astuteness was out of the common, might have a lower average than he, but certainly none of the rest who had shared in the games.

"Not to-night, Dick," he said dully.

Redfern went. Owen thrust his books away, and took out of his desk the sheet of paper on which he had kept the card scores. He wanted something to think about besides his trouble.

It was about twenty minutes later when Redfern and Lawrence returned, and at a glance Owen saw that something had gone wrong.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Lucky you didn't go with us!" replied Redfern. "That old sweep Ratty came in, and he's kicking up the very dickens of a fuss! Won't believe we weren't playing for cash—as if Edgar or I had any cash to waste that way! Says he's going to report us all to the Head, the old hunks!"

"Kerr takes it coolly enough," said Lawrence. "He contends that there has never been any ban upon cards here—that fellows have played whist, and, of course, kids' games like snap, without objection. But Ratty says that he won't have cards in his House, and he wouldn't let Kerr explain the game. He said he had never been interested in any card-game, and never intended to be."

"He is an old wower," Redfern said. "That's one of Kangaroo's words, but there isn't any English that fits Ratty so well as that bit of Australian. 'Wower' means long-faced and sour and narrow, you know."

"Ratty's all that," returned Owen, speaking more like his usual self than he had been doing. "But this doesn't matter much, I should say. If you really have to go before the Head, I'll back Kerr to make out a good case. And the Head knows pretty well when anyone's humbugging—he'll believe Kerr."

To Owen, with the weight of a big trouble upon him, this seemed a mere trifle. Redfern and Lawrence took it rather more seriously, and were distracted from their chum's trouble by it.

They had a vague kind of hope that he would be all right in the morning.

But in the morning he had gone!

Some time between "lights out" and rising-bell, Leslie Owen had got silently out of bed, dressed, made up a small

parcel of clothes, stolen downstairs, and found a way out of the New House and over the wall into the big world beyond.

But not thus simply did the shock of his going strike Redfern and Lawrence.

When they saw that he had got up before them they were only mildly surprised. They expected to see him in the quad or about the school buildings somewhere, or to find him mooning in the study, possibly awakened early by his worries.

He was nowhere to be seen, however. And then came the shock.

It wanted about five minutes to breakfast-time when through the New House rang the wail of Chowle of the Fourth, mourning like Rachel, bereaved of her children and refusing to be comforted.

Not that it was children Chowle had lost, of course, or that anyone waded in at once with consolation. St. Jim's generally had very little use for Cyril Chowle.

Money had gone! Chowle had had a remittance the day before, and had left three pound Treasury notes in his desk. That desk had been rifled by someone—its confusion made that plain. Chowle

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NEXT WEEK!

Subject: The Latest Type
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DON'T MISS IT!

averred that it had been forced open, but Dick Clarke reminded him that he had lost the key a week earlier, and had been using the desk since, so that it would hardly have been necessary for anyone to force it.

The breakfast-bell went, and senior and juniors trooped in. Then it was seen that Owen's place was empty.

"I say, you know," sneered Clampe of the Shell, "this looks fishy, you know—what? Here's Chowle's cash gone, and now it seems Owen's gone. I'm not sayin' they went together, but—"

"An' you'd better not, unless you want thick ears on both sides of your ugly face!" hissed Redfern.

"Silence, there!" snarled Mr. Ratcliff, from the head of the table. "Redfern, what has become of Owen? Is he unwell?"

"I don't know, sir. I don't think so. He got up early, and I haven't seen him this morning."

"Ha!" snorted the Housemaster. "Looks queer!" murmured Clampe in the ear of Chowle.

"I'll bet anything he's done a bunk with my money!" replied Chowle.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Black Case.

"YOU'RE wanted at once, Redfern and Lawrence," announced Jameson of the Third to the chums, who had gone from Hall to the quad, puzzled and troubled.

"Who wants us?" inquired Lawrence. "Ratty. He's sent for Figgins and Kerr and Fatty Wynn, too. And Chowle. Chowle says he ain't in the gambling, anyway, but he supposes Ratty reckons some of the gamblers have had his coin. Chowle's a cad!"

They did not stop to discuss Chowle with the fag, but hurried off to join those who were fellow-victims with them of Ratty's obstinate refusal to believe a perfectly true and reasonable explanation.

"Don't worry!" said Kerr. "Let him take us to the Head. I'll show the Head that coon-can is much more of a mathematical exercise than a gamble!"

"Found Owen?" asked Figgins. "No," replied Redfern. "Can't think what's become of him."

"He's just as well out of this," remarked Fatty Wynn.

But it appeared that, so far from being well out of the card affair, Owen was in it right up to his neck.

Mr. Ratcliff, whose ways were not the ways of the Head or Mr. Raitton of the School House, had left the breakfast-table early in order to play detective in the Redfern-Lawrence-Owen study. Chowle had reported his loss, and the Housemaster had at once associated the absence of Owen with it. And now he had "evidence"—that was what he called it.

"Before I begin to make inquiries I give you boys a word of advice that you will do well to ponder," said Mr. Ratcliff acidly. "This matter has become one of great seriousness. Nothing but the truth—and the whole truth—will serve you. I do not say that that will save you. But the truth—ha!—you must tell."

"We mean to, sir," said Figgins.

"It was the truth we told you last night, sir," said Redfern.

"Bah!" ejaculated Mr. Ratcliff.

Kerr looked hard at him, and something in that quiet, self-assured look made the Housemaster feel uncomfortable. He had not always scored in his encounters with Kerr.

"You told me last night that the game you were playing was—ha!—in no way a gambling game, and that you had no money staked upon it. Then how is it that the unfortunate boy, Owen, who has obviously been losing heavily, should have stolen money and run away in his despair?"

"He's done nothing of the sort, sir!" cried Redfern indignantly.

"I'm sure he hasn't!" chimed in Lawrence.

Mr. Ratcliff produced a paper. He had an air of triumph.

"You will find it difficult to account satisfactorily for this," he said. "Very difficult indeed! Ha! Do you, Redfern, or you, Lawrence, recognise this paper?"

"If you would turn it so that we can see it, we'd have a chance to tell you, sir," replied Redfern, not impudently, but with a touch of impatience that annoyed the master.

"Do not forget—ha!—the respect due to me, Redfern!" snarled Mr. Ratcliff.

"Here is the paper, which makes it clear that Owen has been a heavy loser in the games of—er—hum—coon-can played with you and Lawrence. I take it that you will not deny—ha!—that 'R,' 'L,' and 'O' stand for your names?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 168.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"THE MYSTERY OF OWEN!"

A NEW
::

LONG COMPLETE TALE OF ST. JIM'S:
By MARTIN CLIFFORD. ::

"There's no need to deny it," said Redfern. "But I don't remember that we three ever played without anyone else joining in, and Owen did not lose—he was always above Lawrence and me. He played a very careful game. Anyway, we never had a penny on it!"

"I know that paper," Lawrence said. "Owen showed me one day. He was not end keen, and he liked to see how he came out of the game compared with us two. He didn't seem to mind so much about Figgins and Kerr and Wynn."

"Rubbish! There is evidence here that Owen lost heavily!" ground out the tyrant of the New House. "His total score is very much lower than that of either of you."

"I tried to explain the game to you last night, sir," put in Kerr. "It's the lowest scorer who wins, because the point of it all is to get rid of your cards, or, if you can't do that, to be left with as low a score as possible when the hand is played out."

"I do not wish to have the game explained to me, Kerr! I regard card games with—ha!—abhorrence. What you tell me sounds merely absurd."

"That's only because you won't listen to reason, sir," Kerr said boldly. "But, anyway, I can prove that what Redfern and Lawrence say is true. I've a notebook with the totals of every game we have played registered in it, and you will see by that that it's the lowest scorer who's winner."

"Fetch it at once, Kerr! No; you go, Chowle! Be good enough to tell Chowle where it may be found, Kerr."

"It's in my pocket, Chowle," said Kerr gravely.

A splutter came from Figgins, Fatty Wynn gurgled, and Redfern and Lawrence grinned.

"Produce it!" grated Mr. Ratcliff, glaring.

The notebook was produced. It showed totals of games played on various dates, with, against each date, the name of the winner at that particular sitting. Kerr's own name was prominent, and so was Owen's. Redfern had scored more often than Figgins, and Fatty had only once come out on top. Even then it had been a fluke, as Fatty well knew. Fatty was better at cooking than at cards.

Mr. Ratcliff ought to have been convinced. But he had adopted a theory, and he meant to make the evidence fit it. Another theory that was rather a pet of his helped him. The tyrant of the New House clung to the belief that every boy would lie when cornered.

"This may be skillfully designed to mislead," he said suspiciously.

"I hadn't any reason to mislead anyone. And if you will compare the figures Owen gives with those in my notebook, you will find that they correspond, I expect, only he merely put down the scores of Redfern and Lawrence and himself, while I had each player's. That was because I always kept the score when we played," Kerr answered.

"I regret—ha!—that I find it impossible to believe you, Kerr. Now let me have the truth. Which of you boys have been putting pressure upon Owen to pay the debts he has obviously incurred at these—ha!—gambling seances?"

"He incurred no debts," replied Kerr.

"And we shouldn't have dunned him if he had," added Redfern.

"Not likely!" chimed in Figgins.

"You appear to have been exceptionally lucky, Wynn. Have you—"

"Me, sir? Why, I only won once! I did have a lot of luck that time. Twice I got hands that I could pretty nearly lay down as they were, and then drew just the right card to help me. And the rest were caught with ever so much in their hands. Do you see, sir?"

Nothing could have been more ingenious, more transparently honest than Fatty's answer. It needed a Ratcliff or a Selby to disbelieve him. But Ratty was fixed in his disbelief.

At that moment the bell for morning classes rang.

"You will go at once to your Form-room," said the master. "I shall proceed to interview Dr. Holmes, to report to him this gambling matter, the absence of Owen, and the loss of a sum of three pounds by Chowle. The three are all, I am convinced—ha!—neither more nor less than different aspects of—ha!—the same affair, and I only hope that every boy here—ha!—except Chowle, who is merely a victim, of course—may not find himself expelled!"

"He means, he hopes we shall, the old sweep!" said Figgins bitterly, as they made their way across the quad.

By that time Leslie Owen, who had left St. Jim's between three and four in the morning, was a good fifteen miles on the northward road.

He was walking. He had had to walk at the start, of course, for then no trains were available. But trains were running now, and Owen was in a hurry to get home; yet he walked, and as he walked he counted the money in his pockets, and found it sadly little for the journey.

It was all very curious, because Chowle really had been robbed of three pound-notes. And who should have taken them if Owen had not?

And whilst Leslie Owen plodded on with a stiff upper lip, at St. Jim's a queer little bit of drama was taking place in the Head's study.

Five New House juniors were demonstrating to Dr. Holmes the game of coon-can, while Mr. Ratcliff looked on sourly.

Kerr had dealt ten cards to each, using two packs shuffled together. Redfern, sitting next to Kerr on his left, had taken the top card from the remainder, and had said, "I can declare forty and a bit over." Then he had put down four queens of different suits and a sequence of five, six, seven, and eight of diamonds. Figgins explained to the Head that no cards could be tabled till someone had been able to declare forty or more. After that— But the Head would see.

The Head did see. He was an old whist-player, and he had sometimes put in an hour or two at patience. Things that seemed absurd to Mr. Ratcliff were plain to the Head. By the time the hand had been played out he understood the game.

"An excellent game, affording opportunities of observation and quickness of thought," said the Head. "But if your Housemaster objects to cards, you must keep it for the holidays. Mr. Ratcliff, I can easily see how anyone who does not play cards might be deceived into that belief; but, as an old player, I assure you that a gambling game this is not. Money might pass on it, but we must really accept the assurance of these boys that they have not played for money."

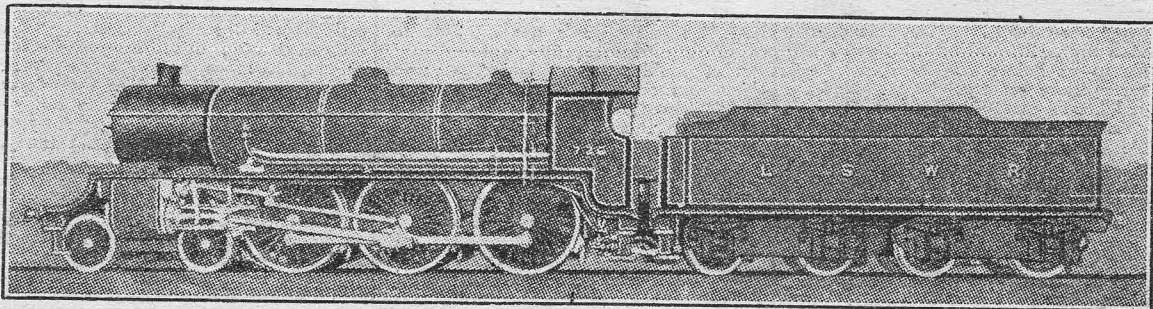
The master of the New House muttered something, scowling. The five went. Then Dr. Holmes turned to his colleague.

"This matter of Owen's disappearance and the loss of Chowle's money is serious. But it is impossible for me to believe that the harmless game just expounded to us can have had anything to do with it. A boy who wanted to gamble would regard coon-can as a waste of time. Never mind! I must wire to Owen's people."

THE END.

(What has become of Leslie Owen? That question will be answered in next week's splendid, long, complete story of the chums of St. Jim's, entitled "The Mystery of Owen!" By Martin Clifford.)

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A SPLENDID STORY TELLING HOW ALGY SILVER TURNS OVER A NEW LEAF AND SURPRISES THE NATIVES!



ALGY SILVER'S LATEST!

A Grand Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver and Co., The Chums of Rookwood School
By OWEN CONQUEST

(Author of the Famous Stories of Rookwood, appearing in The "Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Turning Over a New Leaf.

"JIMMY, old sport!"
Algy Silver of the Third Form strolled into the end study at Rookwood, with his hands in his pockets.

His manner was cool and nonchalant, and did not indicate in the least that he was on the worst of terms with his Cousin Jimmy.

He nodded coolly to the juniors in the study—Lovell and Raby and Newcome—who looked at him rather grimly.

Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth, looked as grim as his comrades.

"Well?" he snapped.
"Well," repeated Algy, "ain't you glad to see me?"

Jimmy Silver looked at him.
He thawed a little.

Jimmy was very desirous of getting on better terms with his young cousin, whom he was supposed to be keeping an eye on at Rookwood.

Algy had angrily refused to be looked after.

Indeed, the more Jimmy looked after him the more determined Algy seemed to be to kick over the traces.

Quite recently Jimmy had come upon the sportive fag smoking, and conning over a racing paper, and had felt it his cousinly duty to give Algy a bumping, to help him back into the right path.

To judge by Algy's friendly manner, that cousinly bumping had not been wasted.

"You don't look over pleased," said Algy, eyeing Jimmy. "I've taken the trouble to come and see you. I can tell you the Third don't approve of a chap being chummy with Fourth-Formers. It's considered rather no-class in our Form."

Jimmy grinned.
"There, that's better!" commented the fag. "Put a smile on and keep it there! Any grub going?"

The Fistical Four were at tea—a very frugal tea.

But they were hospitable.
"Oh, sit down!" said Lovell.

"Thanks—I will!"

The cheerful young gentleman pulled a box to the table and sat down—chairs being limited in number.

Jimmy Silver was smiling now.

"Help yourself to the kippers, kid!" he said.

"Thanks!" said Algy. "Quite a pleasure to be enjoyin' your company, Jimmy! You were jawin' me the other day about my naughty ways. I've been thinkin' it over."
"I'm glad of that."

"Banker in the study and smokes in the woodshed pall in the long run," the fag rattled on. "In fact, I'm gettin' a bit blasé, and am thinkin' of turnin' over a new leaf. My old pal De Vere, at High Coombe, would be shocked if he heard me say so. But there you are. I'm repentin'. I suppose

it's the atmosphere of Rookwood—much more elevatin' than that of my old school. Sendin' me here was really bookin' me to become a reformed character."

"You young ass!"

"You don't seem overjoyed at my reform, Jimmy."

"Oh, bosh!"

"I'm takin' up footer," said Algy in an injured tone. "You must have seen me at practice. Third Form footer isn't quite up to my mark. We played a much better game at High Coombe. Now, you're junior skipper, Jimmy, and I want you to give me a chance."

"Eh?"

"Put me in the junior team."

"Third Form kids are not up to the form of the junior eleven."

"I am," answered Algy coolly. "Let me practise a bit with the Fourth, and you'll see. If I'm not good enough, you can turn me down. I'm not askin' to play in a school match, when you get your men from both sides of Rookwood. But a House match, Classical and Modern—no reason why I shouldn't play for the Classics, is there?"

"Well—"

"You haven't got such a crowd of first-rate men, you know, specially now Erroll's gone home with Mornington. Now, look here, Jimmy, stretch a point, and give me a chance. You'll be reformin' me, you know—snatchin' me like a brand from the burnin'. Isn't it worth while?"

Jimmy reflected.

It was true that Algy was a good footballer for his age, young rascal as he was.

Playing him in a school match was out of the question; but, after all, he might be given a chance against the Moderns, Jimmy reflected.

Jimmy had two places to fill in the team, and if Algy showed up well in practice—

"I can see you're goin' to say 'Yes,'" smiled Algy. "You're a good sort, Jimmy, though a bit of an old frump! You can expect me down to practice to-morrow and you can rely on seein' me stagger humanity."

"Cheeky little beast!" commented Lovell.

"Well, look here, Algy," said Jimmy Silver at last, "I can't promise anything, but I'll do my best for you, if you mean business. I suppose this means that you're done with Peele and Gower, and that set?"

"What do you think?" answered Algy. "Peele & Co. haven't been half so goey lately. I'm goin' to pay Peele the quid I owe him, and say good-bye to the dear boy."

"That's right."

"I suppose you could lend me the quid?"

"Oh," said Jimmy.

"Stony, you know," said Algy. "Peele would be willin' to play double or quits, but I'd rather get clear of the whole shoot. Of course, I'll let you have the quid next week, after my allowance comes."

Jimmy Silver regarded him very thoughtfully.

He could read the expression in the faces of his chums.

He knew what they thought, but he did not agree with them.

"Of course, if you haven't a quid—" sighed Algy.

"I had one from the pater this morning," said Jimmy.

"And I'll bet you Algy knew it!" growled Lovell.

"Oh, cheese it, old chap!"

Algy Silver wagged his forefinger at Lovell reprovingly.

"That's suspicious," he said. "Don't be suspicious, Lovell. It's rather no class."

"You cheeky little worm!" roared Lovell.

"Shush! That isn't the way to talk to a visitor."

Lovell seemed on the point of an explosion. Jimmy Silver struck in rather hastily.

"Here's the quid, Algy. Settle up with Peele, and have done with him. I'll expect you on Little Side to-morrow."

"Done!" said Algy.

He glanced over the table, which was bare, and rose.

He slipped the currency note carelessly into his pocket.

"Thanks, old sport! Ta-ta!"

And the fag strolled out of the study, whistling.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Surprise for the Nuts.

SS!"

Three voices addressed that complimentary remark, in unison, to Jimmy Silver, as the Third-Former took his departure.

Jimmy Silver frowned uneasily.

"Oh, rats! What's the matter with you?" he said.

"I'm best if I ever saw a chap whose leg was pulled so easily!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, in disgust. "The little beast came here for your quid, and pitched you a yarn to squeeze it out of you. Anybody but a born idiot would see that!"

"Oh, rot!"

"As for chucking up Peele, and banker in the study, that's all moonshine!" said Newcome. "He don't intend anything of the sort!"

"I believe he does!"

"That's because you're a born duffer, Jimmy!" remarked Raby kindly. "I don't blame you, old chap; you can't help it. It's a bad handicap!"

"Oh, rats!"

"And the cheeky young rascal, to think of pushing himself into the junior eleven!" exclaimed Lovell indignantly.

"I don't see it!" said Jimmy, with a touch of obstinacy. "I sha'n't play him unless he's up to the mark, you know that. As a matter of fact, I've had an eye on him, and his game is miles above the average Third Form game."

"Not up to our mark, I suppose?"

"Well, no. He couldn't play for the School,

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"REPRIEVED!"

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but he might come in very useful in a match against the Modern side."

"Diddle!"

Jimmy grunted.

"Not that he means it, either," pursued Lovell. "He won't turn up at practice to-morrow. He was pulling your leg!"

"I believe he will."

"Well, you're a fathead!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Shut up, both of you!"

Jimmy Silver walked out of the study. His temper was rising.

Perhaps it was rather hope, than faith, that made Jimmy determined to believe in Algy's new leaf.

Probably that made his chums' disbelief all the more irritating.

Lovell breathed hard.

"Of all the silly asses——" he growled.

"Never mind. Give him his head!" said Newcome. "Jimmy has to be given his head. Anybody can spoof him, and it can't be helped!"

"I'll bet you that young waster is laughing in his sleeve now, and that quid will go in banker in Peele's study!" snorted Lovell.

"I shouldn't wonder. But, after all, it's Jimmy's quid!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Jimmy will see that he was spoofing when he doesn't turn up at practice to-morrow," added Newcome soothingly.

"Well, yes; that's so."

But there was a surprise for the Co. on the morrow when they went down to Little Side after morning lessons.

Jimmy Silver had called together his men for practice, and with them came Algy Silver of the Third.

The fog was on the ground before the Fistical Four, in fact.

Algy looked very bright, too.

"Hallo, he's there!" exclaimed Lovell, very much taken aback.

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"What are you doing here, young Silver?" demanded Lovell gruffly, as they came on the field.

Algy looked at him coolly.

"Practice!" he answered.

"Oh! That's it, is it?"

"That's it. I don't need it so much as you do, but here I am."

Lovell murmured something under his breath.

It was bright, spring-like weather, and the juniors joined up in the footer practice with great zest. Algy with the others. And even Lovell had to admit that the fog was in great form, considering his age.

He was as good a man as many fellows in the Fourth, though naturally not up to the level of the junior team.

But there was no doubt that, with his quickness and deftness, he might be made into a very useful forward.

Peele and Gower of the Fourth came down to look at the practice.

They were not footballers, and had very little interest in the game.

They grinned as they saw Algy among the footballers.

Smythe and Howard and Tracy strolled along and joined the Nuts of the Fourth, and Adolphus turned his eyes upon Algy in considerable surprise.

He jammed an eyeglass into his eye, as if to assist him in realising the surprising sight.

"By gad!" said Adolphus.

Algy Silver, though only a fag, had the honour of being admitted into Smythe's select circle.

Being a sportive youth, with plenty of money, he was looked upon with a kindly eye by the great Adolphus.

"That young merchant playin' footer, by gad!" said Smythe.

"Rather a new departure, playin' with his esteemed cousin," said Howard, laughing. "I understood they were at daggers drawn. Peele, old man, you'll lose your disciple, at this rate!"

Cyril Peele shrugged his shoulders.

"Not much loss!" he answered. "I'm not yearnin' for fag society."

"Good for you, Algy!" called out Jimmy Silver approvingly at that moment.

"On the best of terms, by gad!" said Adolphus, with a stare. "I suppose that means that Algy won't turn up for banker this evenin'."

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The Rookwood Nuts waited till the footballers came off, and then Smythe called to the fag.

"Hallo, Algy!"

"Hallo!" answered Algy carelessly.

"I'm expectin' you in my study this evenin'. Some of the fellows are comin'."

"Sorry, can't come."

And with that Algy walked on with Jimmy Silver, leaving the great Adolphus staring.

Jimmy Silver smiled, and even Lovell thawed a little.

It really did look as if Algy was in earnest, after all.

The fag went his own way, and Jimmy Silver went indoors with his chums. He was feeling very pleased.

"Are you going to play that kid, Jimmy?" asked Lovell, much less aggressively than might have been expected.

"You saw how he shaped on the field," replied Jimmy Silver. "Why shouldn't I play him against the Moderns next Wednesday, especially as the Modern team will be weak? Tommy Doyle's laid up with a cold, and Lacy is crooked, and Towle is off colour. Tommy Dodd's team won't be up to sample, and it's a good chance for me to give the Third a look-in for once."

"Well, perhaps it won't do any harm," conceded Lovell.

And the next day, when Jimmy Silver wrote out the list for the forthcoming match, the name of Algy Silver of the Third was written down.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Morny's Little Joke.

"MORNBY, by Jove!"

"And Erroll!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were at footer practice after morning lessons on Tuesday when those exclamations from the fellows round Little Side drew all their attention away from football.

Jimmy Silver was just making a shot when he heard, and he looked round at once.

It was some time since Valentine Mornington of the Fourth had gone up to London, his chum going with him.

All Rookwood knew that the blind junior was to undergo an operation at the hands of a famous specialist, and there were few fellows at Rookwood who would not have given a very great deal to hear that Morny had recovered his sight.

Erroll's devotion to his chum had been unflinching. He had never felt his blind comrade as a burden.

Never for an hour had his care ceased, and the chums had hardly ever been seen without one another while the blind junior was at Rookwood.

It was known that there was hope for Morny.

That was all that was known so far.

There was considerable excitement among the juniors as Erroll was seen coming towards the football-ground, with Morny leaning on his arm.

Jimmy Silver's heart sank a little.

Mornington was walking with Erroll's guidance, as of old, and that did not look as if the hope of his recovery had been well-founded.

"Poor old Morny!" murmured Lovell.

The footballers moved off the field to meet Erroll and Mornington, and all the juniors gathered round them.

Morny's face was very grave and calm.

Kit Erroll was smiling a little. He seemed to be in unusually good spirits.

"Hallo, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Back again?"

"Yaas; back again," said Mornington.

"That you, Jimmy Silver?"

"Yes, here I am!" said Jimmy, his face a little shadowed.

The question was information enough as to the condition of Mornington.

"What did the specialist say after all?" asked Raby.

"Oh, he talked no end of jaw-crackin' words!" said Mornington.

"But did you have the operation?"

"Oh, yaas!"

"We hoped to see you come back all right, Morny," said Jimmy Silver.

"Thanks, old scout! I was hopin' to be able to play in the last footer match of the season," said Mornington. "Think you can lick the Moderns without me?"

"We'll try," said Jimmy, with a smile.

"It will take you all your time!" remarked Tommy Dodd, the great chief of the Modern juniors.

"Bow-wow!" said Mornington. "I'd undertake to beat any Modern, even as I am!"

"Oh, don't be funny, old chap!"

"Who's bettin' on it?" asked Mornington. "I'll beat the best man the Moderns can put into goal, an' chance it!"

"Ten to one!" chimed in Townsend of the Fourth, at once.

"Quids?" asked Morny.

"Yes, if you like."

"Done, then! Put your man in goal, Tommy Dodd!"

"What utter rot!" exclaimed Tommy. Jimmy Silver was frowning.

But for the fact that Mornington was blind, Jimmy Silver would have come down on him sharp enough for making bets on the football-ground.

But Morny's affliction disarmed him.

Morny was supposed to have given up gambling and his other shady ways; but he was speaking quite like the old Morny now.

"Where's the ball?" continued Mornington. Lovell had kicked the ball along as he came, and it was lying almost at Mornington's feet.

Newcome punted it closer to him, and Morny felt for it with his foot.

That helpless, groping movement touched the hearts of the juniors, though it made still more absurd Morny's offer to kick a goal against any defender Tommy Dodd chose to put between the posts.

"Put your man in, you Modern ass!" exclaimed Mornington.

"I tell you it's rot!"

"Let him have his way," whispered Jimmy Silver.

"Oh, all right!" said Tommy resignedly.

"Get into goal, Cook!"

Tommy Cook went grinning into goal.

Morny in his other days had been a hard man to stop, but Cook did not anticipate any difficulty in stopping him now.

Morny pushed the ball into the field with his toe.

"I say, is this a blessed game of blind man's buff?" demanded Algy Silver, with a sniff.

"Shut up, Algy!"

"Well, I call it dashed rot! Here, don't run into me!" howled Algy, as Morny, rushing blindly after the ball, cannoned him.

Algy went over on his back with a crash.

"You silly ass!" he yelled.

"Keep out of Morny's way, you young fool!" growled Lovell.

Mornington felt for the ball again with his feet, and dribbled it away towards the goal where Cook was standing grinning.

Possibly, from old recollections of the football-ground, he took the right direction.

He did not lose the ball, as the watching juniors expected. When it went beyond his reach he recovered it again.

"By gad, he's keepin' the ball goin'!" said Townsend, in wonder.

All eyes were on the blind junior.

It was really wonderful how Mornington contrived to keep the ball at his feet, and bear down steadily on goal.

The juniors watched him in amazement.

Jimmy Silver was rather uneasy, fearing that the blind junior would run into a goal-post and hurt himself.

But Mornington showed no sign of doing so.

"Well, that beats the band!" exclaimed Conroy, in wonder. "Blessed if Morny couldn't almost play footer, at that rate."

"He won't get the goal!" grinned Townsend.

"Well, no; that's not possible."

"There he goes!" shouted Lovell. "Oh, my hat! Goal!"

"Goal!"

"Great Scott!"

It was a yell of amazement on the football-field.

Morny had dribbled the ball right down to goal, and kicked.

Tommy Cook, in goal, certainly wasn't much on his guard—he did not think there was anything to fear from a blind footballer.

But if he had been at his best he would have had difficulty in stopping that shot.

Mornington had seemed to be aiming right at him, but at the last moment he changed his foot, and kicked for the far corner of the net.

The ball lodged before Tommy Cook was aware it was coming there.

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Cook.

"Bravo, Morny!"

"Well kicked, sir!"

The juniors gathered round Mornington, who was grinning.

Only Townsend of the Fourth looked very green. He owed Mornington ten "quids" for that shot.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

His Old Self!

WELL done, Morny!" "Good man!" "Towny here?" smiled Mornington. "You owe me a tenner, Towny."

"Oh, gad!" said Towny. "Morny!" murmured Erroll. "My dear Townsend," said Mornington, speaking in the celebrated solemn manner of Mr. Bootles, the Form-master, "let this be a warnin' to you. Do not indulge, my dear Townsend, in betting or gambling of any description; and, above all, avoid puttin' your money on dead certs."

"Oh, rats!" "I trust, my dear Townsend, that this warnin' will not be lost on you." "Oh, don't be an ass!" said Townsend. "I'm goin' to pay up all right. You'll have to wait till next week for half of it, that's all."

"Ha, ha! Fathead, I was only pullin' your leg!" chuckled Mornington. "The bet's off!"

"It's not off!" snapped Towny. "I've lost, an' I'm goin' to pay!"

Mornington burst into a roar of laughter.

The juniors were staring at him blankly.

A suspicion of the truth dawned upon Jimmy Silver's mind, and his face lighted up.

"Morny!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"Guessin' it!" smiled Morny. "By gad, you look astonished, the lot of you!"

"You—you can see how we look!" stammered Lovell. "How the merry thunder can you—"

"Because I can see just as well as you can!" grinned Mornington. "I was only pulling your leg. I wanted to astonish the natives, that's all."

"You can see!" shouted Lovell.

"You bet!"

"You knew it, Erroll, you spoofer!" exclaimed Raby.

Kit Erroll laughed.

"Yes, of course! Morny wanted to spring a surprise on you, so I played up!" he said. "The operation was a success—a ripping success! Morny's all right!"

"Hurrah!"

"Oh, how jolly good!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver heartily.

"Why, you spoofer, you could see Cook all the time while you were kicking that goal!"

"Ha, ha! Did you expect a blind chap to kick a goal?"

Townsend's face was a study.

"All serene, Towny!" chuckled Mornington. "I was only pullin' your nutty leg! It's no bet!"

"Congratulations, old chap!" said Jimmy Silver. "I've never had such good news in my life."

"Jolly good of you to say so," said Mornington.

His dark eyes were shining, and it was evident that he was greatly elated.

The little "spoofer" he had played on the juniors was quite in Morny's way, and they readily forgave him for it.

There had been a time when Jimmy Silver and Morny were enemies, but Jimmy's pleasure was great at seeing the dandy of Rookwood well again.

Algy Silver broke in sullenly.

"You spoofer! rotter, you bified me over on purpose, then?"

"Exactly!" smiled Mornington. "I never saw a fag who wanted biffin' more than you do, young Silver!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" growled

Lovell. "Shut up, Silver Two! Do you mind if I break your cousin's neck, Jimmy?"

Jimmy laughed.

"Come on, Morny!" he said. "Never mind footer now. Let's take him in, you fellows—shoulder-high!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Mornington. With great heartiness, the Classical juniors collared Mornington, and he was borne away shoulder-high to the School House.

Mornington went in to see the Head, walking as if on air.

Erbert of the Second rushed to him in the passage.

He caught Morny's sleeve excitedly.

"Morny, is it true?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

Mornington smiled down on the fag.

"Looks like it," he answered. "Are you pleased, Erbert?"

Mornington secundus' face was beaming.

"Oh, Morny!" he gasped. "Oh, Master Morny! I'm so jolly glad!"

"Thanks, old kid!" Mornington went on to the Head's study.

Any room for a chap about my size on Wednesday, Jimmy Silver?"

Jimmy looked grave.

"Well, I've made up the team," he said. "I didn't know you and Erroll would be back, and I've given my young cousin a chance. I—I'll speak to Algy—"

"Oh, don't!" said Mornington at once. "All serene! I shall want some practice first, anyway. Give me a chance later."

"I'll put you into the Bagshot match on Saturday," said Jimmy at once.

"Right you are!"

"Algy must be coming on, to be played for the junior eleven," remarked Erroll.

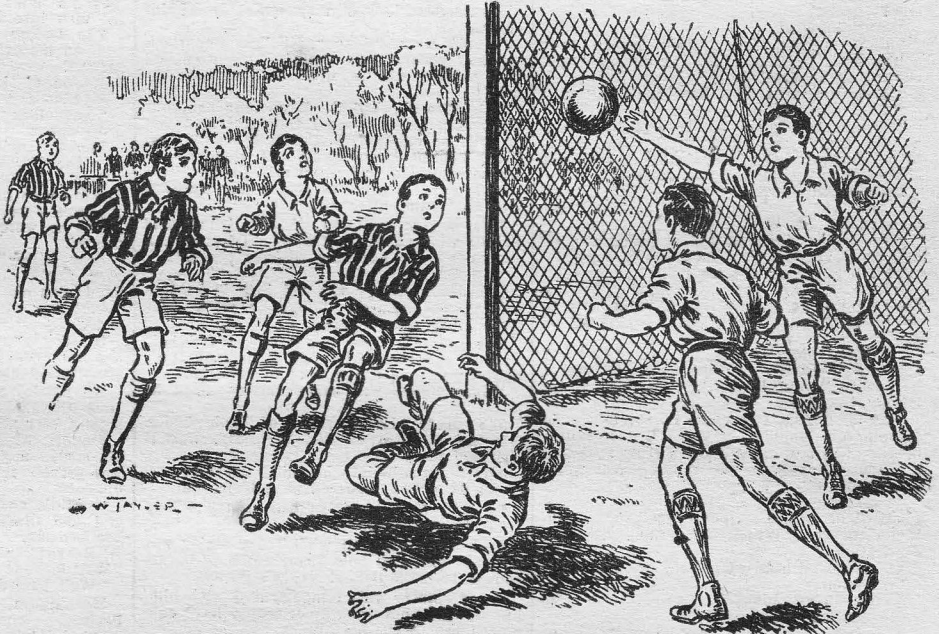
"I'm giving him a chance," explained Jimmy. "He's sticking to footer, and he's dropped some of his old games, so—"

"I dare say he's all the better for not knowin' Lattrey any more," remarked Mornington. "By the way, how's Lattrey?"

"He's still in sanny," said Jimmy Silver.

"Mendin', I hope?"

"Oh, yes; but he won't be about again for some time."



THE WINNING GOAL!—Like a flash Algy Silver leaped forward and headed the ball into the net before Tommy Cook could realise the danger. There was a howl round the field. "Goal! Fag's goal!" "Bravo, Algy, you've saved the match!" (See Chapter 6.)

When he came out, with a happy and elated face, Bulkeley of the Sixth met him and shook hands with him, with a word of congratulation.

It was no wonder that Morny was in great spirits that day.

He had been plunged into cruel darkness by the act of Lattrey of the Fourth. He had known almost the greatest misfortune that could have fallen upon him.

He had borne it with steady courage.

But now the blessed light of day was restored to him, and he rejoiced.

And almost as pleasing was the unaffected delight with which his recovery was greeted by the whole school.

When the Fourth Form came in to lessons that afternoon, Mornington came in with them, to receive more congratulations from Classicals and Moderns alike.

It was strange enough to see Mornington sauntering along unguided, with a smile on his handsome face, and his dark eyes bright and cheery.

There was a celebration in the end study at tea-time, and Mornington and Erroll were distinguished guests.

"What about the footer?" Morny asked, over tea. "I'm dyin' for a game of footer."

"An' when he gets well he's goin', I suppose?"

"I suppose so," said Jimmy.

"I've been thinkin' about that," said Mornington. "It was Lattrey doused my gilm, and he ought to have been sacked for it, an' he was at the finish. But—but it was Lattrey helped me out of the railway smash, an'—and I'm not bearin' any malice, after that. If it depended on me, I'd say give the fellow another chance, and let him stay at Rookwood."

"I don't suppose the Head would let him," said Jimmy, shaking his head. "Still, I must say I don't feel so down on Lattrey now, for one. He did a jolly plucky thing that nobody would have expected of him."

"But he did it," said Mornington. "I'd like him to get some benefit from it. He got all the benefit of the bad things he did." Jimmy laughed.

"It depends on the Head," he remarked. "I don't suppose the Head will ask us for advice."

"Ha, ha! No!"

And then the talk ran on the football prospects for the wind-up of the season—a rather more congenial subject than Lattrey of the Fourth.

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A GRAND TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL. By OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"REPRIEVED!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Dark Suspicions.

CYRIL PEELE was waiting in Morny's study when he came there with Erroll after tea.

Morny glanced at him, and nodded carelessly.

But he looked round the study with great satisfaction. It was a pleasure to him to be in his old quarters again.

"Jolly glad to see you back, Morny!" said Peele.

"Thanks!"

"I looked in to speak to you."

"Get on, Peele," said Mornington, with a grin. "Have the dear boys guessed that I've come back from my uncle's with a handsome tip in my pocket? An' is there a game of banker goin' in Smythe's study this evenin'?"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Peele irritably. "I suppose you know there's a Classical-Modern match to-morrow?"

"I do—I do!" I hear that your merry young disciple, Algy of the Third, is playin' for the Classicals."

"He's not my disciple!" snapped Peele. "I never have anythin' to do with him now!"

Morny laughed.

"Jimmy Silver thinks he's turned over a new leaf," he remarked. "I did not think there was anythin' in it."

"Well, I'm done with him, anyway."

"What a stroke of luck for Algy!"

"Oh, cheese it! I'm not here to jaw about a silly fag!" growled Peele. "I'm layin' money against the Classicals, and if you choose to put a quid or two on—"

Mornington roared.

"Well, what are you cacklin' at now?" demanded Peele savagely.

"Ha, ha, ha! Has your dear young pal got into the team to let the Moderns through?"

"I tell you, he's not my pal!"

"Then why are you layin' money against the Classicals? Tommy Dodd's team isn't up to strength, and Classicals are bound to win."

"I don't think so," said Peele. "I've got the money—don't you fear about that; I happen to be well-heeled just now. Smythe's holdin' the stakes. What do you say?"

"My dear man, I've given up bettin'," said Mornington, laughing. "But if I were still a bettin' chap I wouldn't back a team that had a friend of yours in the ranks. Not quite good enough."

"I've booked bets already."

"Must be a born lunatic, then," said Mornington dryly. "Why, your game's as plain as daylight."

"I've booked bets with Tracy of the Shell."

"Gammon!"

"You can ask him."

Mornington stared at Peele. Tracy of the Shell was a member of

Adolphus Smythe's select circle, but he had much more brains than Adolphus.

He was, in fact, a much more shady fellow than Adolphus, and much keener.

Of all the Rookwood juniors he was the most like Lattrey, late of the Fourth.

If Tracy had booked such bets, it was a "facer" for Morny, for Tracy of the Shell certainly knew what he was about, if anybody did.

It was impossible that Morny's suspicion should not have occurred also to Tracy's keen mind.

"How much have you booked?" asked Morny at last.

"Five quids, even betting."

"And Tracy's laid his money on Classicals?"

"Yes. Smythe's holding the stakes."

"Well, I always thought Tracy was more rogue than fool!" commented Mornington. "He seems to be more fool than rogue, after all. You can tell him that, with my kind regards. Ta-ta!"

"Then you're not bettin'?"

"Thanks, no! I shock me by the suggestion, dear boy!"

"Oh, rats!" said Peele crossly, and he quitted the study, and slammed the door after him.

Mornington looked very curiously at his chum.

"That's a queer bizney, Kit," he remarked. "Very queer," said Erroll. "I'm glad you had nothing to do with his blackguardly rot."

"Oh, I've chucked it all up long ago, but if I was a bettin' chap I shouldn't be taken in quite so easily as that. It beats me how Tracy's been hoodwinked. I wonder—"

Morny chuckled. "I wonder if Jimmy Silver knows why his precious cousin has squeezed into the team, after all?"

"He ought to know, if it's true," said Erroll, with an angry frown. "Of course, a chap can't say anything without proof."

"No fear."

But Jimmy Silver was not long in hearing talk on the subject, though no word came from Mornington's study.

The fact that Peele was trying to book bets against the Classical team in the morrow's match was soon the talk of the Fourth.

Jimmy Silver was angry enough when he heard it.

The shady blackguardism of Peele & Co. was no business of his, certainly, but it irritated him.

And it brought into his mind the same suspicion that had occurred to Mornington.

In fact, that suspicion was pretty widely held in the Fourth.

Peele's five-quad bet with Tracy major was his only one, and how Tracy came to be ass enough to make it beat Tracy's friends.

Tracy's nutty pals remonstrated with him, but in vain; not that Peele would have consented to call the bet off.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Tricked!

THE next day Jimmy Silver was in a thoughtful and uncomfortable mood.

Some of the fellows said nothing, from a regard for his feelings, for the young rascal of the Third was his cousin.

Some were painfully candid. But Jimmy Silver went on his own way, and Algy's name remained in the footer list.

Early in the afternoon the footballers gathered on Little Side, and Algy Silver was there in the Classical colours.

All the Classical players gave him grim looks, excepting his Cousin Jimmy. Algy did not seem to mind.

He sauntered on the field with the air of a fellow who owned the ground.

He nearly exasperated Lovell into assault and battery by the cool nod he gave him.

There had been so much talk about the match that there was an unusually large attendance round the ropes.

Mornington and Erroll were early on the ground to watch the game.

Mornington smiled sarcastically as he saw Algy among the Classical footballers.

Jimmy Silver did not look so cheerful as was his habit on such occasions as he led his men into the field.

The feeling in his team worried him, as well as his own secret and unconfessed misgivings.

Jobson of the Fifth was referee. He blew the whistle, and the game started. "Now look out for Algy!" murmured Mornington.

Tommy Dodd & Co. started with a rush into the Classical ground.

Two of Tommy's best men—Doyle and Towle—were off the list, but otherwise the Moderns were in great form.

But so were the Classicals, as they soon proved.

Algy Silver was in the front line, and very nearly all eyes round the field were fixed upon him.

Certainly at the start he showed up well enough.

He displayed great cleverness in eluding charges from heavier Moderns, and he was remarkably quick and nimble upon his feet.

His passing was really first-class, and when Dick Oswald scored the first goal it was from a very neat pass given him by Algy.

Jimmy, at centre-half, had his eyes on his cousin a good deal of the time, and he was greatly relieved by the way Algy played up.

Oswald's goal was the first in the match, and the Classicals round the field cheered vociferously.

"Bravo!" shouted Tracy of the Shell. "Well kicked! And well passed, by gad!"

"Well passed, young 'un!"

Mornington, utterly puzzled, glanced at Peele.

The latter's face was a study. It was easy to see that Cyril Peele had not been expecting good play on the part of his "disciple."

Tommy Dodd & Co. fought hard to equalise, but at the end of the first half the score remained unchanged—one up for the Classicals.

Jimmy Silver clapped his cousin on the shoulder when the whistle went for half-time. "Good for you, young 'un!" he said, pleased and relieved.

Jimmy's faint suspicion was quite dispersed now.

He was ashamed, in fact, that he had ever allowed it to creep into his mind.

Algy grinned at him. "Well, didn't I tell you I was goin' to play the game of my life?" he asked. "Have I helped the Moderns through, as Lovell expected?"

"Ahem!" murmured Lovell.

"Have I got into the way of your merry forwards, an' bumped into the halves, an' made things easy for the Moderns?" grinned Algy. "Bless your little hearts, all of you, I knew what you were expectin'! I've heard quite a lot concerning myself these last few days. The chaps haven't cared if I've heard their remarks or not! Jimmy, old scout, do you think I ought to apologise for disappointin' your team?"

"You young ass!" said Jimmy, laughing. "I don't understand it!" growled Lovell.

"Lots of things you don't understand," remarked Algy. "It's your brain, you know. Sorry you can't get a new one."

Lovell controlled his feelings with difficulty.

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THE POPULAR.—No. 168.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"REPRIEVED!"

A GRAND TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

But, really, he had to admit that Algy was playing "up to sample," so to speak.

The whistle went again.
Algy was the centre of attention—a great honour for a fag player in a match above his weight.

Many fellows expected him to begin fumbling tactics, suspecting that he had merely been keeping up appearances so far. But nothing of the kind happened.

Algy was playing up remarkably.
Tommy Dodd & Co. got through at last and scored, but it was impossible to attribute any blame to Algy for that.

The score remained level till close on the finish, the Classics pressing hard, and the Moderns struggling to defend their goal.

The ball went in from Pons, and Cook, in the Modern goal, fisted it out.
Like a flash Algy Silver leaped forward, and headed the ball into the net before Tommy Cook could realise the danger.

There was a howl round the field.
"Goal! Goal!"
"Fag's goal! My hat! Goal! Goal!"
"Bravo, Algy!"

Jimmy Silver almost hugged his cousin. Algy had taken the winning goal—after so much black suspicion!

For it was the winning goal—there were only three minutes to go, and they were drawn blank.

Lovell & Co. wore very curious expressions as they came off the field—victorious.

Lovell, after an inward effort, clapped the fag on the shoulder.

"Sorry, Algy!" he said.
"Don't mench," yawned Algy. "You can't help being an ass, old chap."

"By gad, I wish I'd taken Peele's bets now," said Adolphus Smythe, in great wonder. "You've won, Tracy."

"Looks like it," said Tracy, with a grin.
"Here's Peele's fiver—it's yours."
Tracy of the Shell pocketed that fiver with great satisfaction.

He sauntered away, giving Peele a nod and a smile as he passed him.
Peele gave him a look in return that was almost homicidal.

"You rotter!" he panted.
Tracy looked surprised.
"What's the row?" he asked. "Haven't I won square?"

Cyril Peele trembled with rage.
"Do you think I can't see it?" he hissed.
"That young villain was foolin' me—he'd fixed it up with you beforehand to bag my fiver, and you're goin' halves with him."

Tracy of the Shell raised his eyebrows.
"Mean to say that you fixed it with Algy to lose the match?" he smiled.
"You—you know I did!" Peele panted. "I wondered you never guessed, when the other fellows did—an—you knew all along—you were in the game with the young bound to take me in!"

"My dear chap, I shouldn't speak too loudly," said Tracy calmly. "If Jimmy Silver knew you'd made such an arrangement with his cousin, I fancy you'd get the hidin' of your life."

Peele choked with rage as the Shell fellow sauntered away.
"Hard cheese!" It was Morny's voice, and Peele started and stared at him blackly. "I fancy I can see the little game now—delightful youth, Algy! You're lucky that I didn't take your bet, old scout."

Peele drove his hands deep into his pockets, and tramped away without replying.
A little later he saw Algy come out of Tracy's study, smiling.

Algy eyed him warily as he came savagely up.
"Got your half?" hissed Peele.
"What are you burblin' about?" smiled Algy. "Feel rather a lame duck? Serve you right for askin' a stamless youth like me to play false in a footer match. And next time we play nap, old chap, don't have a card up your sleeve, as you did last time—I always get my own back in the long run."

And Algy sauntered away, leaving Peele speechless.

It was fortunate for Algy that Jimmy Silver did not know the facts of the matter; very fortunate indeed that Peele dared not tell him.

But Jimmy was destined to be enlightened, in more ways than one, on the subject of his cousin Algy of the Third.

THE END.
(Another grand complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next Tuesday, entitled "Reprieved!" by Owen Conquest. Make sure of a copy of the POPULAR by ordering in advance.)

NEXT TUESDAY!

"REPRIEVED!"

A GRAND TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE EXPULSION OF HARRY WHARTON!

(Continued from page 10.)

enmity, scorn, hatred! His face went pale.

"Here he is!"
"Have him out!"

Wharton pulled himself together. A bitter smile came upon his lips as he looked over the surging crowd. With a firm step he descended into the Close.

Crash, crash, crash!
It was the first blare of the savage music! The drumming-out had begun!

"You cads—you rotters!" howled Bob Cherry, springing to his chum's side. "Let him alone! He's going—isn't that enough?"

"Stand back, Cherry!"
"I won't!"

"Then we'll jolly soon make you!" growled Coker of the Fifth.
"Hands off!"
"Rats!"

Five or six pairs of hands were laid upon Bob Cherry. He struggled desperately, but he was hurled away.

Hurree Singh dashed to his aid, and was pitched aside. Wharton clenched his fists; the crowd closed round him, and he was hurried on. Back towards the School House Bob Cherry and Inky were hustled, still struggling in vain. Harry Wharton, surrounded by a crowd, hissing and growling, was hurried towards the gates.

"Hands off the cad!" shouted Bolsover major. "He's not fit to touch! And we don't want the prefects interfering!"

And the juniors gave Wharton room. Round him the crowd surged, and the drumming-out had begun in earnest now.

"Cad!"
"Rotter!"
"Get out!"

Wharton strode on steadily, his face pale as death, his brows contracted, his lips set in a tight line. He looked neither to the right nor to the left.

But that march to the school gates was agony to him.

The gates were reached at last; they were open, and Gosling stood there—even the crusty old face of the school porter was scornful, contemptuous, like all the rest.

Crash, crash, crash!
Wharton strode through the gateway. The gates clanged shut behind him.

Back in the Close, Bob Cherry struggled free from his assailants; but he was not fighting now. The nabob leaned exhausted against the wall. Bob Cherry panted for breath, and there was a sob in his throat.

"You fools, fools, fools!" he panted. "I tell you he's innocent!"
"Shut up!"
"Ring off!"
"I tell you——"

But the roar drowned Bob Cherry's husky voice.

From the gates came a blare of noise. It died away. The drumming-out was over!

Harry Wharton was gone!

Out in the road, pale, worn, with shame in his face, despair in his heart, the deserted junior tramped on wearily to the railway-station, guiltless but condemned—and Drummed Out of Greyfriars!

THE END.
(You must not miss next week's splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars, entitled "Fighting For His Chums!" By Frank Richards.)

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

THE ATLANTIC LOCOMOTIVES

OF OUR

MONOPOLISTIC RAILWAY!

By a RAILWAY EXPERT.

BRITONS do not like monopolies, but its monopolist railway—the North Eastern—is not unpopular.

From York, where its headquarters are, the North Eastern Railway has the whole of England, northward to the Scottish border, to itself. This monopoly extends not only to the district from the centre of the country to the N.E. Coast, but embraces parts west of the centre line. South of York, also, the N.E.R. extends its tentacles, and although the trains of other railways are admitted into the important York station of the N.E.R., the lines of no other railway approach within several miles of the headquarters of the N.E.R.

In actual mileage, the N.E.R., with its 1,700 miles of line, is exceeded only by the G.W. and L. & N.W. Railways. To people living in populous places, such as Newcastle-on-Tyne, Hull, Leeds, York, Scarborough, and the many important coast towns in the Tees, Wear, and Tyne districts, the N.E.R. is most important; but the importance of this railway to most other people lies in the circumstance that the N.E.R. forms the central link in the East Coast route to Scotland. Those who journey from King's Cross to Edinburgh, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, etc., although they probably imagine they are travelling to Scotland by the G.N.R., in fact reach the end of that system "in a ploughed field four miles north of Doncaster," and although the G.N. engine hauls them to York, they have been on N.E. metals since passing Shaftholme (end-on) Junction, 28 miles south. At York a N.E.R. iron horse replaces the G.N.R. engine. The "exchange is no robbery" for the N.E.R.'s passenger locomotives can hold their own with most others. The express trains are hauled by big engines of the "Atlantic" type, one of which, No. 2183, is illustrated in facsimile colours in the plate presented with this issue.

A feature that adds additional interest to the N.E.R., and to its engines in particular, is that these locomotives run right through to Edinburgh. By right of territory they should be changed at the border town of Berwick, but after much litigation the N.E.R. established its right to haul the East Coast Anglo-Scottish trains for 57½ miles over the N.E.R. to the Waverley Station, Edinburgh.

In pre-war days the 205 miles from York were covered in 4 hours, including a stop at Newcastle, 80 miles from York. The speed, including the stop, was therefore over 50 miles an hour—distinctly good.

That the engines of design similar to No. 2183 are extremely powerful will be allowed when the liberal dimensions of the working parts are considered.

Water is picked up on the 124 miles long non-stop runs between Newcastle and Edinburgh.

For once we are able to record an advance on pre-war achievements. In 1914 there were only 8 of these runs daily, but in 1921 the number had been increased to 10 a day.

Apart from the important part played in the East Coast Anglo-Scottish services by N.E.R. locomotives, these engines in pre-war days held first place for the quickest start to stop run in the world. True, it was but a short one (44½ miles between Darlington and York), but it was covered in 43 minutes, or at the rate of 61.7 miles an hour.

The best in the way of speed the N.E.R. can now show is 54.8 miles an hour, over the same course from York to Darlington.

Its backers amongst railwayists are looking for the return of the N.E.R. to top place in the speed list. They may be disappointed, but all Yorkshire is enthusiastic at holiday times over the N.E.R. fine services of fast expresses from Leeds and similar populous places to Scarborough, Bridlington, etc.

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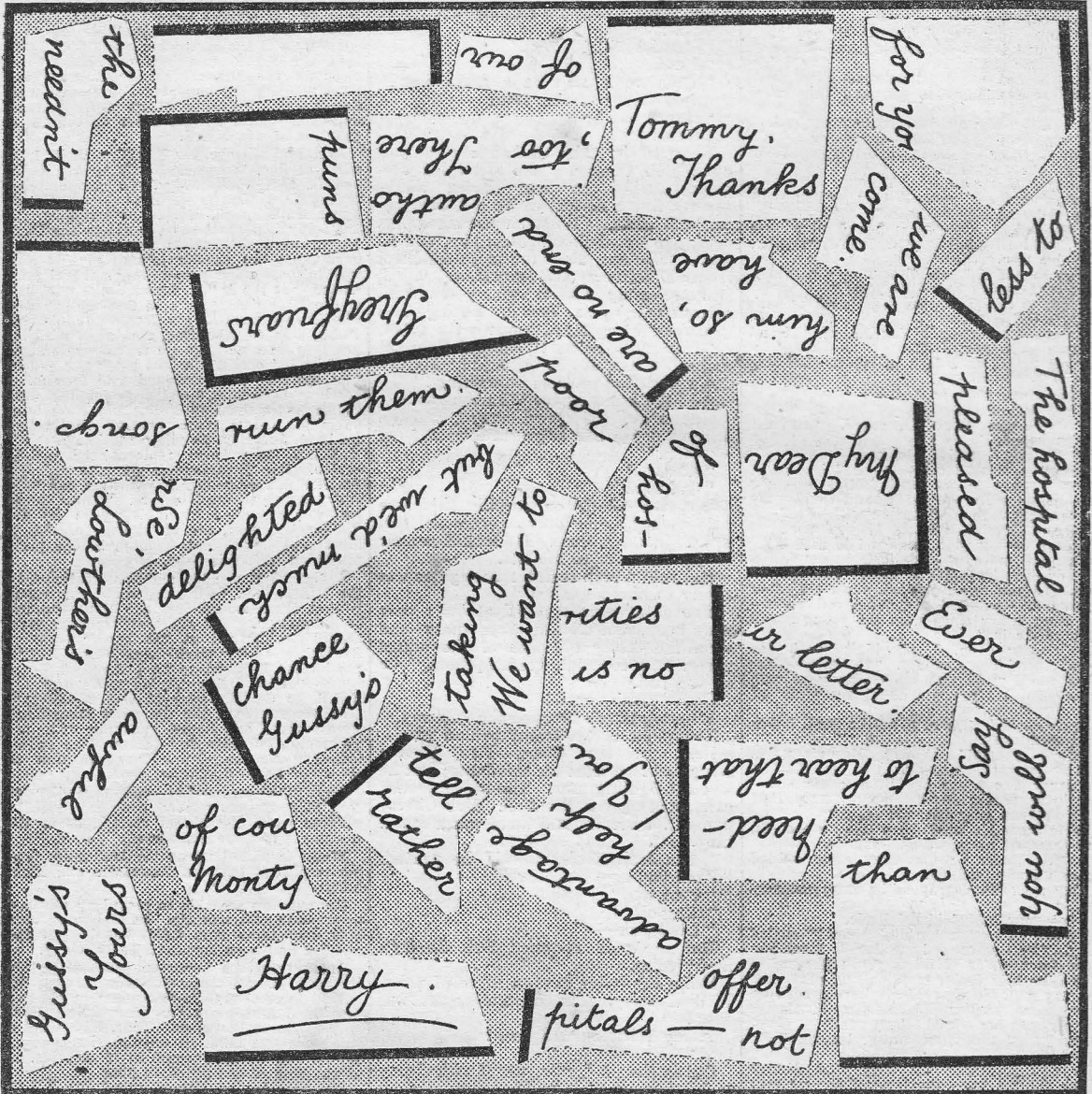
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Puzzle Letter No. 3.

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A THRILLING STORY OF A FIGHT FOR AN ISLAND IN THE ANTARCTIC REGIONS!



A Magnificent New Serial of
Adventure, introducing
Ferrers Lord & Co., and Gan
Waga, the Eskimo.

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 they are held up by a Mexican millionaire, who tells them he has taken possession of the island, and orders them off. Ferrers Lord & Co. leave the island and return to the camp, which is being built on the ice-floe. Castoro sends Dan Govan with a letter to Ferrers Lord, saying, "If you surrender I will take you and your men on my yacht north till I find another vessel to run you home. If you refuse I will smash you all!" Ferrers Lord tells Dan Govan to return to the island and thank Castoro for his generous offer and say that he cannot accept it. Castoro, when he hears this, is furious. "I will kill them all, I have them in the palm of my hand!"

(Now read on.)

Castoro Shows His Teeth!

DAN GOVAN shrugged his shoulders and knitted his brows. If Castoro had made up his mind, he knew that it was waste of breath to plead or reason.

"Guess I see your point, boss," he said, nodding; "but it ain't an inviting prospect. It's plain enough that if any of these chaps did get away, they'd have a yarn to spin that would startle the world, specially if you'd flatly refused to let 'em on the island, and driven 'em back to the floe with rifles and machine-guns to freeze and starve and die. That offer to take 'em north and find 'em a homeward-bound ship would put a better complexion on it. Now it's got to be a game of silence. You're reckoning that if bullets or cold exterminate the whole crush, you've got this frost-bitten island for keeps."

"Till it doesn't pay to work it," said Castoro. "What are you scowling at, you rabbit-hearted fool?"

"Didn't know I was frowning, boss," said Govan. "I don't allow that I'm squeamish, and I'll stand my corner, but it's a dirty game. If your yacht had been afloat, and there'd been a real scrap for the possession of this island between us and them, I'd have fired my rifle-barrel red-hot to help hold up our end. But somehow, boss, it's no joy-ride to be wrecked on a durn old ice-floe a million miles from nowhere. It ain't a dog's chance!"

The fat man chuckled, but it was not a pleasant chuckle, as he settled his head more comfortably in the nest of cushions.

"Queer it should take you that way," he said. "I don't quite get you yet, Govan. You're not asking to be shot yourself, are you, for I can easily oblige?"

"Sure thing, boss, and I know it; and when I'm prospecting for a grave, I'll look around for a site in some pleasanter place than this perishing island! I'm putting up a protest, that's all. If these chaps try to rush the island, I'm a fighter, and the best man at the game you've got. I'll play the defending game right through to the last card in the pack. Only I'm leading no raiding-parties across that floe to murder them. They'll die quick enough without that."

Esteban Castoro swung his legs over, and

put his slippers on the carpet, and his elbows on his knees.

"It seems to me, Govan," he said, with a dangerous gleam in his black eyes, "that this climate has frozen all the red blood out of your veins. You've made your protest, and a lot of nonsense it is. You're useful, but the minute you stop being useful, you can quit. Ferrers Lord and his bunch have got to be wiped clean out. Whether it's by frost and cold or starvation or by bullets is all one to me. If you're so desperately fond of them, clear out and join them! If you're staying with me, remember I call the tune, and you do the dancing. I want men, not rabbits. Don't hand me out any of your sob-stuff about shipwrecked sailors. The long and the short of it is, Govan, you'll go where I tell you to go, if it's to Lucifer, and you'll shoot when I tell you to shoot, even if it's your own father. In a word, if you show your teeth at me, I'll take you twenty miles out to sea, and maroon you on a bit of floating ice, so you'll have time to think what a fool you've been, and do some repenting before you freeze stiff! Now cut it!"

"Right, boss!" said Dan Govan briefly. "I've done. If you want a quarrel, I don't. That floating ice stunt don't appeal to me as enticing."

He emptied his glass, saluted, and left the cabin, well aware that if it suited his purpose, Mexican Steve would not hesitate about carrying out his threat. He went into the Carcase Hotel. It was a roughly-built shanty, furnished with benches and tables, and warmed by a stove in the centre of the room. No money passed. When Govan ordered drinks for himself and Nathan Spike, the assayer, who was waiting for him there, the bar-tender jotted the sum down against his name. The bar-tender was a giant. He had the shoulders of a bullock, and huge, knotted hands, for the spirits he dispensed were of a fiery quality that quickly roused the passions of his customers, and fights were very frequent. To keep order it needed a powerful brute and fearless bully.

"How did you get on with the shipwrecked crush yonder, Dan?" asked the assayer. "Did they accept Steve's offer to deport 'em?"

"I didn't notice any particular display of jubilation when I told 'em the glad news,"

answered Govan. "I was to inform the boss that they owned the island, and that he was to deport himself. Rather a saucy sort of message for fellows in that mess to send along. Steve says he'll wipe the whole crowd of them out. I kicked some, for it's murder on too big a scale to suit me, though I'm not trying to pose as a saint, nohow!"

"And knowing Steve, I guess he kicked back," said Spike, spitting on the stove. "Wonder he didn't order you to be lynched." "He were kinder than that. He didn't threaten me with a sudden death, only to put me adrift on a chunk of floating ice to give me time to think over things and repent before I froze," said Govan, with a grin. "He's a cruel swine, just as cruel as he's greedy. If the crushings have been panning out extra good as you say, that will make him a sight worse. To get gold he'd kill a hundred men as soon as he'd kill a hundred fishes."

"They shouldn't have been such pig-headed fools as to get shipwrecked alongside his claim," said Spike. "I'm going out of this a mighty rich man, and the fellow who tries to clap his thieving-hooks on any of my share of the dust, I'll shoot. I'm with Steve there all the time. When we've done with the island, and the lode peters out, Ferrers Lord or anybody who wants it can have it. Wipe 'em out and be hanged to 'em! What do they come interfering here for?"

The assayer called for more drink, and finally fell asleep, and lay prone on the bench before the stove, snoring. The sound of a shot failed to rouse him. It was the report of the gun fired at the launch from the battery on the brow of the cliff. Govan hurried out and climbed the hill.

"Having a scout round looking for a weak spot to strike at," he thought, watching the launch. "I guess if they glimpse one they've got better eyesight than me, and I'm no slouch when I'm using my peepers. Might as well try to open a rock-oyster with a quill toothpick as find a hole in this island. Say"—he turned to one of the gunners—"I s'pose you didn't get within acres of her when you slipped that shell, but who told you to shoot, anyhow?"

"Don Esteban," answered the Mexican

THE POPULAR.—No. 168.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"THE CEDAR CREEK COCKNEY!"

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

gunner. "We see any boat spying round we gotta shoot. Don Esteban tella that."

"Shut your eyes next time, and p'raps you'll get closer," said Govan. "You made a row, and that amuses you, I reckon. Give me that glass a second."

He took the telescope and looked seawards, but not at the launch. He picked out a piece of drift ice on which a solitary penguin stood like some lonely sentinel. It was on such a strip of ice as this that Mexican Steve had threatened to maroon him, and send him afloat to freeze as hard as a man of stone in the bitter Antarctic frost if he failed to carry out any order Castaro chose to issue. And Don Esteban was quite capable of being as good as his word.

"That shooting puts the lid on it!" he muttered. "It's opened the war, and it will be a fight to the last scalp. As Steve has started the gunning, he'll make it fairly safe that nobody gets back to tell that he began the shemozzle by pumping shells at their boat. He'll lay out every mother's son of them!"

Don Govan shrugged his shoulders as if to shake off all responsibility for anything that happened. He was still determined that he would not lead any attack on Ferrers Lord and his shipwrecked crew, but would repay his obligation to Esteban Castaro by doing to defend the island against every attempt made to capture it. After all though it was murder on a grand scale to keep these unlucky men on the ice-floe, he could not see what else Don Esteban could do, since they had refused his offer to find them a ship. Ferrers Lord claimed the island. Possibly, even if he could prove his title, he had no idea that it was rich in gold-bearing quartz. Don Govan had seen a rush for gold. He knew how the very thought of the precious metal turned men into wild beasts unless they were controlled as Castaro controlled his men with a hand of iron.

"No, he couldn't have let 'em come here!" Govan reflected. "It's black work, but they'd have broke loose and been at our throats the very minute they scented the

nutgets and dust. This perishing cold island would have been the hottest place on the map while the scrapping lasted, till one side got the knock-out, and there wouldn't be many of them left that weren't too full of bullets to brag about it. Outside, those chaps might get in if they'd got a battery of guns and high explosive to fatten us with, or a fleet of aeroplanes to bomb us; but without them useful articles, I guess there are five aces in this deck of playing-cards, and Mexican Steve holds those five aces in his fist. And I reckon the fifth ace and the big winner ain't a club, a diamond, a heart, or a spade—it's King Frost!"

As Govan went back to the drinking-shop he could plainly hear the sounds the men in the launch had heard, the noise of the stamps crushing the ore to be treated in the cyanide tanks. The assayer still lay snoring on the wooden bench in front of the almost red-hot stove.

"What's gone wrong to-day, Drury?" Govan asked the yawning bar-tender. "Why ain't you crowded out? Is the shift working double time, then?"

"They're gettin' paid for double time, Dan, but they're on a fresh job," answered the bar-tender. "The boss has got a notion into his head to take some healthy exercise. He ain't being toted round by his dago bearers in that old box with cushions, but gone waddling along on his own feet to drill 'em. I reckon that job belonged to you by rights, but it looks as if you'd got the push. Old Wallace, the store-keeper, has unpacked a hundred and fifty rifles."

Dan Govan grinned. "Some regiment," he said. "The Carcase Island die-hards. Half a dozen like you and me, boy, could wallop the lot with our hoss-whips, and they'd bolt so fast you couldn't see which way they went for dust. But the boss has a good stiffening without his mob of greasy Mexicans. He could round up at least fifty toughs, and that's more'n he'll want. This place is as strong as a burglar-proof safe, and— What's that, in the name of Mike Drury? What's dropping?"

Something was pattering down noisily on the corrugated iron roof. Both the astonished men rushed to the door. It was actually raining. The mouth of the bay was hidden in mist that was curling inwards towards the anchored yacht.

"Well, if this don't beat it!" said Govan. "I'd as soon expect to see rain in the middle of the Sahara desert, and I got it from the geography books of my youth that it rains there about once in five centuries, and then not enough to wet a mosquito."

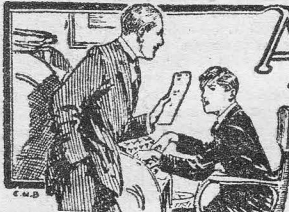
He ran in and shook the snoring assayer to come to see the amazing phenomenon of warm raindrops falling on Carcase Island. Nathan Spike rolled unsteadily to his feet and cursed violently at being disturbed. When thoroughly roused, he felt more sober and went to look for himself.

"Queer!" he said. "Raining and thawing, too, like mad. See that?" He gave the board wall a kick, and icicles that had been hanging from the gutter for months broke off and came tinkling down. "If we get the right wind now, boys, this may save a lot of trouble. That big floe we bombed wasn't hitched on to us till that last storm, and she may unhitch now and drift off south. If it's worse south than it is here, then fellers on the floe are in for a dandy time!"

Spike slouched into the bar again for more drink, for the assayer was one of the thirstiest souls on Carcase Island. Through the gathering mist came a chorus of voices and a tramp of feet. Don Esteban arrived first, walking easily and lightly for a man of his huge weight, and behind him came his mixed regiment with rifles on their shoulders, their clothes and faces powdered with quartz-dust. Castaro bellowed to them to halt, and they gathered in four ragged lines.

"Take this ugly crowd in hand and drill them till it's dark," he said to Dan Govan. "Drinking again, are you, Spike? I pay you to work, not to soak whisky, so shift out of this to bed and sleep it off. Handle this rubbish, Govan, and handle it rough. Take it from me, Ferrers Lord isn't a fool like you, so, in a word, get going!"

(Continued on page 27.)



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

RESULT OF "FANCY WAISTCOAT" COMPETITION.

I was extremely pleased with the enormous number of entries for this competition, and I have nothing but admiration for the artistic abilities of my readers. I had a most difficult job to separate the "very goods" from the "goods," and then the "very goods" from the "excellents." Even then I found myself with two designs that pleased me so much; I could not decide which was the better entitled to the first prize. I consulted members of my staff, and they agreed with me in the end that I could not be more fair than to divide the first prize of five pounds.

So the following readers will each receive the sum of two pounds ten shillings during the course of this week: Harold J. Stone, 34, Plumstead High Street, Plumstead, S.E.18.

Charles A. Kent, jr., 33, Elms Road, Alde, shot.

Being next in order of merit, the following readers will each receive the sum of ten shillings:

Miss Bertha Holmes, 16, Clare Road, Maidenhead, Berks; W. Kenny, 7, King's Road Erdington, Birmingham; B. O'Brien, 39, Market Bridge, Nantyglo, Mon; E. F. G. Sullivan, 14, Elmfield Road, Balham, S.W.17; J. F. Arnold, 177, South Ealing Road, South THE POPULAR.--No. 168.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"FIGHTING FOR HIS CHUMS!"

Ealing, Middlesex; A. Williams, 25, Royal Avenue, Seedfield, Bury; R. L. Brooks, 115, Gelli Road, Ystrad Rhondda, Glam; E. T. Pizey, 33, Hafton Road, Catterf, S.E.6; Miss S. Mulvenna, Harphall, Carnlough, co. Antrim, Ireland; and W. Johnson, 3, Avenue Road, Forest Gate, E.7.

To the foregoing readers I offer my hearty congratulations, for their work was really meritorious. To those who have failed to win a prize this time I offer consolation by way of informing them that owing to the wonderful popularity of this competition I shall shortly give them another chance to win a nice money prize.

MORE SPLENDID NEWS

My chat this week will undoubtedly be one to be remembered by my readers, for I am now able to give you another splendid piece of news.

It had been my intention, as you all know, to give away a series of ten coloured engine plates with the POPULAR. This series is now rapidly drawing to a close, but I have had so many hundreds of letters from my chums that they want several more plates depicting their favourite railway-engine, I am going to extend my gift.

There will be five extra plates given away with the POPULAR, so the series

will be complete in fifteen plates. The ten readers who sent an appealing letter for a plate of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway Company's locomotive have been successful, and one of the new plates shall represent the engine of their dreams. The same remark applies to the three boys and two girls who signed a letter appealing for a plate of the London Brighton & South Coast Railway Company's famous express engines.

To present, absolutely free, such a fine collection of engine plates is, naturally, a very costly affair and I want every reader of the POPULAR to spread the good news to their chums and secure their own copies by ordering the POPULAR to be saved for them. This offer is never likely to be repeated, and I want every boy and girl in the land to possess a fine collection of these truly magnificent plates—plates, I might mention, which have earned the praise of railway experts who have realised how accurate they are in colour and detail.

The ninth plate of the series will be presented free with next Tuesday's issue of the POPULAR.

NEXT WEEK'S STORIES.

I have not the space this week to enlarge upon the stories which will be placed before you next Tuesday morning, but full titles can be seen from the footlines and notices at the ends of the stories in this issue.

Every story which appears in the POPULAR is penned by a world-famous author, and all I need say about our next week's programme is that it is better than ever.

Your Editor,

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

The Housebreakers.

EVEN if Rupert had not spoken, everyone on board the launch would have guessed the truth. The rotten ice-peak had collapsed. They had foreseen it, but they had not expected it so soon. As it could only fall one way, outwards and down on the roof of the ice-cavern, there seemed no reason as yet to be anxious about their comrades and the fate of the camp on the floe. The immediate danger was their own. The mist was driving over them, and waves created by the great collapse were washing round the base of the icebergs. And through the mist the curious rain pattered down more heavily as rain increases in a thunder shower after the concussion of an unusually heavy thunder-clap.

Gan Waga stood erect in the bows, his arms stretched out as if his brown finger-tips could feel the invisible ice.

"Keeps on very slowness," he said. "That big tumbles shake a lot of ice looseness. These old bergs get rotten on the tops when they float about a long times."

A few sullen splashes told them that the Eskimo was right, but they nosed on cautiously. At last, dimly but distinctly, they heard the call of a bugle.

"That's Carpenter Joe giving us a chi-ike," said Ching Lung. "I've often wanted to shy bricks at him when I've heard him torturing that old instrument, but just now it sounds almost musical. He can only play one tune, and that very badly, and I'll bet that's the one he's giving us."

"Home, Sweet Home, sure enough!" laughed Thurston. "Not much of a home, but the only one we've got. Joe is pulling our legs."

All the same, the familiar old tune drifting faintly towards them through the mist and icebergs of the frozen sea had a cheering effect. The millionaire fired his automatic pistol, and a distant shot was fired in answer. After an interval of a few minutes another shot sounded from Saurian Camp. Twice the Eskimo's alertness kept them from colliding with the ice. Then Hal Honour's voice belowered to them through a megaphone, and torches flashed in the gloom.

"How much has gone, Honour?" asked Ferrers Lord, as ready hands steadied the launch into the icy slipway.

"A lot. Too much fog to see," grunted the engineer. "Hundreds of tons."

They made their way up to Saurian Camp. The chef had been busy, and a hot meal was ready for them. Until the mist lifted or dispersed it was impossible to make out the full extent of the ice slide, but the stump of the berg still remained towering above the huts and the stockade. No doubt the ice cavern had been smashed to atoms, and the Lord of the Deep had gone down in the gigantic ruin of her crystal prison. Gan Waga was lucky. He managed to secure a dish of eggs and bacon, a meal sufficient for three hungry men. He got away with it to his igloo before anybody missed it. The cook was furious.

"Eet is always like eet, always," he said. "Zat t'ief of an Eskimo—zats rascal of an Eskimo—he steal and he rob always the best! I haf eggs I keep in my cold-room two, t'ree years. Eet is zem zat I safe for ze vicked Eskimo. He go off vit ze fresh eggs, only seex, seven, eight veeks old."

"Souise me!" said Maddock, paling, for he had already devoured four fried eggs. "How old these chap, chef? I thought they tasted a bit fruity."

"Pout! Tree years of age," said the chef, making an inspection of the last egg on the dish. "Gan Waga haf pinched vat I cook for you, and you haf eat ze stuff I safe for ze Eskimo. Ven I crack zem zee smell—pout!—zey smell like nozzing but ze horrible, but ze smell go away when zey are fried."

Amid loud laughter the bo'sun got up and sought the fresh air.

"Bedad, give me another helping, chef, and then we'll go out and foind his corrpse and bury it!" grinned Barry O'Rooney. "Ut was wrong of you to tell the poor bhoj, cook, knowing he has a wake stomach, and is careful about his vittles. He'd never have guessed them same eggs was discovered in the Pyramids of Egypt umpteen years afore Julius Cesar shartred punching the Ancient Britons av you hadn't blabbed it out."

"Vell, you haf also eat four of zem, mon ami," said the chef kindly. "For ze t'ief Eskimo I cook nine, he so greedy. Ze bo'sun, he swallow four, you eat four, and ze last lettle chap is on ze dish."

Barry O'Rooney's eyes began to roll and his mouth began to work. He pressed both hands over his thick woollen waistcoat and tottered to the door.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Prout. "By honey, I like that! If you've poisoned them, chef, we'll make you eat what's left and then lynch you!"

Outside in the mist, Barry O'Rooney stumbled against Maddock. He only discovered it was Maddock when the bo'sun asked gruffly to know who he was shoving and threatened to lay him out. Barry O'Rooney took him by the arm, whispered in his ear, and they strode into the gloom.

With some difficulty they located Gan Waga's igloo, for even in daylight it was not a very conspicuous object. A faint light leaked through the slab of ice that did duty for a window, but the ice was not clear enough to see the interior very distinctly, so O'Rooney opened his knife and began to dig a hole in the roof. It was a thick roof, but Barry's knife was a long one. He obtained a peep-hole at last, and put his eye to it.

Gan Waga, as yet, had not eaten his stolen dinner. He was keeping the dish warm over a pot of boiling water. A single wax-candle lighted the mansion. Gan Waga always asked for wax-candles for lighting purposes, for he could never resist the temptation of eating a tallow one.

come quick av ut's to come at all. The inside of me is wobbling, and there's a mist afore my swate blue oies. Must we doiee unavenged, is ut?"

Gan Waga was happy. He began to sing, not loudly, and perhaps not very sweetly. Barry O'Rooney took another turn and quickly removed one sweet blue eye from the peep-hole and put his ear to it.

And this was the song he heard: "Oh, here's we pinches the butterfuls neggs and bacons—hoorays!

And the butterfuls neggs and bacons, they so niceess—hoorays!

I pinches morer to-morrows when I eated this lots—hoorays!

I eats all I pinches in my jolly old igloo—hoorays!"

"Faith, he's glorying in ut, the thafe!" said Barry. "Oi feel thim coming on, Ben, thim spasms. Can you jump, bhoj, or are your failing knees too wake?"

Gan Waga was munching a rasher. He gulped it down hastily when he caught sight of the little round hole in the roof of his ceiling. He guessed that the hole was not the result of the thaw, and that it could not have come there by accident. He had, of course, without authority, borrowed a dish of



CASTARO'S LITTLE ARMY! Castaro came swaggering along, and behind shuffled a mixed regiment with rifles on the r shoulders. "Take this ugly crew in hand and drill them till it's dark!" bellowed the Mexican, turning to Dan Govan. (See page 26.)

"Here, souise me, give us a chance!" muttered Benjamin Maddock, pushing O'Rooney aside. "Let's have a squint at the fat rogue afore I kill him!"

Gan Waga was crawling out through the tunnel, and Maddock moistened his hands and crouched down, ready to pounce. The Eskimo had only emerged to empty away the hot water, and Barry O'Rooney saw him return backwards. Then Gan Waga sat down and gazed rapturously at the luxurious dish. He took a fried egg between his finger and thumb, poised it above his open mouth, and allowed it to fall in. As the egg went its appointed way, he rubbed his left hand up and down his moulted sealskin coat in a caressing manner. Again the bo'sun pushed the Irishman away from the peep-hole. Gan Waga was sampling the second egg.

"The greasy spalpeen!" muttered O'Rooney wildly. "Oi can't bear another sight of ut! He's wolung our eggs, the fresh eggs, and at any minute, wid the poison inside us, we may be rolling in the snow in spasms of mortal agony. Can you jump, or are you too wake and all, bhoj? Bedad, vengeance must

eggs and bacon, but he did not know that he had borrowed the wrong eggs. Someone was watching him.

With his finger and thumb the Eskimo snuffed out the candle.

"Heigho!" he yawned loudly, for the benefit of the person outside. "I not able to eat no morer, so I goes to peep-by and have a butterfuls sleeps!"

He was making for the tunnel when it happened. Maddock and Barry O'Rooney stepped back a few yards and then broke into a run, in order to obtain their revenge before they were stricken down by the virulent poison frozen eggs three years of age ought to have been saturated with even if they weren't.

"Murther and gridirons!" roared Barry O'Rooney, as he leapt into the air. "Away wid the Eskimo! Death to the hubber-boiler who poisoned us!"

(There will be another long instalment of our grand serial in next week's issue of the POPULAR.)

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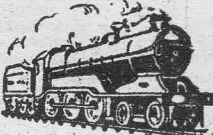
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