

TWENTY POUNDS TO BE WON IN NEW COMPETITION! (See Inside.)

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New
Series
No. 177.

28
Pages

The POPULAR 2d

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Complete Story of
Harry Wharton &
Co., of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS

(Author of the Famous Greyfriars Tales appearing in the "Magnet" Library.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Upper Hand!

CLEVELAND, the new boy of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, lay uneasily in his bed in the dormitory.

He could not sleep. The new boy's thoughts kept him awake, and his thoughts were not pleasant ones. He was thinking of Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of the Remove, who had broadcast the accusation that he, Cleveland, was in reality Hubert Osborne, who had been expelled from St. Wode's for petty theft.

But Osborne had been the finest athlete at St. Wode's—a magnificent swimmer and a wonderful boxer. The Bounder had tried to prove his accusation by forcing Cleveland both to swim and to fight.

But Cleveland had shown that he was a novice at both sports. He had been licked in a fight with the Bounder, and he had been rescued from the Sark when bathing. Because of that the juniors generally looked upon the Bounder's accusation as sheer caddishness.

But the Bounder persisted in the persecution of the new boy, and his persecution was worrying Cleveland more than the Removeites thought.

Suddenly there was a sound in the dormitory. Someone was getting up.

Cleveland guessed that it was the Bounder who was rising—the sounds came from the direction of his bed.

A dim form crossed the dormitory towards the door.

There was a glimmer of clear moonlight in at the high windows, and a ray fell across the face of the junior passing towards the door, and Cleveland saw it clearly. It was the face of Vernon-Smith.

He passed out of the moonlight the next moment, and Cleveland heard the door open and close again softly.

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The new boy's lip curled.

It was not difficult for him to guess where the Bounder had gone. Vernon-Smith was not the fellow to burn the midnight oil unless it was at a card-party. He had not gone down to grind in his study.

New as he was to Greyfriars, Cleveland had heard the gossip of the Remove, and Vernon-Smith's little manners and customs were much talked of in his own Form.

The Bounder had risen to break bounds, and for no creditable motive—in all probability a card-party at the Cross Keys, the disreputable public-house in the village.

He was risking disgrace and expulsion by his conduct; but he had risked it before, and long impunity had made him reckless.

Cleveland stepped quietly out of bed, and, without waiting to dress himself, hurried to the door and passed out of the dormitory.

He moved along the passage towards the box-room at the end, and as he did so he heard a door softly open and shut. He smiled grimly in the darkness. The Bounder had gone into the box-room.

Cleveland waited a few minutes, and his keen ears caught the sounds of a sash cautiously raised and lowered. He opened the door of the box-room and passed in. The window was shut, but it was not fastened.

Windows had been fastened up for the night by Trotter, and the unfastened catch was therefore not likely to be discovered. The Bounder had left by that window, reaching the ground by means of the outhouse below. And he evidently intended to return that way.

Cleveland fastened the catch.

Then he returned to the Remove dormitory and dressed himself, and then went down to his study. The lights were out in the passage, and he reached his study unobserved. He closed the door, laid a rug along it to keep the light from

penetrating into the passage, drew the blind closely, and lighted the gas.

Then he settled down to work.

While the rest of the Remove were fast asleep in their beds, and the Bounder was absent upon his unknown errand, the new boy at Greyfriars bent over his task, working away with grim determination.

Eleven o'clock sounded!

Cleveland was still grinding away—with all the more grimness and determination because he did not like the work, and it was distasteful to him. Cleveland was not by nature a "swot." But he had no choice in the matter.

Whether all that he had said was true or not, certainly he had spoken the truth when he told Wharton and Bob Cherry that he had come to Greyfriars to work, and that it was his only chance. And he worked with almost feverish determination.

Twelve o'clock!

Cleveland sighed, and rose to his feet. He was tired and sleepy, and the Greek characters were dancing before his weary eyes.

He was not satisfied with what he had done, but he had done all that Nature would allow. He put his books away, and turned out the light, and left the study. But he did not return immediately to the Remove dormitory.

He made his way to the upper box-room, and closed the door after he had entered it, and stationed himself at the window.

It was turned midnight, and time that the Bounder should have returned. Perhaps he had returned already, and found that he could not enter.

Cleveland pressed his face to the glass and peered out into the darkness. He started a little as he caught sight of a face also pressed to the glass, peering in. It was the Bounder's.

Vernon-Smith had evidently returned. His face was white with anger and fear as he peered in at the window. The

finding of the window fastened had given the Bounder a painful shock.

He could only suppose that a prefect had found it unfastened, and had fixed the catch—and perhaps his absence had been discovered, too. Vernon-Smith had spent a very unpleasant ten minutes on the roof of the outhouse, wondering what he should do, when he saw the dim face peering at him from within.

It was evidently not a prefect. A prefect would have opened the window, and ordered him into the house at once. Vernon-Smith tapped on the glass.

"Is that you, Snoop?" he whispered.

The sash was raised an inch.

Vernon-Smith caught hold of it, and endeavoured to push it up; but it did not move farther. It was being held from inside. The Bounder breathed very hard.

"Is that you, Snoopy?" he whispered.

"No."

Vernon-Smith started, electrified by the voice. He knew it at once.

"Osborne!"

"It is I—Cleveland."

"It is you, Osborne!" said the Bounder bitterly. "What have you played this trick on me for, you cad? Open the window!"

The Bounder made another effort to push up the window, but the grip of the new boy held it fast in its place.

"You may as well give it up," said Cleveland coldly. "You cannot open it unless I choose."

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"You've been spying on me, you rotter!"

"I came down to study, and saw you go out, by chance."

"And you fastened the window?"

"Yes."

"Why?" asked Vernon-Smith, as much puzzled as enraged.

"Because I intended to catch you," said Cleveland calmly. "We're going to make terms before I let you in, Vernon-Smith. If you are found out there, you will be exposed—as you deserve—and expelled from the school. And unless you come to terms you are going to be shut out and fastened out. Do you understand?"

The Bounder almost choked with rage.

"I'll make no terms with an expelled thief!" he muttered between his teeth.

"You will make no terms with me?"

"Never!"

"Very well. Remain where you are." The window closed down, and Vernon-Smith heard the click of the catch as it fastened.

The dim figure inside disappeared.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

In Black and White!

VERNON-SMITH panted with rage. He was shut out. He could not possibly open the window, and there was no other mode of entrance. He was shut out—to remain out for the rest of the night—to be discovered out of the house in the morning—to be exposed and expelled from the school! That was what it came to.

His fate was in Cleveland's hands—in the hands of the boy he had insulted, accused, persecuted, and humiliated!

If the Bounder had had a bitter enemy at his mercy in the same way, he knew what he would have done. He would have secured the window, and gone back, chuckling, to bed. He did not expect anything better from Cleveland. But—

He tapped on the window as the dim form of the junior disappeared within. At all and any cost, he must make terms with this boy whom he hated and had injured. Cleveland alone could save him

from the punishment he richly deserved, from the results of his folly and baseness.

Tap—tap—tap!

He breathed with relief as he saw a dim face reappear inside the window. There was a click of the catch again, and the sash of the window was raised an inch, as before, and Cleveland bent down to it.

"You tapped?" he said.

"Then you weren't gone, after all?" said the Bounder, between his teeth. He was crouched on the roof of the outhouse, his hands clutching the sill, his face on a level with the partly-open sash.

"I was going," said Cleveland. "What do you want?"

"I want you to let me come in, you sneaking cad!"

"I will let you in on conditions. Otherwise, I shall leave you there. When you are found out you will be expelled. It will be a good deal easier for me here when you are gone."

The Bounder trembled, with a mingling of rage and fear. It was quite true—it was all in Cleveland's interest to leave him to his fate. And Vernon-Smith could not help wondering why the fellow did not do it.

"Will you let me in?"

"On conditions."

"Well, what are they? Do you want money?" sneered the Bounder. "You know I'm rich, and I've got more than a suspicion that you are as poor as a church mouse."

"You know I don't want that," said Cleveland quietly, "and you are a cad to suggest it. I want you to leave me alone. All the time I've been at Greyfriars you've been against me, persecuting me all the time. You will never let that old story rest?"

"You know it's true."

"True or not, I'm having no more of it."

"You admit it, then?" muttered the Bounder.

"I admit nothing. I'm not going to argue with you. I tell you that you've got to make it pax, and stop troubling me. Otherwise, I'll take the chance I've got, and you'll be sacked from the school. You'll have to let me alone then. Take your choice."

The Bounder was silent for a moment.

"Do you know that you're giving yourself away?" he said. "I know you were duffing in the gym. I know you lied when you said you couldn't swim, though you played the game out to the end very cleverly. I know you are Hubert Osborne. If you were what you pretend to be, you wouldn't have thought of a trick like this. This is a criminal's trick to save himself from being shown up."

"You can look at it how you like. You've got to promise me, honour bright, to let that matter drop, and say nothing about it in future; not to call me Osborne again, or to make any move to prove your case. You've got a scheme on now—"

The Bounder started.

"How do you know?"

"I do know. I'm no fool," said Cleveland. "I know you have some scheme for showing me up, as you call it; and I'm nipping it in the bud."

"You want me to give my word?" asked the Bounder, his eyes glimmering strangely in the darkness. He reflected that Cleveland, cunning as he had shown himself, was a fool after all. A promise cost Vernon-Smith very little.

"Yes," said Cleveland.

"Well, I give it. Now let me in."

"You will promise to let the whole matter drop, to make no schemes against me in any way, and, in fact, to let me alone altogether?"

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth.

"Good!"

"Now let me in!"

Cleveland laughed.

"I am hardly likely to take your word," he said. "I haven't known you long, but I know you too well for that."

"Honour bright!"

"That wouldn't bind you," said Cleveland contemptuously. "Don't waste time. I shall have it in black and white."

"In writing?" said the Bounder, in amazement.

"Yes."

"What—what do you mean? I don't understand."

"I have a fountain-pen here, and a sheet of paper," said Cleveland grimly. "I will pass them to you. You will write at my dictation."

"You—you cunning rotter! I won't!"

"Very well!"

The window closed down, and the Bounder tapped upon it in alarm. Up went the sash again.

"Well?" said Cleveland.

"I'll write what you like," said the Bounder grinding his teeth.

Cleveland passed the paper and the fountain-pen through the narrow slit under the sash.

The Bounder opened the pen, and prepared to write, resting the sheet on the window-sill.

"Write," said Cleveland, "after me—"

"In consideration of Cleveland keeping secret the fact that I have broken bounds at midnight to go to the Cross Keys to a card-party, I agree to stop my persecution of him in the future." And sign it."

The Bounder breathed hard.

"That's enough to get me expelled from Greyfriars, if the Head saw it!" he muttered.

"That's what I want. If you keep your word, that paper stays locked up in a secret drawer in my desk. If you bring trouble on me, that paper is placed in the headmaster's hands, and we go down together. Understand?"

"You—you plotting villain!"

Cleveland laughed.

"One rogue makes many," he said. "I did nothing to you; I have never harmed you in any way, and you have persecuted me ever since I came to the school. You have tried to drive me out in disgrace. I can't afford to be too particular in dealing with a fellow like you. I must deal with you how I can."

"I—I'll write it."

"And in your own hand," said Cleveland calmly. "I shall light the gas, and examine it, after you've written it. I've got a specimen of your handwriting with me. I shall compare them, and if you've tried to disguise your hand in any way, I shall make you write it over again; and you will not get in till I am satisfied."

The Bounder ground his teeth in helpless rage. He was trapped at every point. And this was the simple new boy whom all the Remove fellows regarded good-naturedly as a kind of duffer—this fellow, who had calmly overreached him at every point—overreached the Bounder, whose cunning was proverbial in the Lower School. And he was helpless; he had to yield. With gritting teeth and blazing eyes, the Bounder wrote the paper, and passed it in to Cleveland.

"Are you satisfied now, hang you?" he said.

"Wait!"

Cleveland closed and fastened the window, evidently intending to leave nothing to chance. He lighted the gas-jet in the box-room, and carefully examined the paper. He was satisfied, and

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when the ink was dry he folded it up and placed it in his pocket. The Bounder tapped impatiently on the window. Cleveland turned out the gas, and came back.

"I will let you in in five minutes!" Vernon-Smith heard his voice, and then Cleveland disappeared. The Bounder, choking with rage, waited. His last hope was gone. He had intended, when he was admitted, to make a sudden attack upon the new boy, and deprive him of the paper by force, and destroy it. But Cleveland was too much on his guard to give him a chance of that.

The Bounder waited. Five minutes had elapsed when he saw Cleveland's face glimmering at the box-room window again. The sash was lifted, and the Bounder climbed in. He closed the window after him, and fastened it, and then turned to Cleveland in the darkness, trembling with fury.

"You cad! What have you done with that paper?"

"It is locked up in a safe place."
"I'll make you give it back to me—I'll—"

The Bounder, so enraged that he hardly knew what he was doing, flung himself furiously upon Cleveland.

There was a low laugh in the darkness, and the new boy gripped him. It seemed to the Bounder that he had been caught in arms of iron. He was swept off his feet, and dumped down on the floor, almost unresistingly. Cleveland bent over him.

"You had better not try that game," he said, in a low, even voice. "You will get the worst of it, Vernon-Smith. You may think what you like. But you had better take care in the future, unless you want to be sacked from the school."

"You—you are Hubert Osborne!" panted Vernon-Smith. "You are giving it away!"

And Cleveland left the box-room without another word. Vernon-Smith rose to his feet, pale, breathless, trembling with rage. He went slowly to the Remove dormitory. Cleveland was already in bed when he arrived there; and the Bounder, with feelings too bitter for words, turned in. He had been defeated.

He would say "Pass the salt, Osborne," or "Good-morning, Osborne!" This morning at breakfast the name of Osborne did not pass his lips once. He spoke to Cleveland on the occasion, and addressed him as Cleveland.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry broke out. "Are you really giving up playing the giddy goat, Smithy?"

The Bounder made no reply. Bolsover major joined him as the Remove went out into the Close after breakfast. Bolsover major was puzzled.

"What's the little game, Smithy?" he asked.

"What little game?" said Vernon-Smith shortly.

"About Cleveland. Do you believe in him now?"

"No, I don't."
"You called him by his right name this morning."

"I called him by his wrong name. The fellow wants me to," said the Bounder, with a sardonic grin. "I'm trying to please him."

"That's not it," said Bolsover. "Blest if I understand you, Smithy! What about that scheme you were hinting at the other day?"

"What scheme?"

"About asking that chap you know
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at St. Wode's to come here for a week-end, so that he can identify Cleveland." The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"That's off," he said.
"Off!" said Bolsover, in amazement.

"Yes; for the present, at any rate."
"You've given up the idea?"

"Yes—just now."
"Why?"

"Oh, I'm following the crowd," said the Bounder. "They've swallowed Cleveland whole, and it isn't my business to open their eyes. I'm done! I dare say they'll find him out in time—when he steals something here, perhaps, as he did at St. Wode's."

Bolsover shook his head.
"Better not try that game, Smithy," he said warningly.

Vernon-Smith glared at him.
"What do you mean, confound you?" he exclaimed angrily.

"I mean, that the fellows would smell a rat at once. If anything were found on Cleveland, or in his traps, they wouldn't believe he'd taken it. They'd think that you had planted it on him. Better be careful!"

"Do you think I was thinking of anything of the sort?" demanded the Bounder, in a tone of concentrated rage.

"Well, if you weren't, all the better," said Bolsover major, quite unruffled. "I only gave you a word of warning as a friend."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled the Bounder.

Bolsover's words had made the Bounder feel something very like terror. The fellow was a thief; and if he had been a thief at St. Wode's, he might be a thief at Greyfriars. And if he were found out, suspicion would turn upon the Bounder of having "planted" it on him—as Bolsover put it. For his own safety, the Bounder felt that the fellow must be shown up in his true colours.

But his teeth were drawn now. He dared not make a move against Cleveland. He writhed with helpless rage as he thought of it. He had been outwitted, and there was an end of it.

Not that Cleveland showed any sign whatever of departing from the straight and narrow path. The new boy had settled down to be a "swot," and he was working hard for the Greek exam—working so hard that even Mark Linley, a terrific worker himself, remonstrated with him more than once.

"You're overdoing it, Cleveland," Mark said, as they finished work at tea-time one afternoon, having put in an hour after last lesson. "No good doing that, you know, or you'll be ill before the exam comes round."

Cleveland smiled faintly.
"I sha'n't be ill," he said. "I'm as fit as a fiddle. Though this way of life doesn't agree with me much. I've got to get through—I must get through. If I can get the Greek prize I shall satisfy my uncle."

"He must be an awfully exacting old chap, from the way you speak," said Linley, rather puzzled.

"He's given me this chance," said Cleveland. "If I don't make something of it I shall be done for. He won't trust me again."

"But why shouldn't he trust you?" said Mark.

Cleveland coloured.
"I—I displeased him once," he said.

"In fact, I—I was a slacker, before I came here."

"You a slacker!" said Mark, with a whistle.

"Yes. It doesn't look like it now, does it?"

"He's not coming now," he muttered.

"Mind that he doesn't!"

Cleveland quitted the study without another word. The Bounder ground his teeth. He looked on Cleveland's words

"My hat, it doesn't!"
"Well, I was. I was a careless ass. But I've got more sense now. If the Head sends a good report at the end of the term I shall be all right; and if I get the Greek medal that will clinch it. Perhaps I might be able to take things a little bit easier after that. But I daren't let anything slide now."

Mark had an uncomfortable feeling for a moment. Cleveland spoke and acted like a fellow who had to make up for some grave fault—who had given his uncle and guardian good reason to distrust him. But Mark would not let that thought linger in his mind.

Snoop met them as they left the study, and he grinned at Cleveland.

"Still swotting?" he asked.

"Yes," said Cleveland.

"I hear that Smithy's going to have a visitor," said Snoop, with his light, shifty eyes fixed upon Cleveland's face.

"Is he?" said Cleveland carelessly. "I don't see that it matters to me, Snoop. What do you mean?"

"Chap he knew at St. Wode's, you know, coming here for a week-end," said Snoop.

"What!"

"Seems to surprise you," said Snoop. "Why shouldn't Smithy have a chap from St. Wode's to see him if he likes?"

"Why not?" agreed Cleveland. "It doesn't interest me."

And he walked on with Mark Linley. The Lancashire lad was frowning.

"That's another trick of Smithy's, I suppose," he remarked. "I thought he had stopped that rot, but he seems to be beginning again. Of course, he's getting this chap from St. Wode's with some idea of identifying you, the silly ass!"

Cleveland laughed.
"I dare say it's all gas, and the fellow won't come," he said. "It's a good step from Devonshire to here."

Cleveland was right—the St. Wode's fellow did not come. But Mark Linley would have been very much surprised if, about an hour afterwards, he had seen and heard his new chum. Cleveland had called in on Vernon-Smith in his study. The Bounder was smoking a cigarette, one of his pleasant little habits. He scowled at the new junior through a blue haze of smoke.

Cleveland closed the door and came towards the Bounder, and looked at him steadily.

"I hear you have a friend coming here, Vernon-Smith?" he said.

"Who told you that?"

"Snoop."

"It's a mistake," said the Bounder uneasily. "I talked it over with Bolsover and Snoop. But—but I've given up the idea now."

"When did you give up the idea?" asked Cleveland calmly.

"After you got that paper out of me, you rotter!"

Cleveland smiled.

"Very well. You're at liberty, of course, to have all the friends to see you that you want; but I've explained to you that I'm fed up with your stories about St. Wode's and what happened or did not happen there. If a fellow comes from St. Wode's to visit you, I shall take it as a sign that you are looking for trouble."

The Bounder's eyes fell before Cleveland's.

"He's not coming now," he muttered.

"Mind that he doesn't!"

Cleveland quitted the study without another word. The Bounder ground his teeth. He looked on Cleveland's words

as practically an admission that the charge against him was true. But he was helpless. The power had passed from his hands.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
In Danger!

WERE ORL right now," said Bolsover minor.
Bolsover minor, of the Third Form, had been at Greyfriars some time, but he had not quite lost the peculiar accent he had acquired at the time when he was lost in London, and lived the life of a street-arab. Bolsover minor was looking out of the window towards the cricket-ground.

"It's orl right!" repeated Bolsover minor. "Percy's playing this afternoon, and he won't be on our track. Come on, young Tubb! Come on, Paget!"
"Got the bathing-things?" asked Tubb.
"Yes; 'ere they are!"

And the three fags sallied out. They made their way down to the river. The chums of the Third Form were going out to swim. Bolsover minor, as a rule, was very obedient to his major—to whom, indeed, he looked up with very great awe. But in a matter of this kind, Bolsover minor felt that he was entitled to follow his own judgment—especially as Tubb and Paget thought so, too. Because a fellow had had cramp once in the water, it didn't follow that he would have cramp again—it was all rot, as Billy put it! It was very kind of Percy to be so concerned about him—and to save his major the worry, he wouldn't mention the matter to Percy. But he was going to bathe in the river with Tubb and Paget. The three fags were going to enter the swimming competition on sports day, and they couldn't afford to neglect practice.

And so, with their bathing-costumes hidden under their jackets, Tubb & Co. made their way down to the river, giving the cricket-field a wide berth.

There were a good many boats out that afternoon, and some swimming going on from the raft, but a disappointment awaited the heroes of the Third. As they came out on the floating raft, the boatkeeper hailed them.

"Master Bolsover!"
"Allo!" said Bolsover minor.
"Your brother has been here," said the boatkeeper. "He's given partickler instructions as you're not to go in."
"Oh, my 'at!" said Bolsover minor, in dismay. "It's all right, Potts. I'm only going in for a bit of swimming practice."

The boatkeeper shook his head.
"Master Bolsover's orders," he said. "I've promised him that you sha'n't go into the water."

"Look here, Potts," said Tubb; "you've no right to interfere. You go and eat coke!"

"Yes, and chop chips!" growled Bolsover minor.
Potts grinned.

"If you goes in, I shall call a prefect," he said. "You 'ad cramp the other day in the water, Master Bolsover, and it ain't safe for you."

"Oh, that's all piffle, you know! Chap can 'ave cramp without 'aving it again!" said Bolsover minor, in an aggrieved voice.

"We're going in," said Paget. "Potts, my man, you can turn your head the other way, and I'll stand you a tanner when my allowance comes."

"Can't be done, Master Paget. I'm responsible if there's an accident."
"But there won't be any accident!"

howled Bolsover minor. "Do you think I can't swim, you juggins? I could swim your 'ead off!"

"Come on," said Tubb. "Potts can talk till he's dry!"

"Yes, come on, Billy," said Paget. "Potts can go and eat coke!"

Potts called out to a group of seniors on the raft, who were watching a sculling race:

"Master Wingate!"
"Hallo, Potts!"

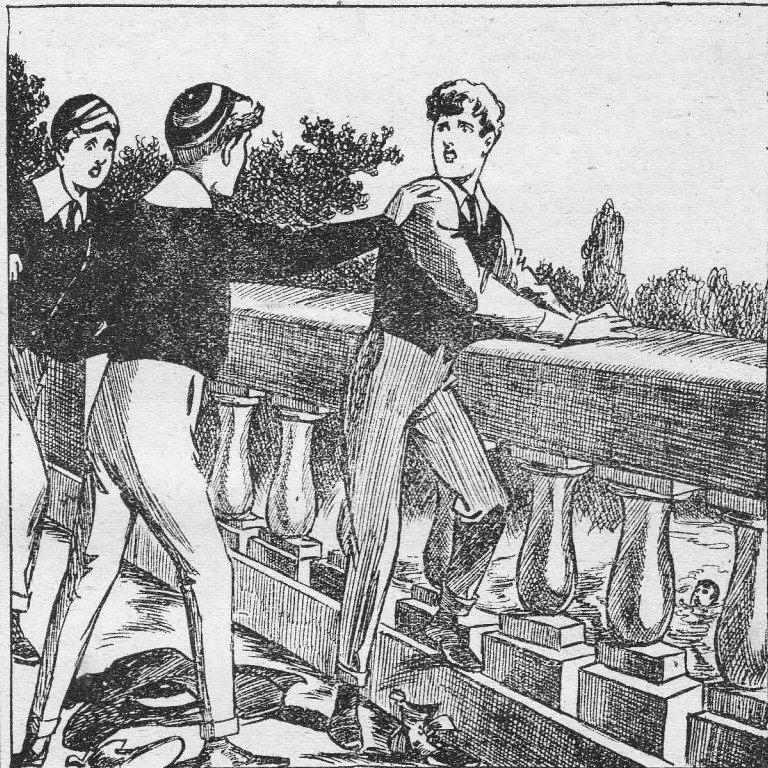
"Master Bolsover major 'ave asked me not to let his minor go in, owin' to his cramp the other day," said Potts. "I leave it to you, sir."

about not going into the water anywhere else, did he?"

"Well, no," said Paget, rubbing his nose thoughtfully. "He didn't. But he must have meant—"

"Never mind what he must have meant," said Tubb. "We only know what he said, and we're not bound to guess at what he must have meant or mustn't have meant. We're going to obey orders and not bathe here. But we can go in somewhere else."

"Good egg!" said Bolsover minor. "Course we must do as Wingate says. But we're not bound to do what he doesn't say. Come on!"



CLEVELAND TO THE RESCUE!—Cleveland peeled off his coat and kicked his boots off his feet. Bob Cherry caught him by the arm as he rushed to the parapet of the bridge. "Don't be an idiot!" he exclaimed. "You can't go in!" "I'm going to try! I can't see a kid drowned before my eyes!" (See Chapter 5.)

Wingate frowned.
"Clear off from here, Bolsover minor," he said. "You're not to go into the water here, excepting when the instructor is on duty, or your brother is with you. Clear off!"

"Oh, I say, Wingate—"
"Buzz off!" said the Sixth-Former, with a wave of the hand.

The three Third-Formers looked at one another disconsolately, and trudged off the raft, simmering with anger and disappointment.

"It's too bad of Percy!" said Bolsover minor. "He means it only in kindness, but he's spoiling our swimming practice, and we've got to keep it up."

"More ways than one of killing a cat," said Tubb. "If we can't swim here, we can swim somewhere else."

"Wingate said—" began Paget dubiously. But Tubb interrupted him.

"Wingate said that Billy wasn't to go into the water here unless the instructor was present," he said. "That's what Wingate said. He didn't say anything

And the fags started down the towing-path.

"But where are we going in?" asked Paget.

"There's a lovely place just above the bridge," said Tubb. "Sheltered by trees, too—a nice quiet spot we can have to ourselves."

"Just the place!" said Bolsover minor.

"If a chap should happen to get carried under the bridge, it's dangerous," said Paget. "There's the Pool on the other side of the bridge, and a fellow was drowned there once. They never found his body—the currents had sucked it away under the weeds."

Tubb snorted.
"Well, you're a cheerful sort of silly ass to come out for a swim!" he exclaimed indignantly. "Got any more merry reminiscences?"

"I was thinking of Billy. He suffers from cramp—"

"I don't!" shouted Bolsover minor. "Well, you did the other day!"
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"One swallow doesn't make a summer, lathed! That was just a little twinge, and it wasn't really so bad, after all," said Bolsover minor.

"Besides, we shall be with him," said Tubb. "If he has cramp—"

"I sha'n't have cramp!"

"But if you should—"

"There ain't any 'if' about it!" persisted Bolsover minor obstinately. "I sha'n't 'ave it!"

"Well, if anything should happen," said Tubb pacifically. "I'm a jolly good swimmer, and I'll look after the pair of you."

"You'll get a thick ear if you start looking after me, young Tubb!" said Paget with a sniff.

"Same 'ere!" said Bolsover minor. "I'm all right! I'm more likely to 'ave to pick you out than you me, Tubb."

"Well, as you suffer from cramp—"

"I don't!" roared Bolsover minor.

"Look here, Billy—"

"Look 'ere, Tubb—"

"Oh, shut up, both of you, and get on!" said Paget. "If you're going to jaw all the afternoon, we sha'n't get time for a swim. We've left it pretty late already."

The three fags followed the towing path to the bridge. It was a quiet and secluded spot. Under the bridge the water ran less deeply, but on the other side of the old stone structure the river widened and deepened into the Pool. It was a spot carefully avoided by swimmers. The banks were high and steep, the current hard and treacherous. All the Greyfriars fellows had heard of the boy who had been drowned there—sucked under by the current and choked in the weeds, powerful swimmer as he was. They knew, too, the story of how Harry Wharton had saved Frank Nugent's life in that deadly place on the day he came to Greyfriars for the first time, and so laid the foundation of the steady friendship that had never been broken since. But the fags of the Third were not swimmers like Wharton, and Wharton had only escaped with his life almost by a miracle.

Tubb & Co. had no intention of venturing near the dangerous spot. The place they had selected was well above the bridge, where the current was not strong enough to be dangerous to any fellow who knew how to swim.

In the westerling sunlight, under the old trees, hidden by thickets, the fags tripped, and donned their bathing bags, as they called them, and plunged into the cool water.

They splashed merrily in the shining river, splashing water over one another, plunging, swimming, and thoroughly enjoying themselves. And, tired of gentle sport, Tubb was the first to propose a swim to the opposite bank, the last ashore to stand a feed at the tuckshop as a penalty.

Tubb's proposition was agreed to at once, and they lined up and started. Tubb, who was a powerful fellow for his years, was soon far ahead. Paget and Bolsover minor kept level. Tubb was close to the shore when the other two had reached the middle of the river. Then Paget shot ahead.

Swimming his hardest, Paget did not hear a faint cry behind him. He knew that Bolsover minor had fallen behind, but he supposed simply that he was bearing him in the race.

Tubb reached the bank and was looking back.

A sudden yell from Tubb first warned Paget that something was wrong. He ceased his efforts, and swung round in the water to look for his chum.

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"Billy!" he called out.

But there was no reply. Bolsover minor was nowhere near him.

Paget's terrified glance swept the shining water towards the deep, dark arch of the stone bridge.

He caught an instant's glimpse of a white face on the water, of a hand thrown up into the air.

Then it vanished from his sight as Bolsover minor was swept away under the shadows of the bridge.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Betrayed by Himself!

"COME out, you bounder!" Cleveland rose from his study table. He was looking tired and weary, but his face lighted up with a smile as he caught Mark Linley's cheery glance from the door.

"Finished the cricket?" he asked. "Yes. We've drawn with Courtfield. Now for that little trot. You want some fresh air after being stuck in here all the afternoon," said Mark.

"Yes; I do, indeed! But"—there was satisfaction as well as weariness in Cleveland's face now—"I'm getting on with this. I begin to think I shall beat you for the Greek prize, Linley."

"Good man!" said Mark, laughing. "Best man wins, and I wish you luck! Anyway, one of us is pretty certain of it, I really think, and the other one will get the second prize, I believe. So, in any case, you'll have something to show your uncle."

"Yes; thank goodness!" Cleveland closed his books and picked up his cap. The two juniors strolled down the passage together, and passed Vernon-Smith on the landing. The Bounder looked at them and his eyes glinted. But he did not say "Going out, Osborne?" to Cleveland, as he would have said a few days earlier. He did not speak at all.

"The Bounder seems to be letting you alone," Mark Linley observed, as they went out into the Close.

Cleveland smiled. "Yes; that's a relief, too. He was getting on my nerves."

"He was getting on all our nerves, I think, and I'm glad he's dropped it. He was bound to find out sooner or later that he had made a mistake."

"He certainly made a mistake in some

ways," said Cleveland, half to himself. Then he laughed. "And his friend from St. Wode's has not come, after all?"

"No. That shows he's given up the idea. Blessed if I can see how he could be so obstinate about it when it was clearly proved that you were no more Hubert Osborne than you were Lloyd George."

Cleveland laughed and changed the subject.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you bounders going?" asked Bob Cherry, meeting them in the Close.

"Walk down the towing-path," said Mark.

"Good! I'll come with you. Wharton and Nugent have gone to Friardale, and we may meet them coming back."

"I say, you fellows, if you're going to the tuckshop, I'll come with you, if you like. I want to see Uncle Clegg," called out Billy Bunter, coming up to them.

"Good! Come on!" said Bob. "Let's give Bunter a sharp walk. It will do him good."

The three juniors grinned and set off at a sharp walk, and Billy Bunter's little fat legs had to go at a great rate to keep pace with them. By the time they reached the towing-path Bunter gave it up.

"I say, stop for me, you fellows!" he called out. "If you don't walk a bit more slowly I sha'n't come with you!"

"Oh, don't be cruel, Bunter!" implored Bob.

"Good-bye, Porpoise!" And the trio walked on, leaving Bunter gasping and growling on the bank.

"We'll go by the bridge, and back round the lower bridge," said Mark.

"Right-ho!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Some kids out there swimming!" said Bob Cherry, glancing down from the old stone bridge as they were crossing it.

"Third Form fags!" said Mark. "They'd get into a row if a prefect saw them swimming in this part of the river. It's dangerous if they should get carried under the bridge."

"Yes; rather! Hallo! What is Tubb yelling about?"

The three Removites halted, and looked down. Tubb was standing on the bank, and Paget had just joined him there. Bob shouted down to the fags.

"Anything wrong, Tubb?"

Tubb started, and looked up at the bridge.

His face was white as chalk. "Bolsover minor!" he gasped.

"Is he with you?" asked Bob.

"He was—oh—he—he—he's been carried through under the bridge!" panted Tubb.

"What!"

For a moment the three juniors on the bridge felt frozen with horror. Carried under the bridge—and on the lower side—the Pool, with its unknown depths and its treacherous currents and its death-trap of clinging weeds!

"Come on—quick!" muttered Cleveland.

They ran across the bridge to the stone parapet on the other side.

Leaning on the low stone parapet, they watched the glimmering surface of the river, thirty feet below, scanning it with anxious eyes for a sight of the fag who had been swept away.

A wide, deep reach of water, with steep crumbling banks—here and there a shoaling shallow where the water foamed.

Their faces were white as they looked down.

"Can you see him?"

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"Poor kid!" muttered Bob Cherry hoarsely. "The young ass! He's done for. A strong swimmer wouldn't have a chance there, and that kid—"

"Look!" Cleveland pointed. Far down on the glimmering waters appeared a dark spot—the head of the fag! Bolsover minor was there, struggling for life under their eyes. He had no chance!

He was almost overcome. He had caught a floating branch by good luck, but it was not sufficient to support his weight; but by clinging to it, and swimming also, he was able as yet to keep afloat.

But the treacherous under-currents were dragging him down, and his strength was well-nigh spent.

A few minutes more— And there was no chance. He was fifty yards from the bank, and the bank was high and steep, and crumbling, offering no hold for the hands if he had reached it.

"Good heavens!" muttered Bob Cherry, white as a sheet.

Mark Linley began to peel off his

jacket. Bob was mechanically doing the same. It was death to dive there—grim death! But to see the boy perish under their eyes, without lifting a hand to save him, that was impossible!

Cleveland did not move or speak. His face was like chalk; his heart seemed turned to ice.

Wild thoughts were racing through his brain. Under his eyes was a boy in the grip of the merciless waters, and he could be saved by a strong swimmer—a swimmer who had strength and skill and courage—at least, there was a chance. Not by Linley, or by Bob Cherry, but by a swimmer who was strong and skilful beyond his years—by the swimmer who had won the swimming championship of St. Wode's School.

The boy's look was bitter.

He had lived down that story—he had met his enemy's cunning with cunning more skilful, and had silenced him. His way at Greyfriars was clear now. The Bounder silenced, if not convinced, that wretched story nipped in the bud—a prospect of winning the Greek prize, and standing well with his uncle—all the future was fair.

And now—

Cleveland groaned aloud.

But he dragged himself from his bitter thoughts. He peeled off his jacket, and threw down his cap, and kicked his boots off. Bob Cherry caught him by the arm.

"Don't be an idiot, Cleveland!" he exclaimed. "You can't go in. Pluck's no good if you can't swim."

"I'm going to try, Cleveland," said Mark hurriedly. "Don't be an ass! No good throwing your life away! Run along the bank, and see if you can help us there."

"Stay where you are!" he said. "You can't do this! I don't know if I can, but I'm going to try. I can't see that kid drowned."

"But you can't swim!" roared Bob.

"I can swim!"

"What—what?"

"I can swim better than you, better than any fellow at Greyfriars, senior or junior," said Cleveland wearily. "Let me alone! I'm going to save that kid, or be drowned along with him. I don't much care if I am, either."

He climbed on to the stone parapet.

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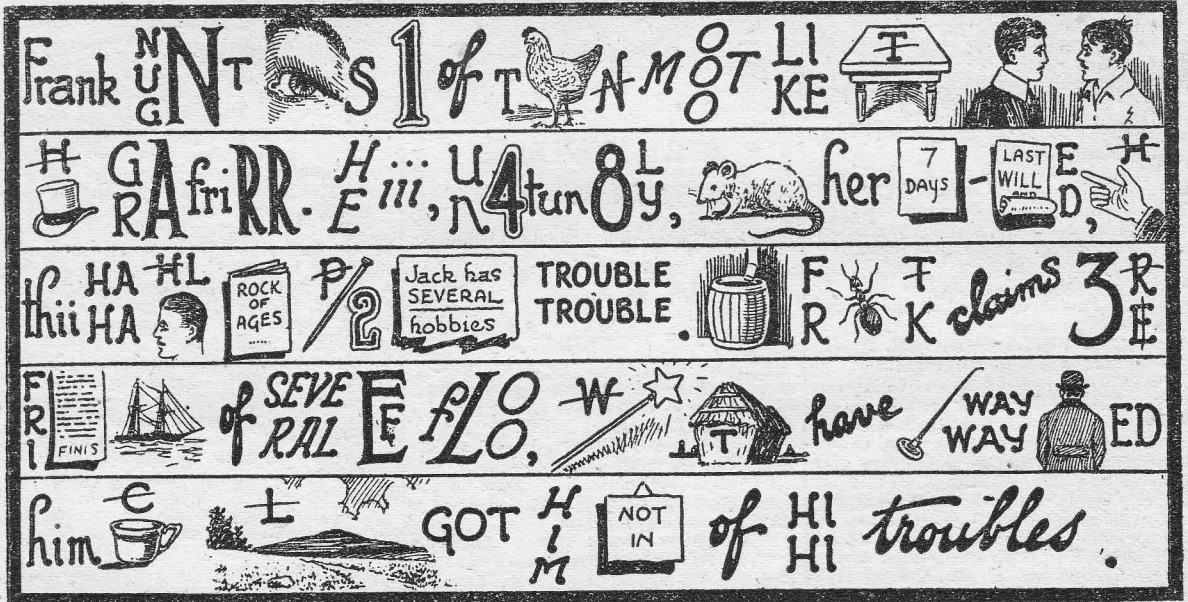
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POPULAR Puzzle No. 3.

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Bob Cherry stood dumb. Mark panted.

"Then—then you are—you are——"

"I am Hubert Osborne of St. Wode's—an expelled thief, and a bigger fool at this minute than I've ever been in my life before!" said Cleveland, in a hard, dry voice.

And he put his hands together and dived.

Deep down in the glimmering waters there was a splash.

Bob Cherry and Mark Linley's eyes met.

"Osborne!" muttered Bob.

"It was true!"

"I don't care—I don't care! He's a splendid chap—a ripping chap!" said Bob. "He's given himself away; he's risking his life; he's a splendid chap!"

Mark put on his jacket. It was useless to dive now. He would only add to Cleveland's task by going in. If anything could be done, the swimming champion of St. Wode's could do it. Mark caught Bob's sleeve.

"Come along the bank. We may be able to help them out there. It's the only chance."

"Right!"

They dashed down from the bridge and scrambled along the bank—a steep, rough slope, with rushes and thickets clothing it. There was a hail from the distance.

"Hallo! What's the matter, Bob?"

"This way, Harry. Bolsover minor's in the Pool, and Cleveland's gone in after him!"

Wharton and Nugent came tearing up. They scrambled down the bank, as far as they could go without falling into the water. Their eyes were upon the strong swimmer. Cleveland had reached Bolsover minor. The fag, his strength exhausted, had let go the branch, and gone under the surface when Cleveland reached him. But the strong grasp of the junior brought him up again. Holding the almost insensible fag, Cleveland was fighting for his life and the life of his burden.

"Cleveland!" muttered Harry Wharton, in dazed wonder. "Look how he's swimming! Cleveland! He said he couldn't swim!"

"He's Osborne!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Then—then the Bounder was right!"

"Yes, hang him!"

There was a crowd along the bank now. The news had spread by magic. Fellows had come from all quarters—a hundred eyes were upon Cleveland in his fight for life. Some had rushed for a boat, some for rope or a plank. But before help could come that struggle would be ended—one way or the other!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Last of Cleveland.

CLEVELAND'S face was white, set, hard. He did not see the juniors clustering on the bank—he saw nothing but the grasping, merciless waters, and the insensible fag. He was fighting for his life and another life, and the fight was hard. With strong strokes he swept towards the steep bank, and a sucking eddy swept him out again, with his burden, into the middle of the river. There was a groan from the watching crowd as they saw him go under, under the swirling waters; but he came up again, white as chalk, but hard as nails, fighting on grimly.

"I—I can't stand this!" Wharton muttered. "I'm going in!"

"No good!" muttered Bob. "You could never reach him! And you

couldn't help him, Harry! He's the best swimmer I've ever seen. If he can't get Bolsover minor ashore, you couldn't get him ashore."

Wharton realised the truth of that; yet to stay there and watch—it was impossible! Could nothing be done?

Again Cleveland swept to the bank. He was growing exhausted now, and if he lost the third chance, he would not have another."

"I'm going to chance it, Bob, and you fellows help me!" muttered Harry.

Closer and closer came Cleveland, still supporting the senseless fag. He was within three yards when the eddy whirled him away again, and then there was a plunge as Wharton went in. He grasped the swimmer, and held him fast, fighting madly with the swirl of the water. Another and another plunge—Mark Linley and Nugent were in, too. There was a shout on the bank as Wingate of the Sixth came tearing up, with a rope in his hands.

"Look out—catch the rope!" shouted Wingate.

The rope thrashed on the water. It was Wharton who caught it, and held it fast. Then the other swimmers got a

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grip on it, and all the fellows on the bank dragged at it, and they were drawn to the shore.

There many hands were ready to help them.

Bolsover major had just arrived, with scared horror in his face. He grasped his minor, and dragged him from the exhausted Cleveland.

Wingate seized Cleveland, and pulled him from the water.

Cleveland lay in the deep grass on the bank, gasping, panting. It had been a very near thing for him.

Wingate gave him a strange glance. "The fellow who couldn't swim!" he said.

Cleveland smiled in a strange, hard way.

"The game's up, now!" he muttered. "It must all come out! I'm Osborne of St. Wode's—thief, liar, and impostor! I shall be kicked out of Greyfriars, as I was out of St. Wode's, and serve me right! You'd have done me a favour to leave me in the river."

"Good heavens!" said Wingate.

But there was no time for talk. The drenched juniors were hurried back to the school, and Cleveland and Bolsover minor were bundled into bed, the other fellows having a hard towelling, which set them right again.

Greyfriars was in a buzz with it.

The Removites could hardly believe the news at first! Cleveland, the duffer who could not fight, or play cricket, or swim, was Osborne of St. Wode's, the champion athlete, and he had been playing a part all the time he was at Greyfriars!

It seemed incredible, but it was true. The Bounder had been right. He had known the truth, he had stated it, and he had not been believed.

Had the discovery been made under any other circumstances, had the Bounder proved his case, only scorn and contempt would have been felt for the impostor, the fellow who had entered the school under false colours, under an assumed name, after disgracing himself at his own school.

But it was impossible to despise the fellow who had risked his life for another, who had betrayed his secret himself to save that life. For if Hubert Osborne had chosen to leave the fag to drown his secret would have been safe still. Vernon-Smith had been unable to prove anything against him; but he had proved it against himself, for the sake of a lad he hardly knew.

"He's a splendid chap!" said Bob Cherry, with a choke in his voice. "I don't care what he's done. Anyway, he did what lots of fellows wouldn't have done; and he's a splendid chap!"

"I was right," said the Bounder, who was looking unusually subdued. "But—but I'm sorry I ever said a word against him now."

"I should think you are!" growled Johnny Bull.

"But he won't be able to stay here now," said Skinner. "It's rough on him, but the Head can't let him stay now he knows."

And the juniors felt glumly enough that that was true.

It was true. Hubert Osborne could not stay at Greyfriars after he had betrayed himself. No one expected the Head to allow him to do so. And quite a few juniors remarked that it came to them as no surprise that he himself should refuse to stop—his position would not have been very acceptable.

But the juniors and the seniors—even the Bounder—could not forget that Osborne had made a splendid sacrifice. Had he not dived to save Bolsover minor, he might have carried through with his story that he was not Osborne of St. Wode's. Everybody recognised the sacrifice he had made—the rescue of Bolsover minor had meant the end of Cleveland's stay at Greyfriars.

And never before did such a cheering crowd give a send off to a junior who had been expelled from one school, and forced to leave another.

Dr. Locke, observing the exit of Cleveland, shook his head solemnly.

"He'll make good!" he muttered. "He's atoned for the past—and now he'll make good!"

And, although Dr. Locke never knew it, Cleveland did make good.

THE END.

(There will be another grand long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday, entitled "A Blow for Bob Cherry!" by Frank Richards. Order your copy now.)

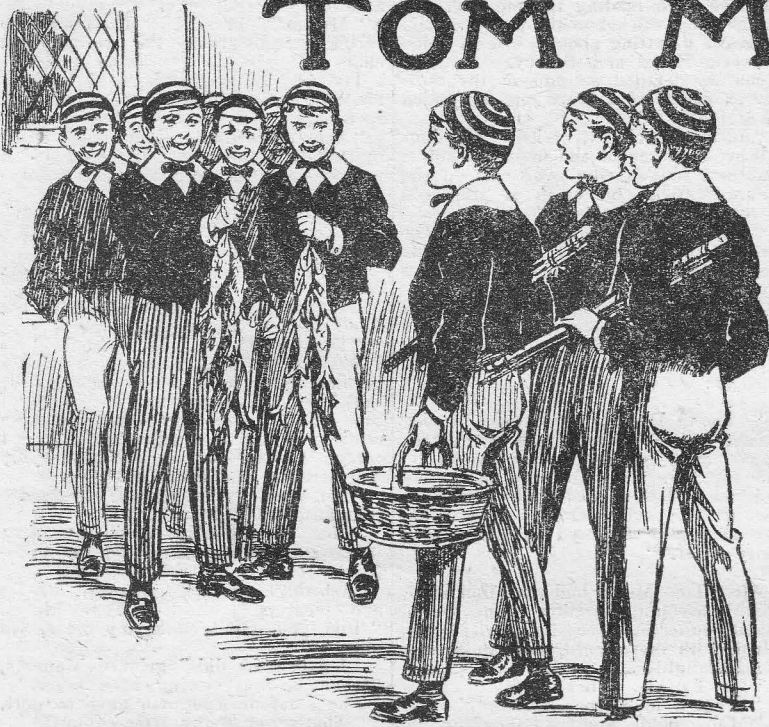
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THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Mysterious Parcel!

"WHICH as 'ow, Master Merry, Carter Paterson was a-lookin' for you this mornin'."

Tom Merry, captain of the Shell Form at St. Jim's School, who was walking arm-in-arm across the quad with his chums, Monty Lowther and Harry Manners, stopped short. The announcement caused him to gaze at Taggles, the school porter, in astonishment.

"Carter Paterson!" he echoed. "He's the johnny who owns all those vans and things, isn't he?"

Taggles opened his mouth to reply. But Lowther burst in.

"That's the fellow. What did he look like, Taggles? I've always pictured him to be a jovial old boy with white mutton-chop whiskers and a tall coachman's hat." The school porter gazed at Lowther severely.

"Which as 'ow the chap who called was a little 'un with a blue nose as ever was."

"M-my hat!" gasped Lowther in pretended surprise. "Are you sure his name was Carter Paterson, Taggy?"

"E wasn't Carter Paterson. 'E was—"

"An impostor—eh, Taggles?" put in Manners. "My aunt! Fancy him having the cheek to come here asking for Merry under an assumed name!"

"Which as 'ow 'e didn't!" almost shrieked Taggles. "'E—"

"Now you're contradicting yourself," said Tom Merry reprovingly. "You said distinctly that Mr. Paterson was looking for me. Can it be that you have not been speaking the truth, Taggles?"

The school porter assumed the colour of a ripe Victoria plum.

"Which as 'ow, if you contrary young varmint's will listen to me, I'll explain."

he howled. "It was Carter Paterson's man, with a hoss and van."

"Carter Paterson's van with a horse and man!" murmured Tom Merry. "Really, you're getting quite poetical, Taggles! And this agent of the worthy Mr. Paterson was looking for me?"

"This 'ere Carter Paterson's van—er—I mean, man—brought a parcel."

"A parcel! Great pip! Why didn't you send for me at once, Taggles?"

"Which as 'ow I didn't know where to find you, Master Merry."

"Oh crumbs! And he took the parcel away with him, I suppose?"

"E wanted to. But after a lot o' kindly persuasion I got him to let me sign for it."

"Bravo, Taggles! You're a brick! Where is it?"

"In my lodge, Master Merry. Which as 'ow I've been a-lookin' after it for you."

"That's jolly good of you!"

The school porter smiled benevolently.

"I'm allus ready to do any o' the young gents a good turn," he said.

"There's a letter come, too, for you, Master Merry."

Tom Merry turned to his chums exultingly.

"My hat! This is my lucky day, you chaps!" he cried. "Let's get the goods from the lodge. Lead on, Taggles McDuff!"

The Terrible Three followed the porter to the latter's lodge by the school gates. There Taggles first produced a letter, the sender of which Tom Merry guessed at once from the well-formed writing on the envelope.

"From my old nurse and governess, Miss Priscilla Fawcett," he said. "A thumping good remittance, let's hope."

Then Taggles brought forth a heavy brown-paper parcel about three feet long and a few inches in circumference,

bearing two labels addressed to the junior.

"Great pip! Are you sure that's for Merry?" asked Manners. "It looks rather like a packet of new canes ordered by the Head."

Tom Merry examined the labels curiously.

"It's for me right enough," he said. "Like the letter, it's from my old governess. I wonder what the dickens it contains?"

"A couple of broom-handles, I should judge by the shape of it," remarked Monty Lowther. "Cut the string, Tom."

"We'll take the parcel to the study, old top. Thanks muchly for taking it in, Taggles."

"Which as 'ow I've been a-lookin' after it werry carefully for you, Master Merry."

He wiped an imaginary speck of perspiration from his forehead, and looked duly fatigued. Then he drew the back of his hand suggestively across his mouth.

Tom Merry placed the parcel under his left arm, and put his right hand into his pocket. Taggles grinned expectantly. Then Tom Merry drew his hand from his coat and pressed a large, golden-coloured yielding object into the porter's upturned palm.

"There's a blood orange for you, Taggles," he said. "Nothing like it for quenching the thirst after a hard morning's work!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Manners and Lowther.

For a moment the school porter gazed at the slightly overripe fruit in his hand. The expression of pleased anticipation faded from his face, giving place to a look of deep disgust. Then, with a roar of anger, he hurled the inoffensive blood orange at the head of the donor.

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

NEXT TUESDAY!

CARDEW'S LAST CHANCE!

Tom Merry ducked like lightning, and the orange went sailing across the quad to the School House. A moment later the three chums, smiling broadly, marched rapidly off in the same direction, bearing the mysterious parcel with them, and leaving Taggles to address his pungent remarks concerning certain "ungrateful young rips" to the empty air.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Rods for Three!

"HERE we are, then, my pippins!" Tom Merry led the way into Study No. 10, off the Shell passage, and threw the elongated paper parcel on to the table. The Co. gathered round. "Here's a penknife, Tom," said Lowther. "Shall I rip off the string?"

"Fire away, old son!" Tom Merry and Manners looked on eagerly as their chum cut through the twine that bound the parcel. All three helped to tear the wrappings away. There, on the table, were revealed a number of long, polished objects with gleaming brass fittings.

An exclamation of surprise left Tom Merry's lips. "My aunt!" he cried. "Fishing-rods!"

"And lines!" ejaculated Manners. "Some quill floats as well!" pointed out Lowther.

Tom Merry looked at his two study-mates with a grin.

"I wonder what the thump induced my old governess to send these?" he said. "It isn't my birthday!"

"Perhaps she thinks that catching giddy tiddlers would help your natural history studies, old top," suggested Lowther.

"Rot! I notice she sent three lots of everything. Maybe the extra rods and lines are meant for you, my cherubs."

"Well, see what the letter says," remarked Manners. "You said that was from Miss Fawcett, too."

While Lowther and Manners examined the fishing-rods, Tom Merry tore open the envelope and extracted the neatly-written missive it contained. But he had not read far into the letter when he gave a loud chuckle.

"Oh, my hat! Listen to this, you fellows! It's too rich! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, fire away, old sport!"

Having relieved himself of another hearty chuckle, Tom Merry began to read:

"My Dearest Tommy,—I am sending under separate cover three fishing-rods—one each for you and those two nice little boys called Manners and Lowther."

"I like her cheek!" snapped Manners.

"Well, you are nice little boys, aren't you?" asked Tom Merry, grinning broadly. "But don't interrupt. The letter goes on to say:

"I have been very worried about you lately. Like only too many other reckless and misguided boys, you indulge in that terribly dangerous game called cricket, and—"

"What!" shrieked Lowther. "Did your old governess write that, Tom, or are you only pulling our legs?"

"This is Miss Fawcett's letter I'm reading. Now, do dry up. I forgot where I got to. Ah, here it is—'terribly dangerous game called cricket, and I hope that you will now give it up and take to fishing.'"

"Great pip!" gasped Manners.

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"Your governess must have gone potty, Tom!"

"Seems like it. She goes on to say: 'I have been reading the most terrible things about cricket in the papers lately. I enclose a cutting about a cricket game between Essex and Surrey. In it is given a detailed account of the murderous doings of a fierce monster called Jack Hobbs.'"

"Jack Hobbs!" cried Lowther. "Why, he's one of the finest cricketers and best fellows who ever wielded the willow! What on earth is your old governess talking about?"

"Can't make it out. But here's the cutting in question. I see that Miss Fawcett has underlined some passages with a blue pencil."

The newspaper clipping gave a vivid description of a match played between the two first-class counties at the Oval. Very heavily underlined was the passage:

"Then Douglas resorted to leg breaks, but Hobbs continued to treat the bowler with the same scant sympathy. He hit him all round the field, and finished a slashing display by slamming him into the pavilion clock, before having his off stump shattered by a lightning daisy-cutter."

After Tom Merry had read that brief, stirring account, the three chums looked at each other in silence for a brief space. Then, with one accord, they burst into hearty laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha! That's rich!"

"What a murderous monster!"

"M-my giddy aunt! Fancy my old governess taking it literally. Ha, ha, ha! I can just depict her horror as she imagined Jack Hobbs trouncing the Essex skipper with his bat."

"And she sent the fishing-rods to induce us to give up this dangerous pastime of cricket?" chuckled Manners.

"That's the ticket, obviously. In her letter she goes on to say that 'after I read the terrible account of the match, I noticed the following morning that Essex completely collapsed in the second innings.' No wonder, after the brutal treatment meted out to them by that fierce man Hobbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Manners and Lowther.

"So, my dearest Tommy, it is clear to me that cricket is almost as demoralising a sport as Spanish bull-fighting. I shall feel much more comfortable in my mind to feel that you and your little chums are pursuing the more seemly and gentle pastime of angling. With the best of love, Priscilla Fawcett."

"Egad!" murmured Manners. "Your old governess is jolly considerate for our welfare."

"You bet. But listen to the post-script. 'When you go fishing, my dearest Tommy, take great care of yourself. Do not sit near the bank of any pond or river. Wrap up warmly, for even in the summer-time it may be chilly sitting about. On no account get your feet wet. And please do not use worms for bait. This is a most cruel practice, affording great inconvenience and suffering to harmless creatures!'"

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Lowther. "We're not likely to. You won't catch me going fishing; it's the slowest game on earth. Still, it's jolly decent of Miss Fawcett to send us the gear!"

"Rather!" said Manners. "I hope you'll write a nice letter extending our grateful thanks, Tom, old top!"

Tom Merry tossed the letter on the

table, and picked up a section of one of the fishing-rods. Then he fitted two other sections to it. The rod extended almost across the study.

"My hat!" he said. "There's a nice springy feel about the thing, you chaps!"

The two other members of the Co. made up their fishing-rods complete with reels, lines, and floats.

"They're certainly jolly nice rods!" muttered Manners. "It must be a ripping sensation to yank up a whacking big mackerel or something!"

"These are for fresh-water fishing," said Lowther. "I remember years ago, when I was a kid—"

"How many years?" asked Tom Merry, with a smile. "Two?"

Lowther shot a dagger glance at the Shell captain.

"Don't be an ass!" he retorted. "As I was saying, many years ago I tried a bit of angling when I was staying near the Norfolk Broads with an uncle. I remember the way the float kept bobbing under water was jolly exciting. I caught sixteen—or was it sixty?—jolly fine perch in one afternoon."

"Six, probably," suggested Manners.

Lowther flushed hotly.

"No. I remember distinctly now; it was a mixed bag of rattling fine fish—perch, roach, pike, eels, smelts—"

"Whiting, haddock, kippers, welks and bloaters," finished Tom Merry. "Pity you didn't catch any crabs, old man."

"I expect he did," grinned Manners, "when he was rowing back home."

The amateur fisherman gave a snort.

"That's not funny, you chump!"

"Sorry I can't say the same for your fishing yarn," replied Manners brightly.

"But, seriously, I think it's a pity Miss Fawcett didn't send these fishing rods to fellows who would have appreciated 'em more."

A thoughtful look appeared on Tom Merry's face as he lovingly examined the slim, dappled, quill float on the end of his line.

"Old Sam Isaacs seemed to have found fishing mighty exciting," he murmured.

"Sam Isaacs?" repeated Manners.

"Yes, the fellow who wrote 'The Compleat Angler,' you know."

Monty Lowther gave a derisive laugh.

"You mean Isaac Walton, you silly chump! Sam Isaacs is the chap who owns that string of fish restaurants."

"Er—ah, yes; that's the johnny. A slip of the tongue, that's all. I've got his book on sculling about somewhere."

"Have you?" cried Manners. "That's ripping! You might lend me it, old man."

Tom Merry gave a low chuckle.

"I believe you're getting keen on having some fishing yourself, old chap," he said. "This prime fishing tackle is jolly enticing, I'll admit."

But Lowther was the first to completely surrender to the new attraction.

"Er—look here, you fellows," he said, "to-morrow's Wednesday and a half-holiday. I vote we try our luck in the River Rhyl. Are you game?"

And with one accord Tom Merry and Harry Manners gave a hearty assent.

"Rather!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Patient Anglers!

"H OORAY! I've got a bite!"

"What from—a mosquito?"

Ignoring Manners' sarcasm,

Tom Merry gave his fishing rod a frantic jerk. Then he wound in the line, to bring in to view the best collection of weeds of the afternoon.

A NEW LONG TALE OF ST. JIM'S.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"CARDEW'S LAST CHANCE!"

It was the half-holiday, and for three solid hours Tom Merry & Co. had sat on the grassy bank of the River Rhyl. Between them they had drowned about a hundred worms and grasshoppers and wasted half a pound of the best white dough. On the bank at their side was a large basket, borrowed from Mrs. Taggles, capable of holding half a hundred of the biggest perch that ever inhabited a river. As it happened, they might better have brought an empty matchbox for their catch—it would have been less trouble to carry.

Since receiving the fishing-rods on the previous day they had pored over Isaak Walton's classic work on angling. They had borrowed a natural history volume from their respected Form-master, Mr. Linton, and had swotted up everything about the various kinds of fish. They had taken advice from Taggles and amateur anglers among their school-fellows.

But in spite of all, Tom Merry & Co. had tempted the finny denizens of the River Rhyl in vain.

After this last disappointment Tom Merry fell back on the bank, a look of disgust on his face.

"There aren't any beastly fish!" he growled. "Fancy giving up an afternoon's cricket to come here and drag this silly river of weeds!"

"It is a bit slow," admitted Lowther. "Hallo, I've got one at last! No, I haven't!"

"Shurrup, youf ass!" muttered Manners.

He was gazing alertly at his float, which was flickering ever so slightly on the surface of the stream. Tom Merry and Lowther roused themselves from their apathy and watched in breathless silence.

Suddenly the float gave a sharp bob down under water. With a whoop like a Mohican on the warpath Manners gave a wild, upward swing with his rod. And there dangling at the end of the line was a silvery, shimmering, fluttering thing about the size of a sprat! "But it was a fish!"

"Hurrah!"

That mighty cheer left the throats of Tom Merry & Co. in unison. But it was succeeded a moment later by deep groans as the minute specimen of the finny tribe wriggled from the hook and dropped back into its native element with a faint little splash.

Manners' face was a picture of shattered hope.

"Oh crumbs!" he groaned. "What thumping hard cheese. The thing was a foot long if it was an inch. Still, it proves that there are fish in the river."

Convinced now that the stream was actually inhabited, fresh hope filled the breasts of the trio. Certainly it looked as though the fish were beginning to feed, for Tom Merry's float began to show alarming symptoms of St. Vitus' Dance.

"My hat, I've got a bite!" muttered Tom Merry.

But hardly had the words left his lips than something big and round prescribed a curve over his head. Then it crashed into the river close to his line, splashing a shower of water over the three anglers.

"Woof! Phew!" gasped Lowther. "What was that?"

Tom Merry & Co., startled and very wet, gazed about them in astonishment. It was Manners who first spotted the cause of the catastrophe.

"Look!" he cried.

For one brief second the chums saw two juniors in Eton jackets running between some bushes thirty yards away. Then the figures disappeared.

Tom Merry & Co. looked from one to another.

"The rotters!" said Manners. "They must have chucked a whacking great stone into the stream."

"So it seems," said Tom Merry ruefully. "That's finished our angling for one day. They scared my fish away all right, and there won't be any more coming round for some time. Who were the beasts? Unfortunately, I only saw their backs."

"I could make a jolly good guess who they were," remarked Manners—"Racke and Crooke."

"Egad, I believe you've hit it, old top!" said Lowther.

As it happened, Tom Merry & Co. had seen Aubrey Racke and George Crooke, the cads of the Shell, setting out from the school with fishing tackle some minutes ahead of them. Not being on the best of terms with their two well-to-do but unscrupulous Form-mates, the Terrible Three had not spoken to Crooke and his crony. The probability that Crooke and Racke had been fishing nearby suggested that one of the precious couple had been the stone-throwing culprit. Besides spoiling somebody else's pleasure was just the sort of fun that would amuse either of the pair.

But although Tom Merry & Co. were convinced in their own minds that the two juniors they had glimpsed were Racke and Crooke, they had not obtained definite proof of it.

"It's no good taxing the rotters with the matter," said Tom Merry. "they'd only deny it. Let's pack up, you fellows."

The three chums disconnected their fishing-rods, and, bearing these and the

empty basket, made their way disconsolately back to St. Jim's. As they entered the school gates they saw a little group of fellows talking excitedly in the centre of the grass quad. From it emerged Aubrey Racke and George Crooke, each holding a dozen fine fish strung together.

"Hallo, you fellows!" called out Racke cheerfully. "Been fishing?"

"No, deer-stalking!" replied Tom Merry.

Racke threw an aroused glance at the empty basket the chums were bearing.

"That accounts for it!" he said. "Obviously you haven't been catching fish."

"Gr-r-rh!" went Lowther.

But Manners' eyes were on the strings of fish that Racke and Crooke held into full view. His curiosity overcame him.

"You chaps seem to have been pretty successful," he remarked. "Where did you get 'em? From the Rhyl, I guess?"

"Well, you've made a thumping bad guess," replied Crooke. "We haven't been within miles of the Rhyl. Have we, Racke?"

"Rather not!"

"H'm!" said Tom Merry. "We thought you might have been. What kind of fish d'you call 'em?"

"Carp."

"Carp? Are they any good to eat?"

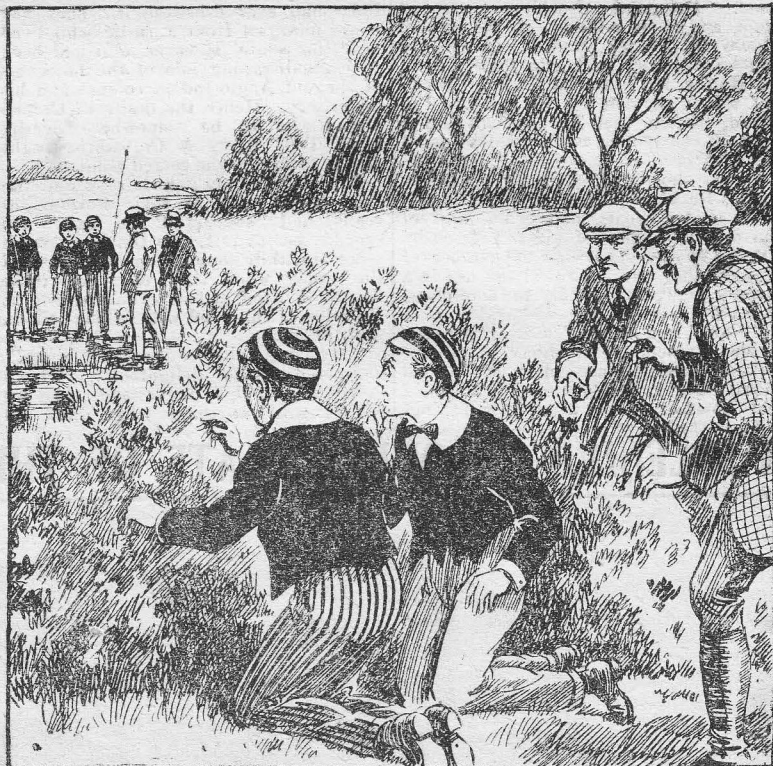
"I should smile!" grinned Crooke.

"My hat, we're just going to fry a couple apiece now!"

"What bait did you use?"

"Dough with aniseed mixed in it. But that wasn't the reason for our success. We went to the right spot to catch 'em!"

"Oh!" said Tom Merry curiously. "Where was that?"



TROUBLE COMING FOR THE CADS!—Crooke and Racke made their way to the bushes about forty yards from the pond, where Tom Merry & Co. were engaged in conversation with the colonel and his son. "My giddy aunt!" gasped Crooke. "The boulder didn't pulverise them at all!" So engrossed were they in the group near the pond that they did not notice the two gamekeepers standing behind them. (See Chapter 4.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 177.

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

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"GARDEW'S LAST CHANGE!"

Crooke hesitated and looked at Racke, who gave a slight shrug.

"Well, it isn't a secret really," said Crooke. "We obtained permission to fish in the pond on the estate of Colonel Cuttle, about three miles the other side of Glynn House."

"Colonel Cuttle! Who the dickens is he?"

"He's the retired Anglo-Indian johnny who took that big mansion known as the Retreat. He altered the name to Rooklands, though. The old boy was jolly decent when we asked if we might fish in his well-stocked pond. He said we or any of our personal friends could go at any time."

"My hat, that was sporty of him!" murmured Lowther, as he examined the fine catch of fish. "There'd be no objection if we three trotted over there some time?"

"Not at all!" put in Racke heartily. "Just go there and fish. If anyone speaks to you mention our names."

And, carrying their fishing tackle and swinging the splendid strings of fish in their hands, Crooke and Racke sauntered off towards the School House.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
An Eventful Half!

SMACK!

"Oooh!" Taggles, the school porter, crossing the quad close to the school building, gave voice to that exclamation in a tone of pained surprise. The immediate exciting cause was a well-developed fish that descended apparently from the sky, sending his tall hat spinning from his head. Delighted chuckles resounded from an upper window of the School House as Aubrey Racke and George Crooke withdrew back into their study.

"Ha, ha, ha!" gurgled Racke. "That's got rid of the last of the catch. I'm afraid, though, that Taggles will find it a bit off colour if he contemplates having it for supper."

It was shortly after dinner on Saturday. Racke and Crooke, with a few other choice spirits, had eaten most of the fish a couple of days previously. Thanks to the opportune appearance of Taggles they had got rid of the last in a manner highly satisfactory to themselves, at least.

"Now," said Racke, "we'll linger here a few moments, and then set off for Colonel Cuttle's place. Tom Merry and those other two silly chumps, Manners and Lowther, went with their fishing-

tackle ten minutes ago. Best to give 'em a good start."

Crooke gave a broad grin. "What a jape!" he said. "They've swallowed the bait for a cert—and the hook and sinker as well! It will be a sight worth going miles to see when the old colonel or one of his gamekeepers catches 'em fishing in his pond!"

"Egad, yes," agreed Racke. "Colonel Cuttle's got a temper like a half-boiled lobster. He'll simply slaughter Merry and his precious cronies. Serve 'em right, too! I've always hated the beasts!"

It was but natural that both Racke and Crooke should cordially dislike fellows who could, and did, hit straight from the shoulder in response to underhand tricks. But now the cads of the Shell saw the prospect of sweet revenge for all their painful experiences at the hands of Tom Merry & Co. The fact that it had been their own caddish tricks that had brought the well-merited punishment didn't weigh at all in the minds of Racke and Crooke.

While Taggles was still searching for the "young rips" who had smitten him with a "bloater," as he called it, the two Shell fellows left the school. Once outside of the gates they strode briskly along across country until they reached a high hedge surrounding the estate of a large country house. Without hesitation the precious pair made for a small opening in the hedge, through which they crawled into the private grounds.

As a matter of fact, both Crooke and Racke had been into a small wood belonging to Colonel Cuttle for the purpose of birds'-nesting. They had noted the pond on one occasion among an area of gorse. But it was quite untrue that either of them had ever fished in it. They had made inquiries from a rustic who lived near the estate, however, and had been told a hair-raising tale of the fierceness of the old Anglo-Indian colonel and his underlings. Hence the desire of Crooke and Racke to be somewhere nearby when Tom Merry & Co. were caught calmly fishing in the sacred pond.

The slight doubt which possessed the cads as to whether their Form-mates really had "swallowed the bait" was speedily set at rest. As the two cronies crept stealthily among the gorse beyond the small wood they discerned three figures in Eton jackets calmly sitting at the edge of the pond with fishing-rods in their hands.

"My aunt, they're here all right!" whispered Racke delightedly. "Let's creep just a bit closer, and then we sha'n't miss anything when that old

spitfire colonel or one of his gamekeepers arrives."

The two cautiously made their way to within forty yards of the pond, and then they halted. They deemed it unsafe to proceed nearer lest they themselves were spotted.

Apparently Tom Merry & Co. were thoroughly enjoying themselves. Manners and Lowther each made a fine catch almost simultaneously. Then Tom Merry himself drew a fish about a foot long from the water. He was just unhooking his capture when a burly, red-faced man with a clipped white moustache stepped from a thicket in the company of a tall, well-set youth and a bulldog.

Crooke and Racke almost hugged one another. Their excitement and delight were so great that they could hardly restrain themselves from laughing aloud.

"Now for the fun, old top!" muttered Racke, in a tense whisper. "My hat! I wouldn't be in the shoes of those silly jays for a tenner!"

So engrossed did Tom Merry & Co. appear in their latest finny capture that they did not notice the two men and the dog until the latter were almost directly behind them. As they suddenly became aware of the new arrivals, they faced about and sprang to their feet.

Crooke nudged Racke in sheer ecstasy. A moment later a look of blank astonishment, mingled with disappointment, appeared on the faces of the two cronies. For instead of immediately proceeding to slaughter Tom Merry & Co., the old colonel and his youthful companion gripped each of the lads in turn in a hearty handclasp. Then the owner of the property and the amateur fishermen indulged in cheery conversation. This Racke and Crooke were not close enough to overhear.

"M-my g-giddy aunt!" gasped the astonished Crooke. "The—the old boulder didn't pulverise 'em, after all!"

"Can't make it out!" muttered Racke. "Hallo! What's that?"

The two trespassers swung round in alarm. There close at the back of them were two hefty gamekeepers who had crept up.

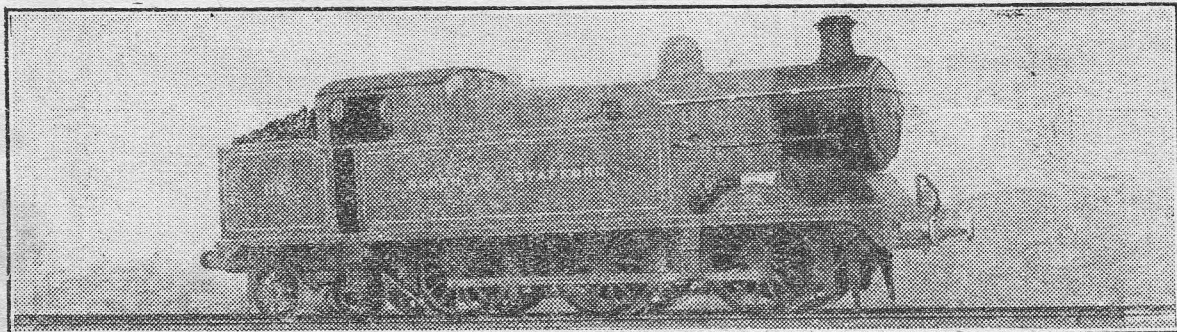
"Oooh, look out! Run for it!" yelled Racke.

But the two St. Jim's fellows were too late. The gamekeepers collared them, and held them in a grip of steel.

"Now then, you young varmint," growled one, "what d'you mean by a trespassin' on the colonel's preserves?"

(Continued on page 27.)

A SPLENDID COLOURED PLATE OF THIS RAILWAY ENGINE



(A Famous Express Locomotive of the North Staffordshire Railway.)

GIVEN AWAY FREE IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE!

Still Forging Ahead! Another Splendid Coloured Engine Plate Next Week! 13

TELLING OF KERN GUNTEN'S AMAZING PLOT TO GET EVEN WITH FRANK RICHARDS & CO.,
THE CHUMS OF THE BACKWOODS SCHOOL.



A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale, dealing with the Schooldays in the Backwoods of Canada of
FRANK RICHARDS

(Author of the Famous School Tales of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Gunten's Latest.

"A IN'T you fellows coming?" Chunky Todgers' plump face was quite excited.

Morning lessons were over at the lumber school, and Frank Richards was chatting with Bob Lawless and Vere Beaulere outside the porch, when Chunky came up.

Frank had noticed that a good many of the fellows had cleared off at once, in the direction of the old corral, at a little distance from the school. The school-ground was almost deserted.

Chunky was following the rest when he spotted the three chums near the porch, and bore down upon them.

"What's on?" asked Frank.

"Haven't you been told?" asked Chunky.

"Not a word. What is it?"

"H'm! Praps Gunten don't want you there," remarked Chunky thoughtfully. "Still, I'd come, all the same, if I were you."

"Oh, Gunten!" said Bob Lawless, with a sniff. "What's the little game now? Poker or euchre in the old corral?"

"A bit more exciting than that!" grinned Chunky Todgers. "It's a great game! Gunten says so. Keep it dark, of course! Miss Meadows would be awfully mad if she knew."

"What is it, then, Chunky?" asked Vere Beaulere, in his quiet way.

"Faro," said Chunky.

"What?" exclaimed the three, in chorus. Frank Richards & Co. stared at the fat schoolboy blankly.

"Faro!" repeated Frank.

"Yes, Gunten's the banker, and it's going to be some sport," said Chunky Todgers. "Of course, it's a secret."

"My hat!"

"Ain't you coming?" demanded Todgers.

"I guess not!" growled Bob.

"Well, look here! Lend me a few dollars, and—"

"I'll lend you my boot!" said Bob Lawless, lifting his foot to suit the action to the word. Chunky Todgers dodged, and ran for the gate. Chunky did not mean to be left out of Kern Gunten's new enterprise.

Frank Richards and his chums looked at one another.

Well enough they knew the rascally nature of Kern Gunten, the Swiss; but this was a surprise to them.

"I think that's about the limit!" said Vere Beaulere, setting his lips. "That young scoundrel ought to be stopped!"

"I guess so!"

Frank Richards' eyes flashed.

"Let's stop him!" he exclaimed. "Come on, you fellows! Let's take a hand in the game. It's time that rotter was stopped!"

"I'm on!" said Bob Lawless.

The chums of Cedar Creek followed in the footsteps of Chunky Todgers, who had disappeared through the timber.

Frank's brow was very dark.

Gunten, the son of the Swiss storekeeper at Thompson, was a rogue to the very fingertips, and he was very unpopular in the lumber school. In spite of his unpopularity, however, he had a certain amount of influence.

He claimed to be a "sport," and certainly what Gunten did not know about poker and euchre was not worth knowing.

Fellows who were easily led dropped into the way of joining in Gunten's "little games," and the cunning Swiss had made his knowledge of poker a very paying thing.

His present scheme was a little more ambitious, and Frank was surprised that he had the nerve to carry it out so near to the school.

He could guess what Miss Meadows' feelings would be like if the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek discovered that one of her pupils was running a faro game, like a "sport" of the frontier mining-camps.

The three schoolboys hurried through the timber, and reached the abandoned clearing on the creek, where the old corral stood.

There was a buzz of voices in the corral as they entered. A dozen or more of the Cedar Creek fellows were gathered there.

Kern Gunten was seated at a plank bench, with a German-silver box in his hand, containing the cards.

"Make your game, gentlemen!" the Swiss was saying as Frank Richards came up.

He spoke in the manner of the faro-banker, his keen, greedy face passing from face to face.

"I guess I'm butting in!" remarked Eben Hacke.

"Same here!" said Chunky Todgers. "Lend me a dollar, Hacke!"

"Go and chop chips!"

"Now then, gentlemen," said Gunten, "put up your dust! You don't often get a chance for a flutter like this!"

"Hallo! You fellows coming into the game?" asked Lawrence, as Frank Richards & Co. joined the crowd round the plank table.

Gunten gave them a dark look.

"No," said Frank curtly. "Look here, you fellows, keep out of this! What's the good of throwing your money to that foreign swindler, for one thing?"

"Who's a swindler?" shouted Gunten.

Frank looked at him steadily in the face.

"You are!" he said directly. "It's a swindling game, anyway; and I don't believe you would play it straight, either! You couldn't!"

"Stand back, if you don't want to play!" said Gunten savagely. "I don't want your pennies! Gentlemen, make your game!"

Three or four coins rattled down.

"Game all made?" asked Gunten, taking no further heed of Frank Richards.

"I guess so! Pile in!"

Gunten began to pass out the cards.

Frank Richards bit his lip hard.

He had no right to interfere with the other fellows, and he had a natural horror of appearing to "preach" to them.

But he was strongly inclined to take the rascally Swiss by the scruff of the neck and run him down to the creek and pitch him in.

Frank was standing undecided when there was a light step in the entrance to the old corral.

"By gum!" whispered Bob Lawless. "Miss Meadows!"

"Miss Meadows!" said Chunky Todgers faintly.

Chunky made a dive for a gap in the wall, and disappeared through it like a fat rabbit.

But the other fellows, with crimson faces, stood still as the schoolmistress advanced, with a stern brow. Kern Gunten sat frozen at the table, with the card-box in his thick fingers.

"What does this mean?"

(Continued on page 16.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 177.


A SPLENDID TALE OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

NEXT
TUESDAY!


"THE CEDAR CREEK SUITORS!"

BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

Sr. Jims
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 idea has been lurking in my mind for a long time to publish a speshul number dealing with the Old Boys of the various schools, and this will be published shortly.

Quite a lot of these gents are keen readers of my WEEKLY. Dockters, barristers, majer-generals, and other kinds of politicians, have written me glowing letters of praise. They say that the jernal under my kontrol gets better and better each week.

It must be jolly nice to be an Old Boy—to come down to the school years afterwards, when one has achieved fame and forchune. On Speech Day we generally get a whole crowd of them down—toffs with monocles, and old jossers with flowing beards. How ripping to be able to look round the old school and say, "Ah! This is my old study, where I used to konsume a duzen doughnuts every afternoon!" Or, "This is the spot where I licked Weakling Minor—knocked him out in the first round!" Or, again, "This is where I had my annual barf!"

One of these days I shall be an Old Boy myself, and it will be a treat to come down and look over the old plaiice—to see the desk on which I engraved my name, and to gaze at that familiar landmark, the school tuckshop. All the kids will point to me with pride, and say: "That's Mr. Bunter, who was here thirty years ago. They used to call him 'Porpoise,' and he's still as plump as ever. He's a big man on the Stock Exchange."

Meanwhile, I must go plodding along at Greyfriars, editing my wonderful WEEKLY.

I have taken grate panes with this issue, and I have got together some ripping artikles and stories. To those who assisted me, I tender my harty thanks. To those who refused, I bequeethe my undying hatred!

And now, dear readers, I will ring off, remaining, as of yore, your sinseer pal,
YOUR EDITOR.

**Our Special
HEALTH & STRENGTH
Number
NEXT WEEK.**

THE POPULAR.—No. 177.

**THE OLD
BRIGADE!**

BY AN OLD BOY.

We are the boys of the Old Brigade,
Who were here in days gone by;
At Greyfriars School we worked and played,
And broke bounds on the sly.
A lively lot of larks we had,
We were mischievous as apes;
By Jove, we made the masters mad
With all our pranks and japes!

"Tubby" and "Dolly" and "Jovial Jim,"
Those were our nicknames gay;
Cricket we played, and we learnt to swim
In the good old British way.
We fought and "ragged" from morn till night,
Till we were stiff and sore;
Yes, we fairly set the place alight
In the happy days of yore!

Where are the boys of the Old Brigade?
What are they doing now?
Many in khaki are arrayed,
Whilst others rule the plough.
Farmers, soldiers, and sailors we,
To honour and fame we spring;
Serving our country on land and sea,
Loyal to home and King.

Gone are the gladsome days of old,
Of thrilling sport and game;
But the school traditions, we are told,
Are kept up just the same.
Then, here's to Greyfriars, great and grand,
Ne'er may its glory perish!
The finest school throughout the land—
The school we fondly cherish!

PEEPS INTO THE FUTURE.

By George Kerr.



BOB CHERRY (of Greyfriars.)

**LOVE'S
LABOUR
LOST!**

By **SAMMY BUNTER.**

"I SAY, Sammy!" eggscclaimed Nugent minor. "There's a sellybrated Old Boy arriving at Greyfriars this afternoon. He's Mr. Samuel Splosh, the millyunaire. Made a fortune out of tintacks, I believe."

I pricked up my ears.
"Do you know which trane he's coming on?" I inkwired.

"Yes. The trane that gets in at Friardale at three-thirty. Hear! Where are you going, Sammy?"

"I'm going to meet Mr. Splosh!" I said promptly.
And I hurried away in the direckshun of the station.

I lost no time in getting to my destination. The trane rolled in, and Mr. Samuel Splosh rolled out. He was a portly, pompuss-looking gent. He threw me a kondensending glance.

"I see you are a Greyfriars boy," he said. "Yessir! Bunter of the Second. Carry your bag for you, sir?"

"Yes, if you wish."
It was a heavy sootcase that I had to carry. It nearly wrenched my arm out of its sockett. Goodness knows what was inside it. Gold, perhaps. Anyway, it weighed a ton.

Mr. Splosh set off for Greyfriars, and I came toiling along in the rear.

I never was a champion weight-lifter, and it was a terribul ordeal, carrying that bag. I kept on changing hands, and the perspirashun rolled down my cheeks.

"Stick it!" said Mr. Splosh, with an encouraging glance over his shoulder.
"Ow! It—it's getting me down!" I muttered.

At last, after what seemed an infirmity (or is it eternity?) I reached the school. And I was jolly glad to dump that sootcase down in the hall. I can tell you!

"Would you like me to show you round the school now, sir?" I asked.
"Delighted!" said Mr. Splosh.

So I toed him round the school. I'm not quite certain whether it's "toed" or "towed," but you know what I mean.

I spent two hours in the kappasity of pilot and guid. And by the end of that time I was utterly worn out.

Turning to Mr. Splosh, I held out my hand. "A very grubby paw," he observed.
"Oh, really, sir—"

"Why are you holding your hand out?"
"For a tip, sir." I eggspocketed a quid, at least.

Mr. Splosh shook his head.
"Although I am a millyunaire, it is against my prinseples to give tips," he said.
"Oh crumbs!"

I jolly nearly kollapsed.
After all my terribul eggsertions, I didn't get a soo. Not a ha'penny!

A crool shame, I call it. A wicked, dasterdy shame! What is your opinion, dear readers?



By JIMMY SILVER
(of Rookwood.)

HE was a benevolent-looking gent. Sort of Santa Claus in appearance. Lovell pointed him out to me from the window of the study.

Leaning on a stout stick, the old gent came hobbling across the quadrangle at Rookwood.

"Who is he?" gasped Raby. "Methuselah, or Methuselah's ghost!" I said.

"He looks about a hundred and ten years old," said Lovell, with a grin. "Perhaps he's come to apply for the job of gate-porter, in place of old Mack."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wonder if he remembers the Battle of Waterloo?" said Newcome.

"He probably took part in it," I said. "I dare say he was born in the reign of George the Third."

The ancient and venerable gent disappeared into the school building.

Presently we heard the halting footsteps in the passage.

"He—his coming this way!" stammered Raby.

"My hat!"

A stick rapped on the door of the study. The next moment the door opened, and in hobbled the ancient.

"My dear infants!" he mumbled toothlessly. "I am overjoyed to see you! Accept my blessing!"

"Who—who are you, sir?" I stuttered.

"My name is Martin Milldew. I am an Old Boy."

"Great Scott!"

"Long, long ago, whilst you were yet unborn, I was a member of this institution."

"Why doesn't he call it a public school, and have done with it?" muttered Newcome, under his breath. "Institution' sounds horrible!"

"Take a chair, sir!" I said.

Mr. Milldew tottered towards the armchair.

"Although I have just said that I am overjoyed to see you, I could wish that you were looking more healthy and robust," he said. "Poor scraggy little things!"

We flushed crimson. Poor scraggy little things! What an insult! True, we are not exactly Tubby Muffins. But we are anything but scraggy.

We began to wish that Mr. Milldew was about seventy years younger, so that we could have given him the bumping he so richly deserved.

"We're not scraggy, sir!" I said hotly.

"Pardon me, but you are—unless my vision is deceptive. Do they still feed you on gruel?"

"Gug-gug-gruel?" gasped Lovell.

Mr. Milldew nodded.

"And are you still beaten black and blue for your misdemeanours?" he inquired.

"Well, we're licked when we deserve it," I said. "I don't know about being beaten black and blue."

The Old Boy fumbled in his pocket. After much groping, he produced a handful of coppers. Then he beckoned to me with a bony forefinger.

"Here is a penny for you, my little man," he said.

"W-h-what!"

"A whole penny, to spend exactly as you like!"

The coin was thrust into my palm. I stood staring at it speechlessly.

"And here is a penny for you," said Mr. Milldew, turning to Lovell.

Lovell was speechless, also. We were being treated as if we were waifs and strays.

The sum of one penny was solemnly handed to Newcome. And then a penny was offered to Raby. He put his hands behind his back, and burst out laughing.

[Supplement II.]

"Are you trying to be funny, sir?" he exclaimed.

"Funny? Oh dear, no!"

"But you—you offered me a penny—"

"Certainly!"

"Well, I don't want charity—none of us do!"

Mr. Milldew looked pained.

"I was only trying to be kind," he said. "I thought you would appreciate it!"

"My dear sir," said Raby, "I'm getting five bob a week pocket-money, so what use is an odd penny?"

"Goodness me!" gasped Mr. Milldew. "Times have indeed changed. When I was a member of this institution, over sixty years ago, it was more or less a reformatory."

"Great pip!" I ejaculated.

"Of course, it was officially styled a public school," went on Mr. Milldew, "but the discipline was that of a reformatory. We were flogged for the most trivial offences. Our pocket-money was confiscated week by week, and placed to our credit in a bank."



After much groping, the Old Boy produced a handful of coppers. "Here's a penny for you, my little man!" he said turning to me.

We drew it out in a lump sum on leaving the school. Each boy was given threepence a week to spend at the school shop—no more!"

"My only aunt!" gasped Lovell.

"I have been away in foreign lands all these years," explained Mr. Milldew. "I know nothing of any changes which may have taken place in the last sixty years."

"I can assure you, sir," I said, "that Rookwood is a very different place now. We enjoy heaps of freedom. Our pocket-money is our own, to do as we like with. Floggings are not extinct, but they are only awarded for serious offences. Not even the most discontented of the fellows can compare modern Rookwood to a reformatory."

"I am very pleased to hear it!" said Mr. Milldew. "I am sorry I insulted you by offering you pennies. The insult was unintentional."

"That's all right, sir!" said Lovell cheerfully. "Will you stay to tea?"

"With pleasure! I cannot touch solid food, but I shall be delighted to quaff a basin of tea."

I think Mr. Milldew was about the queerest guest we've ever had to a study tea. But he told us some entertaining yarns of his schooldays. And we were jolly sorry when he left and hobbled away on his stout stick in the direction of the railway-station.

OLD BOYS' NEWS!

Collected From All Parts
—of the Globe, by—
MONTY LOWTHER.

WILLIAM TORTUSS, who left St. Jim's in 1870 to join the Army, has just been promoted to the rank of lance-corporal. Our hearty congratulations.

COLONEL HARE, who only left school in 1917, is to be promoted to the rank of brigadier-general. More congratulations!

A. LOWDE-SNORER, known to his contemporaries at St. Jim's as "Sleepy Alf," has just obtained a position in a Government office.

BILL BRINY, a very popular Old Boy, now holds commissioned rank in the Navy. Another Old Boy, Freddie Foam, is serving on the same ship.

DAVID DRIBBLE, who left St. Jim's a few years ago, has made a name for himself in amateur football circles.

TOMMY THYNNE, a well-known Old Boy, has leapt into fame as the inventor of an obesity cure.

A very old Old Boy, **P. SHUTER**, came to visit us a short time ago. He had tea with us, and chatted about old times. It appears that he was expelled from St. Jim's for repeatedly using his "P. Shuter" in the Form-room!

MR. STARR TURNER, who in his schooldays was a member of the Shell Form Amateur Theatrical Society, is now a leading light on the stage.

We regret to hear that **MR. T. SPENDER** has been compelled to file a petition in bankruptcy.

MR. CLARK is still employed on an office stool. And **MR. KNIBB** is a well-known writer.

MR. CANNON and **MR. ARMOUR** have been appointed Joint Secretaries of State for War.

MR. CHICK has become a successful poultry farmer. And **MR. HAMMOND** is a flourishing restaurant proprietor. Everybody buys his Hammond-beef sandwiches!

MR. T. DRINKER is now a celebrated temperance orator. And **MR. F. VINE** is a champagne importer.

Surprising how the St. Jim's Old Boys manage to climb the ladder so quickly, isn't it?

FREE REAL PHOTOS
for readers of
The "MAGNET"!

GUNTEN'S REVENGE.

(Continued from page 13.)

Miss Meadows' voice was very quiet, but it was very grim. Never had the Cedar Creek fellows seen the schoolmistress look so angry.

There was no reply, and the silence in the old corral could almost be felt.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. The Way of the Transgressor.

MISS MEADOWS fixed her eyes upon Kern Gunten.

The Swiss rose clumsily to his feet. All his nerve had vanished at the sight of the cold, stern face of the Canadian schoolmistress.

"Gunten, what are you doing with those cards?"

The schoolmistress' voice was like ice.

Gunten stammered helplessly.

"It—it—it's only a game, ma'am," stammered Eben Hacke.

"And what is the game called?"

"F-f-raro, I guess."

"Take up your money!"

With crimson faces, the discomfited "sports" took up their stakes from the board.

"Give me those cards, Gunten!"

Without a word, Kern Gunten handed over the German-silver box to Miss Meadows.

"Richards!"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Take this box and throw it into the creek!"

"Yes, ma'am."

A minute later there was a splash, and Frank Richards came back into the corral. The amateur fero-banker's stock-in-trade had vanished in the muddy depths of Cedar Creek.

Miss Meadows' clear glance travelled over the ashamed faces before her. No one was anxious to meet her eyes.

Frank Richards & Co. were feeling especially uncomfortable.

They had not come there to join in the rascally game, but with a half-formed intention of stopping it by ragging the Swiss.

That, of course, could not be explained to Miss Meadows.

To explain to the schoolmistress smacked a little too much of the Pharisee, who claimed that he was not as others were.

They were silent, with flushed faces. They knew that in Miss Meadows' eyes all the fellows present were tarred with the same brush, and they had to be silent.

"I am ashamed of you," said Miss Meadows quietly. "I hope that, when you think a little over this, you will be ashamed of yourselves. You are all well aware that gambling is wrong and base, and very harmful."

Silence.

"You are the worst, Gunten," continued Miss Meadows.

"I—I—"

"More than once, Gunten, I have suspected you of this kind of rascality," said Miss Meadows. "I could not be sure, and I hoped that it was not the case. Now I have found you in the act of inducing your school-fellows to gamble."

Gunten bit his thick lip hard. Apparently, Miss Meadows had not been so blind to his real character as he had supposed.

"You," continued Miss Meadows, "I must punish. The others I shall leave to their consciences."

"We—we were all in it, ma'am, I reckon," stammered Hacke—"all but Richards and Dawson and Lawless and the Cherub. They were against it."

"Indeed! I am glad to hear that," said Miss Meadows. "If you were against this, Richards, why are you here?"

Frank was silent.

"He was the same as the rest," said Gunten, speaking at last.

There was some comfort in the thought of involving the fellow he hated in his own punishment.

But Hopkins spoke up at once.

"That's a lie!" he said. "Richards was ere to chip in agin it, and you knows it, Gunten! So was the other chaps."

"Very good," said Miss Meadows, under-

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standing. "Gunten, I certainly could not take your word, Lawless!"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Take your knife and cut me a strong switch in the thicket."

"Yes, ma'am."

Bob came back in a few minutes with the switch.

Gunten eyed it uneasily. He could guess to what use that instrument of punishment was to be applied.

The Cedar Creek fellows almost held their breath.

Corporal punishment was practically unknown at the lumber school. But evidently Miss Meadows considered it necessary, in this extreme case, to depart from her usual rule. And undoubtedly she was right.

"I shall punish you, Gunten," said Miss Meadows. "It is the only way, I fear, to bring you to a sense of your wickedness. Hold out your hand!"

The Swiss' eyes glittered. He clenched his hands hard.

"Do you hear me, Gunten?" said Miss Meadows, very quietly. "Unless you obey me at once, I shall send you home, and you will not be allowed to return to school."

Gunten drew a hard breath, and held out his hand. He winced and panted as he received the cut. The weedy, unfit Swiss could not bear pain.

It would not have hurt one of the hardy Canadian lads much, but it was different with Gunten.

"The other hand!"

Swish!

Gunten clasped his hands and yelled. Miss Meadows threw away the switch.

"Gunten, I shall send a report of your conduct to your father. The rest of you, I trust, will think over this, and come to understand how contemptible such conduct is."

"I—I say, we—we're sorry, ma'am!" blurted out Eben Hacke. "We—we never meant any harm!"

"Indeed we didn't, Miss Meadows," said Lawrence. "It was only a lark."

"I believe you, so far as you boys were concerned," said Miss Meadows. "With Gunten, I fear, it was much worse. You may go back to the school."

The crowd of fellows cleared off, and Miss Meadows followed them from the corral.

In the school that afternoon Kern Gunten sat with a face like a demon. The caning had hurt him, but the quiet contempt of the schoolmistress had cut still deeper.

And Gunten was looking forward with dismay to that report which was to go home to his father.

Gunten senior was well known in Thompson for his sharp practices, but it was likely that he would regard in a very different light such practices on the part of his son.

Gunten dreaded a vigorous application of the parental cowhide, and the covert glances he bestowed on Miss Meadows were full of hatred and malice.

It was not a happy afternoon for the "sport" of the lumber school, and it was very unlikely that the game of fero would ever be played again in Cedar Creek with Kern Gunten in the role of banker.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Gunten's Scheme.

"RICHARDS!"

"Yes, Miss Meadows?"

"Please step in here."

Frank Richards stepped into Miss Meadows' little sitting-room, which opened off the hall.

The Canadian schoolmistress gave him a kind smile.

Evidently Frank was exonerated in Miss Meadows' mind from blame in connection with the amateur fero-bank.

"I wish this letter to be taken to the office of the 'Thompson Press,'" said Miss Meadows. "I intended to trust it to Gunten, as he goes home to Thompson. I have decided not to do so, however. Would you care to ride over to Thompson and deliver the letter?"

"Certainly," said Frank.

"You know the office of the newspaper?"

"I passed it when I was in Thompson before," said Frank. "I'll take the letter with pleasure, Miss Meadows."

"Your uncle will not mind your being home a little later than usual?"

"Oh, no!" said Frank. "We weren't going home at once, anyway."

"Indeed?" said Miss Meadows, looking at him.

Frank coloured.

"We were going to stay and help Mr. Slimmey split logs, ma'am," he hastened to explain. "It's all right. Bob and Beaulere can split the logs while I'm gone to Thompson."

"Very well," assented Miss Meadows. "Here is the letter, and here is a dollar. It is an advertisement for the paper, and you will pay for it and take a receipt."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Tell them I specially want it to appear this week, if possible," said Miss Meadows. "There is no one to do Black Sam's work while he is ill, unless I can get a man from Thompson."

"Yes, ma'am."

Frank took the envelope and the dollar, and slipped both into his pocket. As he quitted the room, he almost ran into Kern Gunten. He gave the Swiss a look of contempt. He could see that Gunten had been listening close by the open door of Miss Meadows' room.

"Get out of the way!" muttered Frank.

He pushed past the Swiss and went out of the schoolhouse.

Gunten cast a bitter look after him, and then stepped into Miss Meadows' doorway.

The schoolmistress gave him a cold glance.

"Here is the letter for your father, Gunten. You will take care that you deliver it to him?"

"You can trust me, ma'am."

"I hope so," said Miss Meadows. "In any case, I shall communicate with your father afterwards. You may go, Gunten."

"Good-night, Miss Meadows," said the Swiss, in his most oily tones.

"Good-night," said Miss Meadows curtly. Gunten left the schoolhouse with knitted brows. He had to deliver Miss Meadows' report to his father, and he was apprehensive of the result.

At the school gate he joined Keller, the only fellow he was friendly with.

Keller was a Swiss like himself, the son of an emigrant from Europe who had "left his country for his country's good."

Keller was holding two horses. Gunten took his own, dragging the animal's head round savagely.

"Got the letter?" Keller asked, with a grin.

"Yes!" snarled Gunten.

"It means a lambasting at home," grinned Keller. "Your popper will be mad!"

"I guess so. The popper wants to keep in with Miss Meadows and the mission and all the respectable folk in the section," said Gunten, with a sour smile. "It makes it easier to run his business in Thompson. Sheriff Henderson has been nosin' into things, and popper doesn't want to lose the post-mastership. And the postmaster isn't supposed to allow a fero-bank in his back parlour. I guess I shall get the cowhide."

"For following in your popper's footsteps!" chuckled Keller.

Gunten grunted and vaulted on his horse.

"Richards isn't gone yet?" he asked.

"No; he went over towards Slimmey's cabin."

"Good! Ride faster!" said Gunten.

The two Swiss rode away on the trail through the timber in the thickly falling dusk. Gunten's brows were knitted, and there was a glitter in his narrow, deep-set eyes.

About a mile from the lumber school he drew rein.

"Hold on!" he called out.

Keller stopped.

"What's the game?" he asked.

"Get down!"

Keller dismounted. Gunten led the two horses into the timber, and tethered them at some distance from the trail. He removed the trail-ropes from his own saddle, and prepared a running noose at the end of the rope.

Keller watched him in astonishment.

"What the thunder is the game?" he exclaimed. "What are you making a lasso for?"

"For Frank Richards!" said Gunten, between his teeth.

"What the dickens—"

"Frank Richards is going to Thompson for Miss Meadows. She's given him the advertisement to take to the 'Press' office," explained Gunten. "I heard her telling him when I went to her room for her letter to my father. He's going to ride to Thompson, and he must pass this spot."

"And you're going to rope him in?" exclaimed Keller.

"You bet!"

"I guess I'd let him alone," said Keller uneasily. "That fellow is too hefty with his fists."

"Never mind his fists," said Gunten. "I can stand that. I'm not doing it for fun. I'm after that letter of Miss Meadows."

"What for?"

"I guess I'm going to put a spoke in the wheel," said Gunten, with a malicious grin. "Frank Richards is high up in favour now, since Miss Meadows found out he was down on the faro game down in the corral. That fool Hacke blurted it out. But suppose Frank Richards played a rotten trick on Miss Meadows, and caused her a lot of trouble—"

"He wouldn't!"

"He might be made to seem to," said Gunten coolly. "I'm going to rope him in on the trail and take the letter. When Frank Richards gets it back, it won't be the same letter; but he won't know it. He's taking an advertisement to the 'Press' for an odd-job man. I guess it's going to be a different kind of advertisement when it appears."

"By gum!"

"And if Miss Meadows isn't mad with him, you can call me a sucker," grinned Gunten. "There'll be a letter to Rancher Lawless and the cowhide for Master Frank, I guess, as well as for me."

Keller burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess it's a cinch!" said Gunten. "Come back to the trail!"

The two young rascals crept back to the trail, and waited in the timber, watching the hoof-beaten path under the trees.

The dusk was thickening. Frank Richards was certain to pass before long, and he was equally certain to fall a helpless victim to the ambush.

"Hark!" muttered Keller, holding up his hand.

Thud, thud, thud!

From the direction of the creek came the steady beat of hoofs. Gunten, with a grim smile, prepared the lasso for the cast.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Roped on the Trail.

FRANK RICHARDS, after leaving Miss Meadows, went towards Mr. Slimmey's cabin by the creek.

Mr. Slimmey, the assistant-master of Cedar Creek, was there in his shirt-sleeves, splitting logs for the winter.

Several of the Cedar Creek fellows had stayed behind to help him. It was the custom of the Canadian West, where everybody lends everybody else a helping hand when needed.

Bob Lawless and Vere Beanclore were busy with their axes already, with Dick Dawson and Tom Lawrence and Harold Hopkins.

"Wade in, you slacker!" called out Bob, as his English cousin came up.

"I'm going over to Thompson for Miss Meadows," said Frank. "I'll come back here, Bob, by the time you've finished."

"Right you are!" said Bob.

Frank walked away for his horse.

Only a few minutes after the two Swiss he rode away from the lumber school—at a more leisurely pace, however. The two rascals were well ahead of him on the trail.

Frank Richards was thinking of anything but Kern Gunten as he trotted along the dusky trail to the distant town of Thompson.

But suddenly there came a whiz under the shadows of the trees, and as he heard it Frank drew rein hastily. He knew the sound of a whizzing lariat.

But even as he pulled in his horse the noose settled over his shoulders, and the drag on the rope wrenched him from the saddle.

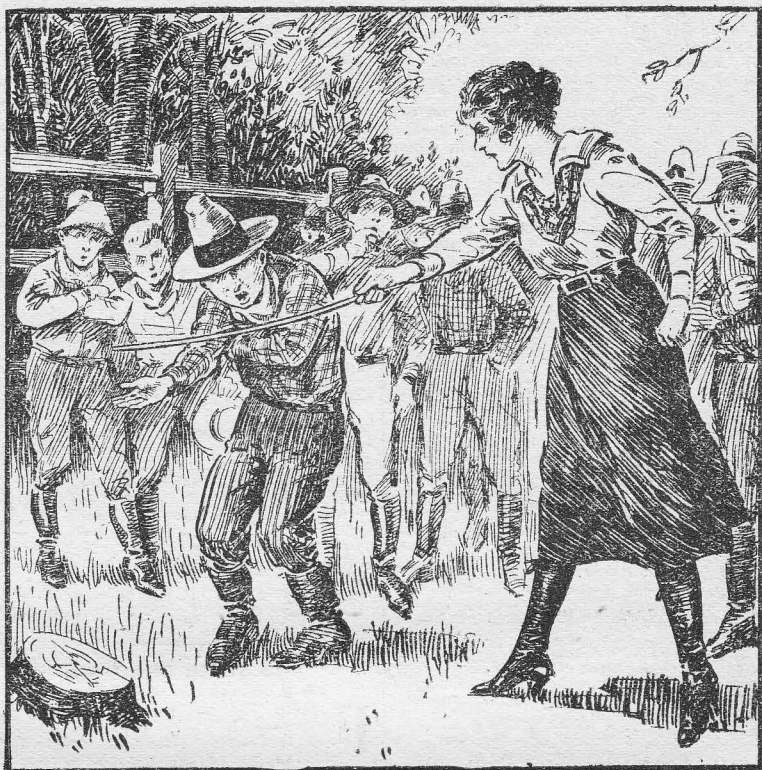
Bump!

The pony reared and whinnied as the school-boy rolled from its back and bumped heavily into the grass.

There was a shout under the dusky trees, and Gunten and Keller came running into the trail.

Frank struggled with the rope, but the tightening noose pinned his arms to his sides, and Gunten kept the rope taut.

The two Swiss reached him in a few moments, and then their grasp was laid upon him.



THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR!—"Unless you obey me at once," said Miss Meadows very quietly, "I shall send you home, and you will not be allowed to return to school. Now hold out your hand!" Gunten drew a hard breath and held out his hand. He winced as he received a stinging cut from the switch. (See Chapter 2.)

"Keno!" grinned Gunten.

He jerked at the rope as Frank struggled, and the helpless boy rolled in the grass, amid loud chuckles from the Swiss.

"You rotter!" panted Frank. "Is that you, Gunten? Let me go, you bound!"

"I guess not!" smiled Gunten.

He bent down, and tightened the rope further and knotted it. Frank Richards was a helpless prisoner now.

The two Swiss dragged him aside from the trail, and Gunten ran the rope round a big trunk and fastened it there.

Frank eyed them in helpless anger.

"What does this mean?" he panted. "What game are you playing?"

"I guess we're going to leave you here all night to cool your heels!" chuckled Gunten. "How do you like the prospect?"

"You dare not!" shouted Frank. "You know I've got a letter to take for Miss Meadows!"

"I'm going to take that for you. All serene! I'll deliver it safe and sound in Thompson," said Gunten.

He felt in Frank's pockets, and took the letter.

"Come on, Keller!"

The two young rascals disappeared into the wood. Frank's pony came up to him, sniffing round him and whinnying.

Frank Richards struggled savagely with the rope that secured him to the tree, but he struggled in vain.

Gunten had done his work carefully. Frank was a prisoner until the Swiss chose to come and release him.

Not for a moment did Frank believe that even the revengeful Swiss would dare to leave him tied to the tree all night. He concluded that Gunten was attempting to frighten him, and was waiting in the wood to hear him appeal to be released.

Frank did not utter a word. He was underdog at present, but he mentally promised the Swiss the hiding of his life when he had his hands free.

Meanwhile, Gunten and Keller plunged deeper into the wood. It was very necessary

to keep Gunten's next action safe from chance observation.

From his saddle the Swiss took a small lantern. He lighted it, and set it on a log amid the thickets. Keller watched him with much curiosity. Gunten's next step was to fill a tin dipper with water from the spring in the timber.

Opening the top of the lantern, he set the tin dipper over the flame.

In ten minutes the water was nearly boiling, and a thick steam rose from it.

"Hold it for me, Keller!"

Taking Miss Meadows' letter, Gunten held it carefully over the steam, and in a couple of minutes the flap of the envelope was loose enough to open easily.

"That's done!" grinned Gunten.

He drew out Miss Meadows' letter to the "Press."

There were two enclosures.

One was a letter from the schoolmistress, and it ran, in Miss Meadows' well-known delicate handwriting:

"Dear Mr Penrose,—Please insert the enclosed advertisement in this week's 'Press.' I should very much like it to appear this week, if possible, as the man is badly wanted here.

"Yours sincerely,

"E. MEADOWS."

Gunten chuckled explosively as he read that letter, which he did without the slightest scruple.

The other enclosure was the advertisement, which ran:

"Handy man wanted for a few weeks at Cedar Creek School. Cabin, firewood, and good wages for a suitable man.—Apply at once to Miss Meadows, Headmistress."

That letter was in Mr. Slimmey's handwriting. The assistant-master had evidently drawn up the advertisement for Miss Meadows.

Gunten twisted the paper, and held it in the flame of the lantern. It was consumed in a moment or two.

"Phew!" murmured Keller.

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"All serene! I guess I'm going to draw up a better advertisement than that for Miss Meadows," said Gunten coolly.

He opened his pocket-book and took out a sheet of notepaper and an indelible pencil. Keller watched him breathlessly.

The cunning Swiss spread the paper on the cover of the book and rested it on his knee.

With the other letter before him, he wrote with the pencil, and his hand bore a remarkable resemblance to that of Miss Meadows. Skill of this kind was one of the gifts of Kern Gunten.

Keller fairly gasped as he read, over Gunten's shoulder, what was written, for the new advertisement ran:

"Schoolmistress, age twenty-three, tall, considered good-looking, would be glad to hear from a bachelor of equal position with a view to matrimony. Photographs exchanged.—MISS MEADOWS, Cedar Creek School, Thompson Valley."

Gunten grinned over that remarkable composition.

"How does that strike you?" he asked. "Great Jerusalem!" gasped Keller. "You— you won't dare to have that shoved into the paper, Gunten!"

"You'll see!"

"But—but Miss Meadows will be as mad as a hornet!"

"And Frank Richards will get the benefit of it," chuckled Gunten.

He slipped the precious advertisement into the envelope with Miss Meadows' letter, and carefully resealed it.

"Come on, Keller," he yawned. "Not a word, mind!"

"Ha, ha! I guess not."

And the two rascals threaded their way through the wood towards the spot where Frank Richards was still struggling with the rope that fastened him to the tree.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Tricked!

FRANK RICHARDS breathed more freely as he heard footsteps on the trail in the deep shadows.

He had been left nearly an hour tied to the tree, and he had begun to fear that the Swiss had ridden on to Thompson, really intending to leave him there for the night.

He peered through the darkness at the two shadowy forms that came along the trail.

"Is that you, Gunten?"

"Yes."

"You bound! Let me loose!"

"I'll let you loose if you agree not to make a fuss about the matter," said Gunten.

"I'm not going to fight you."

"You rotten funk!"

"Funk or not, that's the terms. Give me your word to let the matter drop, here and now, and you're free," said Gunten coolly.

"No hammering a gabot, and no complaining to Miss Meadows to-morrow."

"I shouldn't complain to Miss Meadows in any case, and you know it!" snapped Frank Richards contemptuously. "I intended to give you a jolly good hiding!"

"Take another spell of it, then! Perhaps you'll cool down presently. We've got lots of lins!" laughed Gunten.

Frank panted with wrath.

He was already aching from his bonds, and his limbs were chilled by the night air, sharp and cold from the snow on the Rockies.

Even at the price of allowing Gunten to escape unpunished for his trick, Frank did not want to remain another hour tied to the tree. Gunten had the upper hand, and it was necessary to come to terms.

"Let me loose!" he said, between his teeth. "I'll let the matter drop, if you're afraid to put up your hands."

"Good enough!"

Gunten picked open the knots and unwound the trail-rope.

Frank Richards stood free. He rubbed his numb wrists to restore the circulation.

But for his promise, Kern Gunten would certainly have received the biggest licking of his life during the next few minutes.

But Frank had given his word, and he had to keep it.

"So-long!" smiled Gunten. "Come on, Keller! It's time we hustled on the home trail!"

"Give me my letter!" exclaimed Frank.

"What letter?"

"Miss Meadows' letter. You took it from me."

"The Popular.—No. 177.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"Oh, by gum, I'd forgotten that! I hope I haven't dropped it somewhere!" exclaimed Gunten, feeling in his pockets.

"If you've lost it—" began Frank savagely.

"All O. K. Here it is!"

Gunten drew the letter from his pocket, and Frank Richards almost snatched it from him.

He slipped the letter into his pocket, and called to his pony.

Without another word to the Swiss, though his hands were fairly itching to be upon Gunten, he jumped upon his pony and rode away down the trail.

Gunten grinned as the hoof-beats died away in the darkness ahead. Frank Richards was riding fast. He had a great deal of lost time to make up for.

"Come on!" said Keller.

"The dear John Bull doesn't smell a rat!" grinned Gunten. "Not the faintest idea that the letter's been opened, eh?"

"Not the least!" said Keller, laughing.

"But, by Jerusalem, what will Miss Meadows say? Richards can't deny that he handed in that advertisement at the 'Press' office, and he won't be able to prove that that letter was ever out of his hands."

"Let him try!" said Gunten. "Who's going to believe him? Miss Meadows doesn't even know that I know that he's got the letter. I shan't mind the cowhide so much now if I get it at home. Frank Richards will get something worse than a cowhiding after this."

And Gunten and his worthy comrade rode after Frank Richards, chuckling with satisfaction.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the Printer!

FRANK LOST no time in getting to Thompson.

It was risky riding fast on the dark trail, but Frank rode hard, anxious to make up for lost time.

He reached the town at last.

He rode past the well-lighted store kept by Gunten's father, and stopped at the office of the "Thompson Press."

The "Press" was not an ambitious publication.

Mr. Penrose, the editor, publisher, and printer—he was all those things rolled into one—dwelt in a two-roomed cabin near Gunten's store.

One room was Mr. Penrose's living-room, and the other was the editorial and publishing office and the printing works.

After his editorial labours were done, Mr. Penrose became a compositor, and set up the type, and then he became a machine man, and turned off the copies of the local paper on a hand-press.

Primitive as the arrangements were, Thompson was rather proud of its local paper. There was nothing else in that line nearer than Kamloops.

A third part of the paper consisted of advertisements, chiefly of whisky, weapons, and agricultural implements, mixed with demands for "hands" for the fruit farms and ranches of the valley and tempting appeals to try Hop Chung's Chinese laundry, or to visit McNab's dance hall for a jolly evening.

When advertisements were short, Mr. Penrose's editorial remarks were long. When advertisements were plentiful, the editor compressed his personal observations into a remarkably small space.

Mr. Penrose was an enterprising gentleman. His latest "stunt" was a matrimonial column copied from the Chicago papers.

Humorous citizens of Thompson inserted "spoof" advertisements in that column, which were read out with roars of laughter round the stove in Gunten's store.

But there were a good many genuine advertisements, too, at a dollar each. All was grist that came to the editorial mill.

Lonely bachelors up-country tried their luck in the hope of finding a helpmate, and there were generally two or three notices from members of the gentler sex.

But in a section where bachelors were plenty and spinsters were few, it was highly probable that the gentle advertisers possessed few of the attractions mentioned in the descriptions given.

There was a light burning in the editorial office as Frank Richards jumped off his pony and knocked at the door.

"Walk right in!" came a deep voice.

Frank Richards walked right in.

Mr. Penrose was a little, fat gentleman,

with rubicund nose. The colour of that organ hinted that he often sampled the fire-water at Gunten's store, not wisely but too well.

He was in his shirtsleeves at present, dabbled with printer's ink, setting up type in the formes. There was a dab of ink on his red nose, and another on his stubbly chin.

"Good-evening, Mr. Penrose!" said Frank.

"Not too late for an advertisement for this week, is it?"

"I guess it is some," said Mr. Penrose.

"Office closed an hour ago. But I've got a corner left. I calculate I can leave out Bill Hitchcock's poem on 'Sunrise on the Rockies.'"

"Eh?"

Mr. Penrose grinned genially.

"That poem has been left over for three weeks owing to ads turning up," he remarked. "Bill is getting impatient. P'raps it'll dawn on him later to pay for it at advertisement rates; then it goes in with a click! Chuck your ad over here, sonny! It's all O. K."

Frank laid the letter on the bench, and felt in his pocket for the dollar. Mr. Penrose opened the envelope by the simple process of sticking an inky thumb into it.

He took out the letter and glanced at it and nodded. He knew Miss Meadows' handwriting well, having often received school notices for insertion in the "Thompson Press."

"Right as rain!" he said.

But as he unfolded the enclosed advertisement and looked at it, Mr. Penrose gave a jump.

"Jehoshaphat!" he ejaculated.

"All right?" asked Frank.

Mr. Penrose blinked at the advertisement, and blinked at Frank Richards as he mechanically took the dollar.

"You belong to Cedar Creek School?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Miss Meadows gave you this to bring to me?"

"Yes," said Frank, in wonder.

"All O. K. If Miss Meadows says so, it goes. But—carry me home to die!" said the astonished Mr. Penrose. "Have you read this, sonny?"

"Of course not!" said Frank. "The envelope was sealed when Miss Meadows gave it to me at the school."

"All right! Leave it with me! There's your receipt!"

"The advertisement will appear this week?" asked Frank, wondering what might be the cause of the editorial astonishment.

"You bet! I'm going to set it up now," said Mr. Penrose. "I guess I'll give it a good place at the top of the column, too. I'd never have thought— Never mind! Ladies have their own ways, and it isn't much good a mere man trying to understand 'em. It goes in, sonny!"

"Right-ho!" said Frank. "Good-night, Mr. Penrose!"

"Good-night, sonny! Shut the door after you!"

Frank Richards left the editorial offices, leaving the editor-compositor-printer setting type.

Frank Richards rode out of the lighted town into the darkness of the trail. In spite of the darkness, he made good speed back to the lumber school on the creek.

There he went into the schoolhouse to hand Miss Meadows the receipt for the dollar and to inform her that the advertisement would appear in the current week's number of the "Thompson Press."

Miss Meadows thanked him with a smile, and Frank went along to Mr. Slimmy's cabin to join his chums. He found them waiting for him, and the three started for home together.

The next morning, when Frank Richards saw Gunten at the lumber school, the Swiss was looking sulky and savage.

Gunten did not speak to him, but he smiled a slow, malicious smile as Frank Richards passed him. That day the "Thompson Press" was in print; that evening half Thompson would be staring and chuckling over the advertisement therein.

And then the storm would break upon Frank Richards—the storm that was lowering over him, and of which he had not as yet the faintest suspicion.

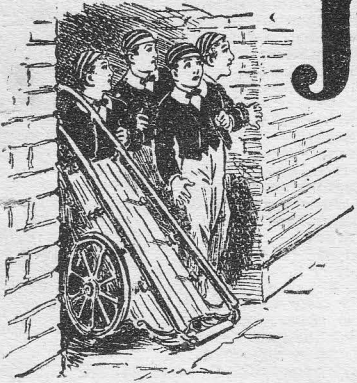
THE END.

(Another fine long complete story of Frank Richards & Co. next Tuesday, entitled "The Cedar Creek Suitors!")

A SPLENDID TALE OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD. 1922

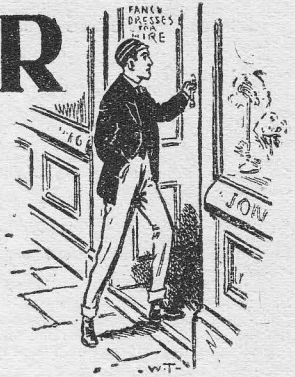
THE CEDAR CREEK SUITORS!

JIMMY SILVER GETS WIND OF AN ASTOUNDING PLOT TO PREVENT GEORGE BULKELEY FROM RETURNING TO ROOKWOOD, AND DECIDES TO CHIP IN!



JIMMY SILVER CHIPS IN!

A Splendid Long Complete Story,
dealing with the Adventures of
JIMMY SILVER & Co., at
Rookwood School.



By **OWEN CONQUEST**

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

—O:O—

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Kind Invitation.

"I'D like a brass band!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell. Jimmy Silver grinned. "I don't think it will run to a brass band," he said. "But we're going to do our merry best."

"Well, so long as we make a row—" "We shall make a row!" grinned Raby. "I fancy all Rookwood will let itself go!" "Excepting Knowles."

"Ha, ha, ha!" The Fistical Four of the Rookwood Classical Fourth were holding a "pow-wow" in the end study.

The occasion was important. For Bulkeley was coming back. George Bulkeley of the Sixth—the captain of Rookwood—the head of the Classical side—"old Bulkeley," in fact!

He had only been away a few weeks, but Rookwood had missed him sorely. But it was not only that they missed "old Bulkeley."

It was the peculiar circumstances of the case that made the event so great. For Bulkeley had left Rookwood under a cloud.

When he left, his father had been under remand on the charge of robbing the bank in which he was a partner.

Nearly all Rookwood had indignantly repudiated the bare possibility of any relation of old Bulkeley committing such an act.

And Rookwood had been right. For the innocence of Mr. Bulkeley had been made clear, and the guilt placed upon the right shoulders—those of his partner, James Catesby, the uncle of Catesby of the Modern Sixth.

The rejoicings at Rookwood knew no bounds.

Naturally, Catesby did not rejoice. He couldn't be expected to under the circumstances.

Perhaps he was glad that justice had been done. If so, he concealed his gladness very cleverly.

Most of the fellows felt sorry for Catesby of the Sixth.

He was not responsible for his uncle's rascality, and it had brought deep disgrace upon him.

Fellows wondered whether he would leave Rookwood.

They felt that it would only be tactful on his part.

But Catesby did not go.

There was another member of the Modern Sixth who did not rejoice in the news.

That was Knowles, the new captain of Rookwood.

He had counted on keeping the captaincy, but there was not much prospect of his keeping it after Bulkeley returned.

He had not been a successful skipper during his short reign.

He had caused more discontent than anything else, even on his own side.

It was taken for granted on all hands that

Knowles would step down, more or less gracefully, and yield Bulkeley his old place.

If he declined to do so, there would certainly be a new election, in which Bulkeley was sure to poll ten votes to one.

Jimmy Silver & Co. of the Fourth were among the rejoicers.

They felt that the occasion of Bulkeley's return ought to be marked with a demonstration.

Such an occasion called for recognition. Bulkeley was coming back on the morrow afternoon.

And Jimmy Silver was planning a march of the Fourth Form to meet him at the station and escort him in triumph to the school.

Half the Sixth were sure to be there to meet him—Neville and Lonsdale and Jones major, and the rest.

Hansom and Lumsden and a crowd of the Fifth intended to go.

But "the thing"—according to the end study—was the Fourth Form demonstration.

That was "it."

"Of course," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully—"of course, there must be some music. We're going to let half the county know we're glad to see old Bulkeley again. I dare say we can muster a dozen tin-whistles in the Fourth."

"Oh, my hat!" said Raby. "Think Bulkeley cares for tin-whistles?"

murmured Newcome.

Jimmy did not heed.

"And three or four mouth-organs," he continued, "and cymbals."

"Cymbals!" ejaculated Lovell.

"Yes, cymbals!" said Jimmy Silver; "and I think an accordion. It will be a regular triumphal march."

"Bravo!" grinned Lovell.

"Knowles hasn't resigned yet," Newcome remarked. "I suppose he will have to when Bulkeley comes back."

"You bet!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "If he puts it to the test of an election, I don't believe half the Moderns even will vote for him. Even they are fed up with the way he's mucked up the cricket. Hallo! Come in!"

Jimmy broke off as a tap came at the door.

The Fistical Four jumped up in surprise as Cecil Knowles of the Sixth Form came into the study.

Naturally, they supposed that the visit was a hostile one.

Since Knowles had been captain of Rookwood he had been able to pay off a good many old scores against the Classical chums.

There had never been any love lost between them, and now there was less than ever.

The Fistical Four eyed Knowles warily.

Jimmy Silver's hand rested lightly on the cane handle of his cricket-bat.

"I—I came here to speak to you kids," said Knowles.

"Go ahead, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver encouragingly.

"Will you come to tea in my study?"

"Oh, my hat!"

That ejaculation was not really the proper reply to make to an invitation to tea.

But Jimmy was too astounded to say anything else.

"I've got a rather good spread," said Knowles, with a smile. "I'd like you kids to come, if you'd care to."

"You—you're awfully good!" stammered Jimmy Silver.

Tea with a prefect—especially the captain of the school—was a high honour.

Even the Fistical Four felt a little mollified towards Knowles.

"Not at all!" said Knowles. "Come, will you? I've looked in specially to ask you."

The Fistical Four exchanged a glance.

An invitation from the captain of the school was a good deal like an invitation from Royalty. It amounted to a command.

"T-t-thanks!" said Jimmy at last. "We—we'll be pleased, Knowles."

"Oh, c-c-certainly!" murmured Lovell.

"Right you are, then," said Knowles, "I'll expect you."

And, with a cheery nod and smile, the captain of Rookwood quitted the end study.

The four Classical juniors blinked at one another as his heavy footsteps died away down the passage.

"So we're going to tea with Knowles!" gasped Lovell, rubbing his nose.

"Looks like it."

"What's his game?" asked Raby. "Is it a dodge to get us over to the Modern side and rag us?"

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"I fancy I know!" grunted Lovell.

"Knowles was like sugar just before the captain's election, you know. He's going to contest it with Bulkeley when he comes back, and he knows the Fourth follow our lead. He's electioneering."

"After our votes!" howled Raby.

"That's it."

"He won't get them!"

"That he jolly well won't! But he's after them, all the same," said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"I suppose that's it," he said. "It can't be anything else. Knowles means to make a fight for it, and he'd like to butter us and get us on his side. Blessed if I think we ought to go, under the cirs."

"It's arranged now," remarked Newcome.

"After all, a feed's a feed. But we're jolly well not going to vote for Knowles if it comes to an election."

"No jolly fear!"

The minds of the Fistical Four were quite made up on that point when they started for Mr. Manders' House to go to tea with Knowles.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Tea With Knowles.

TAP! Knowles was in his study with Frampton when there came a knock at the door. His visitors had arrived.

THE POPULAR.—No. 177.

A GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS, BY OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"NICE FOR CARTHEW!"

The door opened, and the Fistical Four presented themselves on the threshold.

Knowles contrived to smile genially. "Come in, kids!" he said quietly. "I'm glad to see you!"

"Welcome as the flowers in May!" grinned Frampton.

The Classical juniors, thus cordially welcomed, came in.

So much civility from two prefects of the Sixth, both of whom disliked them, could have only one meaning; it was flattering, but it was palpable.

But the Classical chums, for reasons of politeness, affected to take that unusual cordiality at face value.

They grinned as genially as Knowles and Frampton as they came in.

The table had already been laid by Knowles' fag, and there were extra chairs in the study.

In the fender there were piles of fresh toast and poached eggs galore keeping warm.

On the table there were two kinds of jam, marmalade, sardines, pilchards, and cake.

The tea-party sat down in a very amicable way.

Knowles did not, as the visitors expected, begin on the subject of the expected election. He chatted with them cheerily on the subject of junior cricket.

On that subject, naturally, Jimmy Silver & Co. liked to talk, and Knowles let them talk to their hearts' content.

In spite of their suspicious of Knowles' ulterior motives, the juniors could not help feeling good humour.

Knowles could be agreeable when he liked, and he liked now.

In fact, Jimmy Silver & Co. had to admit that they had never really known what an agreeable fellow Knowles of the Sixth could be.

It was not till the spread had been nearly disposed of, and talk had run on junior cricket for some time, that Knowles came down to business.

"You play St. Jim's juniors in a week or two, I believe?" he remarked.

"Yes," said Jimmy, helping himself to jam. "In a fortnight, Knowles."

"I hope we shall have better luck than you had with St. Jim's First Eleven, Knowles," remarked Lovell, rather unfortunately.

Jimmy kicked his foot under the table.

The Fistical Four were not there to make allusions to Knowles' failures as captain of Rookwood.

But Knowles only smiled.

"I hope you will," he said. "In fact, I'm sure you will, from what I have seen of your play lately. I've been thinkin' about that match. To do it justice, you really need to make it a day match."

"Wish we could!" grinned Lovell. "But the Head doesn't seem to understand that a whole day ought to be given instead of a half-holiday."

"I dare say it could be arranged, though," said Knowles thoughtfully. "Dr. Chisholm would listen to a suggestion from me, I'm sure."

"From you!" ejaculated Raby.

"You see, as captain of the school and head of the games, I'm allowed to use my own judgment to a good extent," explained Knowles, smiling. "I think I can answer for it that I could put it to the Head in a way that would make him consent."

"My hat!" said Newcome. "You're awfully good, Knowles. Tom Merry and his crowd could get leave to come in the morning, I know that. If the Head would give us a whole day here—"

"Ripping!" said Jimmy Silver, quite carried away by the idea. "We'd be awfully obliged to you, Knowles!"

"Not at all!" answered Knowles. "My idea is to encourage junior games in every possible way. I consider it's only just. I think the Head will look at it as I do when I put it to him factually. I'll make a point of speaking to him about it early next week."

"Oh!" said Jimmy, his face falling.

Next week, of course, Knowles would no longer be captain of Rookwood if Bulkeley took his old place in the school.

It was only as captain of the school and head of the games that he could make such a suggestion to the Head.

Lovell grinned.

He was no fool, and he could see the cloven hoof, so to speak, now that it was so prominently displayed.

The whole holiday for the St. Jim's match was a bid for the votes of the junior cricketers.

And Jimmy Silver thought a little further than that, too, for, after Knowles had gained his point—if he gained it—it was not at all certain that he would keep his word! Not that Jimmy would have deserted Bulkeley's cause for that bribe or for any other.

But if he had done so, he knew it was very possible that the bribe would not materialise.

Knowles' eyes glittered.

"I'm seeing the Head on Monday, in fact, about some matters for a talk," he said. "I'll mention it then."

"That will be too late," said Lovell.

"I don't quite see—"

"Well—ahem—" Lovell hesitated.

Really, it did not seem very polite to point out to Knowles that his captaincy was only to last another twenty-four hours or so.

"That is, of course, if I'm still captain of Rookwood," said Knowles, laughing. "It's barely possible that Bulkeley may put up again when he comes back."

"Eh? It's certain, isn't it?" exclaimed Lovell, with a stare.

"Not at all. He may or he may not. If he does, there will be a contest," said Knowles calmly. "In that case, I suppose I can rely upon you fellows for the election?"

The cat was out of the bag now.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Cloven Hoof.

JIMMY SILVER & Co. looked as they felt, extremely uncomfortable.

They had had a good tea in Knowles' study, and they had been very friendly.

In fact, they had almost forgotten what a beast Knowles was in the flow of easy geniality that pervaded the tea-party.

Now the Modern captain had come down to business, and they hardly knew what to say.

They reddened, and looked at one another, and coughed.

Knowles appeared to notice nothing.

"I don't suppose it will be much of a contest," he observed carelessly. "After giving up the captaincy, Bulkeley may not even claim it again. It would be rather inconsiderate, wouldn't it?"

"I don't see that at all," said Lovell, at once.

Knowles did not seem to hear that remark.

"Of course, I feel bound to contest it if he does," he went on. "I want to do my best for the school in every way. In case of a contest, I'd really like to know whom I can rely on."

"Oh!" said Jimmy awkwardly.

He was feeling great discomfort, but he was angry, too.

It really was not fair of Knowles to ask fellows to tea, with this intention at the back of his mind.

"Well?" smiled Knowles.

"We're backing up Bulkeley, of course!" blurted out Lovell.

"Why, of course?" asked Knowles.

"He's our man!"

"Classical, you know," murmured Raby, with the idea of putting it gently.

"The fact is, Knowles, we shall vote for Bulkeley if there's an election," said Jimmy Silver. "So will every chap on the Classical side, I think, or nearly every one. That's all settled!"

Knowles' genial smile faded a little.

"Can't I persuade you to change your minds?" he asked.

"Can't be done!"

"Just think it over," said Knowles, coming out more into the open, as it were. "I may as well say that I shall be a friend—a good friend—to every chap who votes for me, and quite the opposite to chaps who don't!"

Jimmy's eyes glared.

He was rather glad that Knowles was coming down to threats; it made it easier to refuse him.

"That wouldn't make any difference to us," he said curtly.

"I could make it worth fellows' while to vote for me, you know!"

"Can't be done!"

"Any kid who was in a scrape—say, short

of money—would find a friend in me," remarked Knowles.

Frampton coughed.

This was so open and so rotten that it shocked even Frampton a little.

But Knowles had spoken truly when he said he would stick at nothing.

Jimmy Silver flushed.

"It's no good talking to us like that, Knowles," he said, very quietly. "You can't suppose that we should touch your money!"

"Not even in quids?" smiled Knowles.

"Not in banknotes!" exclaimed Lovell angrily. "Not in thousands of pounds! What the thunder do you take us for?"

Knowles set his teeth.

He had known that it was useless as well as insulting, but he would not leave a chance untried.

He had tried it, and failed.

Jimmy Silver rose to his feet. He felt that it was high time that that tea-party came to an end.

"So you won't vote for me, in any case?" asked Knowles, rising to his feet also, and exchanging a glance with Frampton.

"It's impossible!" said Jimmy Silver. "Thanks for the spread, Knowles. We'll be getting along now."

"Will you?" said Knowles, gritting his teeth. "You cheeky young cub! You won't get along just yet! The door, Frampton!"

Frampton put his back to the door.

Knowles picked up a cane from the desk near him. He had thrown off all disguise now.

The Fistical Four were immovable, and all that was left to Knowles was to revenge himself.

Now that there was nothing to be lost, he intended to give his malicious temper full play.

Jimmy Silver & Co. drew closer together. Their faces expressed the angry contempt they felt.

This kind of thing was rather "thick," even for Knowles.

"You're not going to lick us, Knowles!" said Lovell savagely.

"We'll see!" said Knowles. "You can have it on your paws or across your shoulders. Take your choice!"

"Neither!" said Jimmy.

"We'll see, my pippin!"

"Mind, you won't cane us!" said Jimmy.

"We shall resist, Knowles, and I warn you!"

"Yes, rather!" said Lovell emphatically.

Knowles' reply was a rush.

The cane sang through the air, and came down on Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy gave a yell.

"Go for him!"

Like one man, the four piled on Knowles.

He had time for only another cut, which caught Lovell across the cheek and made him yell.

Then he came down on the floor with a heavy bump, in the grasp of the four enraged juniors.

Lovell snatched the cane away, and dealt Knowles a cut across the shoulders as the other three jammed him down.

Frampton rushed to the rescue.

"Smash them!" shrieked Knowles.

"Go it, you fellows!" panted Jimmy Silver.

He left Knowles and faced Frampton, who rushed him over, Jimmy Silver clinging to him like a cat.

But Jimmy held on, and Frampton went to the floor with him.

It was a fight now between two seniors and four juniors, and it was a "scrap" of unusual vim.

The two big Sixth-Formers were rather too much for the juniors in actual fighting, which was what it had come to.

But the Fistical Four were well worthy of their name. They put up a record fight.

One or two of them were on the floor most of the time, but they jumped up again and piled in.

Lovell seized the tongs from the fender as Knowles caught up a cricket-stump.

The two weapons crashed together, and the stump went flying, and the next moment the tongs crashed on Knowles' head.

Knowles reeled back with a fiendish yell.

Lovell turned on Frampton, slashing recklessly, and the Sixth-Former jumped away in great alarm.

"Cut!" gasped Jimmy Silver, seizing the opportunity.

He tore open the study door.

The four juniors rushed out, Lovell hurling

A GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

the tongs back into the study as he went, and they landed on the tea-table with a terrific smash of crockery.

Then the Fistical Four fled for the quadrangle.

There was no pursuit.

In the study Knowles was nursing his head and panting, and Frampton stood against the wall, gasping for breath.

The Fistical Four had certainly not had the worst of it, though they were feeling sore when they arrived on the Classical side.

"Hallo! What's happened to you chaps?" exclaimed Mornington of the Fourth, as they came, panting, into the School House.

"Ow, ow!" gasped Lovell. "We've been to tea with Knowles!"

"Faith, you look as if you've enjoyed it intorely!" grinned Flynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. retired to the end study to attend to their damages.

They were followed by a crowd of the Classical Fourth, eager to hear the tale.

There was a good deal of indignation, and still more laughter, when the Co. painted out a description of what had happened in Knowles' study.

"The awful rotter!" exclaimed Erroll.

"He'll report you to the Head!" said Townsend.

"Let him!" growled Jimmy Silver. "We'll report him fast enough if he does!"

"He won't let the Head hear a word of it if he can help it!" said Erroll.

And Erroll was right.



SHOWN UP!—"Knowles is in this carriage at this moment!" said Jimmy Silver. "Look here!" With a quick movement he caught at the dark moustache on the stained face of Cecil Knowles, and it came away in his hands. "Oh my hat!" gasped Bulkeley in amazement. (See Chapter 7.)

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Dark Scheme.

THE next morning there was a good deal of excitement in Rookwood School.

The afternoon was a half-holiday, and that afternoon "old Bulkeley" was coming back.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had finished their arrangements for a reception at the station.

The members of the Sixth and Fifth who were going would take the foremost part in the reception, no doubt; but the heroes of the Fourth meant to take a hand—and a prominent hand, too.

Every musical instrument obtainable was hunted up for the occasion, it being agreed on all sides that the occasion deserved musical honours.

Perhaps the din would not be recognisable by a fellow with a musical ear, but that could not be helped.

At all events, there would be a din.

Everybody was glad when morning lessons were over. In fact, lessons at all were felt to be a bore at such a time.

Knowles did not wear a pleasant expression that day.

Frampton joined him when they came out after dinner.

Knowles retired to his study to smoke a cigarette and think it over, and Frampton joined him there.

He was in an uneasy mood as to what was passing in the Modern captain's mind.

"I suppose you're not going to the station, Cecil?" remarked Frampton, speaking at last, as Knowles smoked in sullen silence.

"The train doesn't get in till four," said Knowles. "Bulkeley changes at Latcham at three."

"What about it?"

"Lots of time to get to Latcham before Bulkeley, if we wanted to."

"We don't want to."

"That depends."

"Look here, Knowles, what have you got into your head?" asked his chum uneasily. "You make me feel quite creepy."

Knowles gave him a gloomy look.

"I'm not going to give up the captaincy," he replied. "I don't stand the slightest chance in an election, I know. It mustn't come to that. Bulkeley can't come back to Rookwood."

"Can't come back!" repeated Frampton.

"No!"

"How are you goin' to stop him, then?"

"Suppose somethin' happened to him on his journey?"

Frampton started to his feet, his face quite white.

"Are you potty, Knowles? What are you talking about? Are you thinkin' of somethin' that might land you in prison?"

NEXT TUESDAY!

"NICE FOR

"Will you help me?" said Knowles, without answering the question.

"No, I won't!" exclaimed Frampton violently. "I think you're mad. Leave me out of it! Give up the idea, and don't be a silly fool!"

"Let me alone, then, and keep your mouth shut!" said Knowles savagely.

"Cecil, old chap—"

"Oh, give us a rest!"

Frampton left the study.

His face was pale and troubled as he went out into the quadrangle.

Knowles' chum was not a particular fellow. He would not have been Knowles' chum if he had been. But he had his limits.

The Modern captain was evidently thinking of foul play of the most desperate kind, so savage and bitter was his determination not to be ousted out of the position he had won.

Frampton hung about the quadrangle, his hands driven deep in his pockets, and a worried frown on his brow.

He was alarmed for Knowles, alarmed for the consequences that might follow a reckless and lawless act.

Knowles came out of the house at last and started for the gates.

Frampton called to him, but he did not answer or turn his head.

Frampton ran after him, overtaking him near the gates.

"Knowles, old chap!" he exclaimed.

Knowles' eyes glittered at him.

"Lef me alone, you chicken-hearted fool!" he muttered.

"I must speak to you!" said Frampton.

He caught Knowles' arm and drew him, almost forcibly, into the shade of the beeches, to be unobserved.

"Now, look here, Knowles—" he began.

"Cut it short!" snapped Knowles.

"You can't stop Bulkeley coming back."

"I'm going to try!"

"But—but—" stammered Frampton, almost helplessly. "You must be mad! Are you thinking of making an attack on the fellow in the train?"

"Perhaps."

"Even that wouldn't stop him, would it?"

"He might be too ill afterwards to take up his position here as captain of the school."

"Knowles!" gasped Frampton.

"Well, you asked me," said Knowles, with a bitter sneer. "Come and help me, instead of babbling. No need for us to be known. We can get ourselves fixed up at the costumier's in Latcham, and Bulkeley won't know us by sight, or anybody else."

"You're out of your senses!" said Frampton hoarsely. "It means prison!"

"It's safe enough."

"Oh, you're potty! It means disgrace and prison. Cecil, old chap, you're not yourself now. Listen to me."

Knowles jerked his arm free and strode away.

Frampton stared after him with a white face as he turned out of the school gateway and disappeared.

"Good heavens!" he muttered to himself.

And he almost limped away to Mr. Mander's House, oppressed with the weight of the secret he had to keep.

And as he went a fat face, with round startled eyes, like saucers, blinked round one of the big beeches.

"My only hat!" stuttered Tubby Muffin between his chattering teeth.

Tubby Muffin had heard what the two Modern prefects had said—every word.

He had dodged behind the tree at the sight of Knowles, simply because Knowles had a pleasant way of cuffing juniors, especially Classical juniors.

What he had heard made Tubby Muffin almost quake.

He remained in cover till Frampton had disappeared, and then Tubby rushed away to the School House as fast as his fat little legs would carry him.

Without a pause he ran up the staircase and dashed along the passage to the end study.

From that study the unmelodious strains of a mouth-organ and concertina came blended.

The Fistical Four were getting ready for the musical honours.

"Not bad!" Lovell was saying as Tubby arrived panting at the door. "I think this concertina will go a treat."

"Well, if you want to make a row that will make it!" said Jimmy Silver. "Hallo, Muffin, you fat duffer! What do you mean by bolting into a fellow's study like a lunatic?"

"Jimmy!" gasped Tubby Muffin breathlessly.

"Well, ass?"

"Jimmy! Oh, I say, Jimmy—" stuttered the fat Classical.

THE POPULAR.—No. 177.

A GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS, BY OWEN CONQUEST.

ANSWERS EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2!

"NICE FOR CARTHEW!"

"He's over-eaten, and wants thumping on the back!" said Lovell. "Here you are, Tubby! Say when!"
 Thump, thump.
 "Yaroooooh!"
 "Have some more?"
 Tubby Muffin dodged round the table.
 "Yah! Keep off!" he yelled. "Jimmy! I say, Jimmy! Old Bulkeley—Knowles—Oh, dear!"
 "Well, what about Bulkeley and Knowles?" asked the captain of the Fourth. "Has Knowles been asking you for your vote? If you vote for him, my fat tulip, we'll bump you on the floor and burst you!"
 "Jimmy!"
 Tubby Muffin's horrified looks made an impression at last.
 The sweet strains of the mouth-organ and the concertina died away.
 "What on earth's the matter with him?" asked Lovell, in wonder.
 "Old Bulkeley!" stammered Tubby. "Knowles has gone to Latcham—"
 "Well?"
 "He's going to get into the train with Bulkeley."
 "Well?"
 "And—and murder him!" stuttered Tubby.
 "What!" yelled the Fistical Four.
 "I—I heard him say so! Oh dear!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Fistical Four Take a Hand.

JIMMY SILVER closed the study door. Then he grasped Tubby Muffin by the shoulder.
 Tubby's astounding statement, of course, was not believed for a moment, but Jimmy could see that there was something behind it.
 "Explain yourself, you young ass!" he said sternly. "Don't shout. Now, get it off your chest, and keep to the facts."
 In breathless excitement, Tubby Muffin babbled out what he had heard under the beeches.
 The Fistical Four listened in dumb amazement and wrath.
 "It can't be true!" said Raby, when Tubby had gasped to a finish. "Even Knowles wouldn't be such a hooligan."
 "I heard him!" panted Muffin. "He's going to the costumier's in Latcham to get disguised, and he's going to attack Bulkeley in the train. He said so. He said Bulkeley would be too ill afterwards to become captain of Rookwood. He's got to be stopped! Oh dear!"
 "My hat!" said Jimmy Silver, with a deep breath.
 "You believe him, Jimmy?"
 "It's true!" yelled Tubby indignantly.
 "I think he heard what he says," said Jimmy Silver. "Knowles is pretty desperate.

Of course, he doesn't mean to hurt Bulkeley very seriously. But—but he means to hurt him, you chaps, so that he can't be captain of the school here. He means to hurt him enough to lay him up."
 "Jimmy!"
 "He may reckon that if he could keep the job for the rest of the term he would be able to secure himself in it," said Jimmy thoughtfully. "It's a jolly desperate idea. But Knowles is desperate, I believe. He's simply furious at the idea of giving up the captaincy. I know it sounds thick, but—but I think Tubby's telling us the truth."
 "The awful villain!" said Newcome.
 "Let's go to the Head!" exclaimed Lovell.
 "No good," said Jimmy quietly. "We don't want to start a disgrace that would stick to Rookwood for years. And it's too late for the Head to interfere. Tubby says Knowles has started."
 "I saw him go!" gasped Muffin.
 "And besides, though I believe the yarn, I shouldn't care to repeat it to the Head. He wouldn't believe it," said Jimmy Silver. "This is where we come in, you fellows. I think Tubby's got it right, but I'm not sure. We're not going to Coombe Station with the fellows, after all. We're going to bike over to Latcham!"
 "Phew!"
 "Did Knowles start on foot, Tubby?"
 "Yes."
 "Then, he's going by the local train. We can beat that on our bikes," said Jimmy Silver. "We know the costumier's in Latcham. We've had things there for the Players' Society here. If we see Knowles go in there that will settle it, and we can see that he doesn't get a chance at Bulkeley. Tubby, don't say a word about this to anybody. We'll skin you if you do!"
 "I—I say, Jimmy—"
 "You'll get flogged for saying such a thing about a prefect, Tubby; and, remember, you can't prove it," said Jimmy Silver. "You don't want to be expelled for slandering Knowles, I suppose?"
 "Ow!" gasped Tubby.
 "You can leave it to us to look after Bulkeley. Keep your mouth shut, old chap. We don't want a scandal in the school!"
 "I—I won't say anything!" stuttered Tubby. "Knowles would be beast enough to deny it, and say I—I was making it up! Ow!"
 "He jolly well would!" grinned Lovell.
 "Come on, you chaps!"
 The Fistical Four hurried out of the study, leaving Tubby Muffin gasping.
 Five minutes later they were on their bicycles, riding for Latcham as hard as they could go.
 The great reception at Coombe was left in less capable hands, but that could not be helped.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
A Surprise for Knowles.

"HERE we are!" panted Arthur Edward Lovell.
 It had been a rapid ride.
 The miles had fairly flown under the whizzing wheels, and Jimmy Silver & Co. had arrived in Latcham long ahead of the slow local train from Coombe—the train in which Knowles was travelling.
 They put up their machines at the station, and, in a rather ruddy and breathless state, walked down the High Street to the costumier's.
 On the opposite side of the way the four juniors stopped in an entry, which was nearly blocked by a barrow, turned on end.
 It was an excellent coign of vantage for watching the shop opposite without being seen themselves.
 There, in cover, they were able to take breath at last.
 To passers-by they looked like a group of schoolboys who had stopped there for a chat, or to wait for some acquaintance.
 But they kept a very keen eye on the costumier's opposite.
 Jimmy Silver looked at his watch.
 "A quarter of an hour ahead of Knowles," he remarked.
 "Good!"
 "Suppose Tubby was pulling the long-bow?" murmured Raby. "We've had a dickens of a ride for nothing!"
 "It was worth risking that, Raby."
 "Well, yes."
 "We'll soon see, anyway," said Jimmy. "If Knowles goes into the costumier's, and comes out looking different, that settles it."
 "But—but could he have the nerve?" muttered Lovell. "What would the blessed costumier think?"
 "Knowles would spin him some yarn—say it was a practical joke, or something. He's done a lot of business with the Rookwood fellows, you know. He'll do what Knowles wants, and without guessing that the rotter has such a scheme in his potty head."
 The juniors watched.
 Twenty minutes passed, and then Jimmy Silver uttered a low exclamation.
 On the opposite side of the street a well-known figure came into view.
 It was Cecil Knowles, of the Rookwood Sixth.
 "My hat!" murmured Lovell, his last doubt vanishing. "It's true."
 Knowles disappeared into the costumier's establishment.
 The Fistical Four waited.
 It was a quarter of an hour later that someone came out of the costumier's.
 Had not the juniors been watching keenly for Knowles, they certainly would not have suspected that this was a Rookwood prefect.
 His face was darkly red, as if sunburnt, and he wore a dark moustache.
 He had changed his clothes for a check suit, and his straw-hat for a cloth cap.
 He looked a rather "loud" young man, and certainly not much like a Sixth-Former of Rookwood.
 "Is—is that Knowles?" muttered Lovell.
 "Same height," said Jimmy Silver. "Same way of walking—as if the earth belonged to him. See how he's looking round him, too—on his guard. See how he's fingering his moustache; it feels odd to him, of course, and he thinks it may come loose. What?"
 "You ought to be a giddy detective, Jimmy," said Raby. "All the same, I wouldn't bet that that was Knowles."
 "We'll jolly soon make sure," said Jimmy. "I believe it is, but we can make sure. Wait here a minute!"
 Jimmy Silver hurried across the street.
 He peered into the costumier's shop cautiously. It was empty, save for Mr. Jones himself.
 Jimmy entered. The costumier, who knew Jimmy well, smiled a greeting.
 "Knowles still here, Mr. Jones?" asked Jimmy boldly.
 Mr. Jones smiled.
 "No; Master Knowles has just gone," he answered.
 "Oh, what a pity!" said Jimmy diplomatically. "Still, I suppose you did what he wanted, Mr. Jones?"
 "I see you know about it, Master Silver. Quite a humorous idea of Master Knowles," said Mr. Jones, laughing. "Rather more in your style than Master Knowles', though, I should have thought, to play such a joke on the village policeman."
 "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Jimmy, wondering

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"NICE FOR CARTHEW!"

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

what Knowles had given Mr. Jones by way of an explanation.

He left the shop, and rejoined his chums in the entry.

"Well?" said the three together.

"It was Knowles. He's spun Mr. Jones a yarn that he's taking a rise out of the bobby at Coombe," said Jimmy breathlessly.

"Come on!"

The Fistical Four walked along to Latcham Station.

At the ticket-office they caught sight of the young man in tweeds with the dark moustache.

He was taking a ticket for Coombe.

He went to the platform, and when he was quite gone Jimmy Silver hurried to the booking-office and took four tickets for the village near Rookwood.

The Classical chums came along to the barrier, and spotted Knowles.

The disguised prefect was keeping back behind some trucks and baggage on the platform, watching the entrance.

The juniors did not go on the platform. They did not want Knowles to spot them there.

The train was not yet due to start, and some minutes before it was due a figure they knew well crossed the bridge from the other platform.

It was Bulkeley of the Sixth, the old captain of Rookwood.

From behind a truck the juniors watched him.

Bulkeley looked very bright and happy.

The clearing of his father's name and his own return in all honour to Rookwood had made George Bulkeley very happy indeed.

He disappeared on the platform.

"Train's in!" muttered Lovell, a few minutes later.

The juniors looked over the barrier.

Bulkeley of the Sixth had been pacing the platform till the local train was ready to start.

There were very few people on the platform, and the juniors saw him easily as he went along the train looking for a carriage.

Behind him walked the young man in tweeds.

Bulkeley stepped into a carriage.

The young man in tweeds a moment later stepped into the same carriage, and closed the door after him.

A passenger tried the door, and passed on.

The juniors could guess that it was being held within.

"The rotter!" muttered Raby. "He wants to be alone with Bulkeley on the journey. The awful rascal!"

"Better get a move on, Jimmy," said Lovell. "Train starts in a minute and a half."

"Come on!" answered Jimmy.

They went in at the gate and along the platform to the same carriage that Bulkeley and the disguised prefect had entered.

Bulkeley was seated in the opposite corner of the carriage, reading a newspaper.

The young man in tweeds was on the near side, and as the juniors stopped at the door he gave a violent start, and grasped the handle within as Jimmy Silver grasped it without.

"Urry up, there!" called out the guard. Jimmy tugged at the handle.

"Let us in!" he shouted.

Knowles held the door fast within.

He had not the faintest suspicion that the juniors knew who he was, but the sight of them had startled him, and if they came into the carriage he felt that his dastardly scheme would be nipped in the bud.

He held on savagely to the handle, and kept the door shut.

"Bulkeley!" shouted Lovell.

"Bulkeley! Make him let us in! We'll lose the train!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

Bulkeley looked over his newspaper.

He smiled as he saw the juniors through the carriage window.

"Hallo, you kids!" he exclaimed cheerily. "What's the trouble?"

"Make this chap let us in, Bulkeley!"

"Let that door alone, please!" rapped out Bulkeley, little dreaming that he was speaking to a schoolfellow. "What are you keeping the boys out for?"

"Urry up, there! Now, then!"

Bulkeley came across the carriage, and as Knowles did not let go, the captain of Rookwood grasped his wrist and forced him to release the handle.

Jimmy Silver tore the door open.

The Fistical Four bundled headlong into the carriage.

The disguised prefect sank back in his seat, almost panting.

Bulkeley looked at him grimly as the guard slammed the door.

"Sorry to handle you like that," he said. "But you had no right to keep the boys out. They might have lost the train."

Knowles made no reply. He was afraid that Bulkeley might recognise his voice, though not his looks.

With bitterness and rage in his heart, he sat staring from the window as the train rolled out of Latcham Station.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Shown Up!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. sat down breathless, but smiling.

Bulkeley seemed pleased to see them there.

"Did you know I was coming by this train, you young scamps?" he asked.

"What-ho!" answered Lovell. "You don't mind us travelling with you, Bulkeley?"

"Not at all; I'm glad to see you."

"It's ripping for you to be coming back!"

"Thank you!" said Bulkeley, with a smile. "And you're going to be captain of Rookwood again?" exclaimed Newcome.

"I shall put up, at all events," said Bulkeley. "Of course, there will have to be a new election."

"That will be a walk-over," said Raby.

"Poor old Knowles!" smiled Jimmy Silver.

Not by a sign had the juniors revealed that they knew the identity of the young man in tweeds, sitting silent and sullen in the corner.

That Knowles could not carry out his intention in their presence was certain.

Bulkeley was saved from the intended attack.

He little dreamed of the danger he had run, and what the chums of the Fourth had saved him from.

"I've got some news for you, Bulkeley," said Jimmy Silver, as the train hummed on towards Coombe.

"Yes, kid?"

"It's about Knowles."

There was a start from the young man in tweeds.

"Don't say anything against Knowles to me, Silver!" said Bulkeley, with a stern note in his voice.

"Can't be helped," answered Jimmy coolly. "A fellow in our Form heard Knowles saying that he was going to damage you, Bulkeley, to such an extent that you'd be laid up, and couldn't take up your job at Rookwood."

The fellow in the corner seat jumped, and his eyes turned on Jimmy Silver.

Bulkeley knitted his brows.

"Silver, how dare you say such a wicked, untruthful thing?" he exclaimed. "I am surprised at you! My first job at Rookwood will be to give you a licking."

"It's true, Bulkeley."

"Nonsense!"

"You've got to hear me, Bulkeley! Knowles planned to go to the costumer's at Latcham and get himself changed in looks, so that he could go for you without recognising him."

"Silence!" exclaimed Bulkeley angrily.

"His game was to get in the same carriage with you, and keep other passengers out," pursued Jimmy Silver, unmoved. "You wouldn't recognise him, Bulkeley, with his make-up on. He was going to knock you on the head or injure you in some way."

"Another word, Silver, and I'll lick you now!" shouted Bulkeley. "How dare you say such things?"

"Because they're true, old scout!" retorted Jimmy. "Knowles is in the carriage at this minute."

"What!"

"Look here!"

With a quick movement Jimmy Silver caught at the dark moustache on the stained face of Cecil Knowles.

It came off in his hand as he jerked at it. Knowles sprang to his feet.

In spite of his make-up, the loss of the moustache rendered him recognisable at a close scrutiny.

Bulkeley stared at him blankly.

"That's Knowles!" said Jimmy Silver coolly. "And he's got some weapon about him. Bulkeley, and you'd have had the benefit of it but for us. Ah, would you?"

The enraged prefect fairly hurled himself upon Jimmy Silver.

His plot was shattered, and he was not even to escape discovery and disgrace.

In his rage he grasped Jimmy Silver with almost murderous violence.

But the Fistical Four were ready for him. Four pairs of hands closed on Knowles, and, with a crash, he was brought to the floor of the carriage.

"Got him!" panted Lovell.

"Look here!" yelled Raby. He had dragged a loaded stick from the prefect's pocket. "Look at that, Bulkeley! That was meant for you."

Bulkeley seemed petrified for a moment. He took the loaded stick, and shuddered.

"Let him get up," he said, in a low voice. The juniors released the disguised prefect.

Knowles scrambled to his feet, panting.

"So you are Knowles," said Bulkeley quietly. "Yes, I recognise you now. You have fallen to this!"

Knowles panted.

"Hang you—hang you!" He ground the words between his teeth. "Do your worst, hang you! I shall deny every word—every word!"

Bulkeley's lip curled.

"You will not need to deny it," he answered. "Silver and the rest of you, you've done me a very great service."

"Always put your money on the end study!" murmured Lovell.

"You've saved me from injury and Knowles from a crime he would have been sorry for afterwards," said Bulkeley, in the same quiet tones. "Will you do me another service?"

"Anything you like, Bulkeley," said the four at once.

"Keep this secret."

"Oh!"

"Don't say a word about it," said Bulkeley. "Knowles will be sorry later he thought of such a horrible thing—I know that! We've got the good name of Rookwood to think of. Promise me to keep this secret."

The juniors hesitated a moment.

"And let him off?" exclaimed Lovell incredulously. "After what he was going to do to you, Bulkeley?"

"Yes. I ask it as a favour."

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"Just as you like, Bulkeley. I—I promise, if you like."

And his chums said the same. After all, Bulkeley was right—the story would have disgraced Rookwood School, as well as the wretched, plotting prefect.

"It rests with you, Knowles, whether this disgraceful thing ever becomes known," said Bulkeley, and he sat down.

Knowles was silent.

"I—I—" he stammered at last. "I—I—I'm sorry, Bulkeley! I—I was—was excited—I was bitter. I—I beg your pardon. I—I'm glad I was stopped," he added, and there was at least some sincerity in the words.

Knowles left the train at a station before Coombe.

That afternoon's incident was to remain buried in oblivion. It was better for all concerned.

When the train ran into Coombe the Fistical Four alighted with Bulkeley, and there was a roar of welcome from a crowded platform.

"Hallo! Did you fellows go to Latcham to meet Bulkeley?" shouted Mornington. "Cheeky bounders!"

"We've taken old Bulkeley under our wing, you know," explained Jimmy Silver airily. "We thought we'd see him safe home. Now, then, you beggars, yell!"

And yell they did. It was quite a triumphal march to Rookwood, and the musical honours were simply deafening.

There was no election; Knowles quietly resigned the untenable post, and Bulkeley stepped into his old place with the hearty approval of all at Rookwood.

And afterwards, when he had time to reflect upon the matter coolly, probably Cecil Knowles himself was glad that he had not succeeded in his foul play.

THE END.

(Another splendid story of the Rookwood chums next week, entitled "Nice for Carthew!" by Owen Conquest.)

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By OWEN CONQUEST.

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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. Castaro sends Dan Govan with a letter to Ferrers Lord, telling him to surrender while he has the chance; but the millionaire refuses the Mexican's offer, and decides to fight for possession of the island.

During the next few days the weather becomes milder, and causes the ice-floe to break away from the rest of the island.

Ferrers Lord is thinking of accepting Castaro's offer to take him off to the floe and to the north, where they will pick up a home-bound ship, when there is a shout from the look-out on the floe, and the men rush out of the hut to see the Lord of the Deep fixed on the top of an iceberg. Ferrers Lord & Co. take the boat and go on board the yacht.

(Now read on.)

The Salving of the Yacht!

THEY kept back. With a cigarette smouldering between his lips, Ferrers Lord looked slowly fore and aft. He walked to the binnacle. The plate glass covering was unbroken when he brushed the snow away with his hand. Then he went below, and the others remained standing together in tense silence.

At last he reappeared and beckoned to Hal Honour. His face was inscrutable as the engineer strode forward to confront him.

"Can you dig her out of this and float her, Honour?" he asked quickly.

The engineer nodded and waved his hand to Ching Lung. Keeping back a yell, the prince sprang to the side and looked down at the eager faces below.

"You can tell them to cheer now, Tom," he cried. "They can howl till they split the fog if they like. I don't know the facts, but Hal Honour has just signalled to me that it's O.K. Shake, Rupert, old man! Wonders will never cease, will they? If Gan can dream a few more dreams that come true as splendid as this one, I'll invest enough money to keep him in tinned lobster and marmalade for the rest of his natural life."

Ringling cheers from the boat and louder cheers answered them from the oval of ice; and, as if to add to the joy of things, the sun they so seldom saw burst through the thinning mist and shone out bravely. The millionaire came to the side to speak to Prout, and at the sight of his erect figure the cheering redoubled. A wave of his hand brought silence.

"Get a crew aboard to rig a crane and take out your stores," he said, "and then pull round and rescue what you can from the ice that broke away."

In the bare-looking saloon, after a tour below, Ching Lung, Rupert Thurston, and the millionaire met again, and hands met. That the yacht could be perfect it was almost impossible to believe, and as yet they could not be sure; but she seemed perfect. It was easy enough to form theories as to what

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had happened to her. Probably, having escaped disaster when Saurian Head had fallen, her ice prison had drifted loose, and the top had split open and fallen away; but how it had fallen clear of the yacht was a problem they could not solve. Naturally, with such a crushing weight removed the floor of the cavern would rise, lifting the Lord of the Deep with it. Her stern must have been resting on the ice in a pool of water, which would account for the forward slant. Then a frost had come, much keener and fiercer than any frost they had experienced on the floe and locked her fast. This may have happened long after the floe had broken adrift, but the berg that carried the yacht, being lighter and higher out of the water, would travel much faster.

"Amazing!" said Rupert Thurston. "I'm not going to give myself a headache by trying to work out how it all came about, for we shall only be guessing all the time. Good old Lord of the Deep! I raised my hat to her in memory of many a happy day when I thought I was taking my last look at her. Like the famous cat they couldn't shoot, poison, drown, or lose, she has come back."

"And just in time," said Ching Lung. "Our chance of getting to Gan Waga's island in that tub wasn't one in a thousand."

Fortune, that had been all frowns and scowls, seemed to have repented, and to be anxious to make reparation. For the rest of the day the sun shone brightly on a calm sea, and when night came the moon was brilliant and clear. No one wanted to sleep. The boat made several journeys, coming back loaded each time. Before abandoning the yacht the engineer had emptied her boilers, and this had saved them, for had the water been left to freeze in them the expanding ice would have burst and ruined them. And just before midnight the first triumph came. Ellery, the electrician, had been working desperately, and suddenly, amid lusty cheering, the electric lamps of the Lord of the Deep glowed up dazzlingly.

All next day the men were busy clearing away the accumulation of ice from the decks, funnel, spars, and rigging, and cutting a level

platform round the vessel. The chef was back in his galley, and he fed the crew right royally. Again the sun shone, and the floating ice sparkled in its rays. At noon smoke was rising from the yacht's funnel. Astern she was roped fast to the berg, and forward her bows were embedded in it. All the afternoon the hissing steam-pipes were at work on the edges of the ice, and the engineer kept a keen eye on the barometer. When on the floe they had longed for frost to keep the rotten floe together and to freeze in the stanches that rose from the decaying weed. Now they dreaded the thought of frost, and hoped fervently for mild weather.

Slowly the action of the steam-jets began to tell. There was a pool of water round the stern, growing deeper and deeper as the chilly water warmed. The berg was hard and thick, and there was no danger that it would split. At last the engineer, who was ready in his diving-suit, went down the ladder that had been lowered into the hole and carefully examined the propeller. It was undamaged, but he was doubtful if it would remain undamaged.

"We must risk it," he muttered, as he climbed to the surface.

There was no other way. The propeller was the most dangerous part of it all. Once badly damaged it could not be successfully repaired unless they placed the yacht in dry dock; and with a broken propeller the Lord of the Deep would most likely never see dry dock again. Prout helped him off with his helmet, and his curt nod told him that all was well. He said a few words to the millionaire, who shrugged his shoulders.

"Has anything gone amiss, Chief?" asked Ching Lung. "Why are you and Hal putting your heads together in this mysterious and alarming way?"

"We're thinking of the launch, Ching," said the millionaire. "When we get the ice away from her bows there is sure to be a ledge left that we cannot cut clear. If her propeller comes down on that we shall be lucky if we only lose a flake. It may snap clean off. That is the risk we have to take—the risk that must be taken. Without a

NEXT TUESDAY! "A BLOW FOR BOB CHERRY!"

A GRAND STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

propeller the yacht will be more comfortable than the ice-floe, but just as helpless." "So it's not all beer and skittles yet," said the prince. "Heigho! I thought we were out of all our troubles!"

"Only lazy people have time to think of troubles," said Ferrers Lord, smiling. "Take charge of the boat for an hour and search the water ahead of us for ice. There may be some submerged stuff, there that we cannot see from the deck. Search carefully."

"I'll take Gan Waga, for I think he can smell ice," said the prince. "Gan, you fat dreamer, throw the end of that cigar away and come here at once and sound."

When Ching Lung came aboard again the yacht was under steam, and the steam-pipes were being run round her for the first time. Her keel had been warmed from within, and Ferrers Lord and the millionaire were of opinion that her weight would carry her clear. The ice at her bows had been cut through up to her plates. Prout and Ferrers Lord climbed to her bridge. Astern, the engineer stood axe in hand, looking towards the bridge.

"Go!" The gleaming axe rose and fell three times, and the third blow severed the hawser. The yacht remained motionless for a moment, moved forward a foot or two, and came up with a jerk. Then she moved again, and, slowly gathering speed, she slid down the berg and took the water with a long gliding plunge.

Prout grasped the wheel, and Ferrers Lord gave the signal to the engine-room. There was a lash and a swirl astern. Good-humouredly Hal Honour shouldered aside the cheering men who rushed forward to grasp his hand, for the Lord of the Deep was afloat again, engines and propellers at work.

"By Jove, Ching, we ought to change her name and call her the Miracle!" cried Rupert Thurston. "Hurrah! Who cares for Esteban Castaro now?"

Ferrers Lord's Triumph!

DON ESTEBAN CASTARO yawned as he sat on the couch in his luxurious cabin. He did not seem interested in what Mr. Nathan Spike, the assayer, had been telling him, or in the samples of ore, nuggets, and gold-dust that had been brought for his inspection. Desolatia had felt the earthquake shock, but it had done no damage to that granite island. In the harbour, astern of the Mexican's yacht, lay the rusty steamer whose mirage had been seen by the castaways on the floe. Again Castaro yawned almost in the face of Nathan Spike.

"I'm wondering what became of that crush we sent adrift, Spike," he said. "They ought to be settled, but I'd like to make sure. How's the ice south?"

"Pretty clear," said the assayer, who was remarkably sober. "That blizzard has opened it up a lot. If you're thinking of a cruise, it wouldn't do the engines any harm to use them. And the weather is amazing. I never knew it so fine since I landed on this rotten rock!"

"Yes, I am thinking of a cruise, Spike; in a word, I'm thinking of cruising home," answered Castaro. "That's why I want to know what's happened to Ferrers Lord and his bunch. If they aren't down and out by this time, they must be as hard to kill as a thousand cats!"

"I've the same feeling here, boss," said Spike. "That last storm and shake-up must have knocked all the sawdust out of their old raft. If she's not smashed, she can't have drifted a thundering lot. She was too big to travel fast. I reckon, supposing she still exists, and there wasn't much ice to stop you, you'd sight her in a for or five hours' run. You'd make the home trip with an easier mind if you knew they were washed out."

"The long and short of it is that I must know," growled the Mexican. "I must go myself, too, for you'll have to look after these greasers. That rabbit-hearted fool, Govan, I can't send, for if he found any survivors out of the mob he'd bring them back! Anyhow, he'd take them aboard, and treat 'em like visitors at a first-class hotel. Ten to one they'd break loose, and seize the vessel while he was asleep and snoring. Yes, I'll go. Till I'm dead sure, I can't feel safe."

"Till you're dead sure they're all sure dead, eh?" grinned Spike. "Well, boss, not being in love with any of them myself, I wish you luck. When you've satisfied yourself, and

streak for home, I hope you'll take Dan Govan with you. It ain't that I dislike Dan, but when there isn't a fight on he's a bit too soft and squeamish. He objects now to seeing a mutinous greaser tied up and lashed. The swine only understand one language—a whip or a rope with a noose on the end of it! What else can you expect the sweepings of the Mexican galls to understand? If you shift Govan, boss, and leave me here with a free hand, I'll squeeze every grain of gold out of Carease Island before I've done. But I must have my own way. See?"

"Dan Govan to Lucifer!" said the fat Mexican. "I'll think about it, Spike. Now you can clear out. If you'd keep off the drink, I may take Govan."

On the island, Govan was a useful person and a restraining influence. Probably he would prevent some tortured and infuriated greaser from cutting the assayer's throat or sticking a knife between his ribs. Spike was a valuable asset to Castaro, but he treated the men like a brute and a bully.

Esteban Castaro had discovered a real money-spinner in the commandeered island. He was prospering. Good news had come from Mexico. The old Government with which he had been at loggerheads had fallen, so he was free to return to his native land, where the heads of the new Government would welcome him with open arms, and offer him high office—possibly the leadership. The one shadow in all this sunshine was his uncertainty as to the fate of the men he had so savagely ordered back to the ice-floe, and cut adrift to perish. While one survived, he could not feel safe.

Govan would keep his lips sealed, and he was sure of Spike and the other handful of Europeans in his pay. The greasers knew little or nothing, and did not count. But the Mexican felt that before he left the island he must learn the truth. One survivor who came back to tell the world the story of his greed and brutality would make civilisation too hot to hold him. Justice would clamour for his life.

Esteban Castaro gave a last yawn, lighted a long brown cheroot, and rang the bell for his servant.

"Send the captain down here," he said.

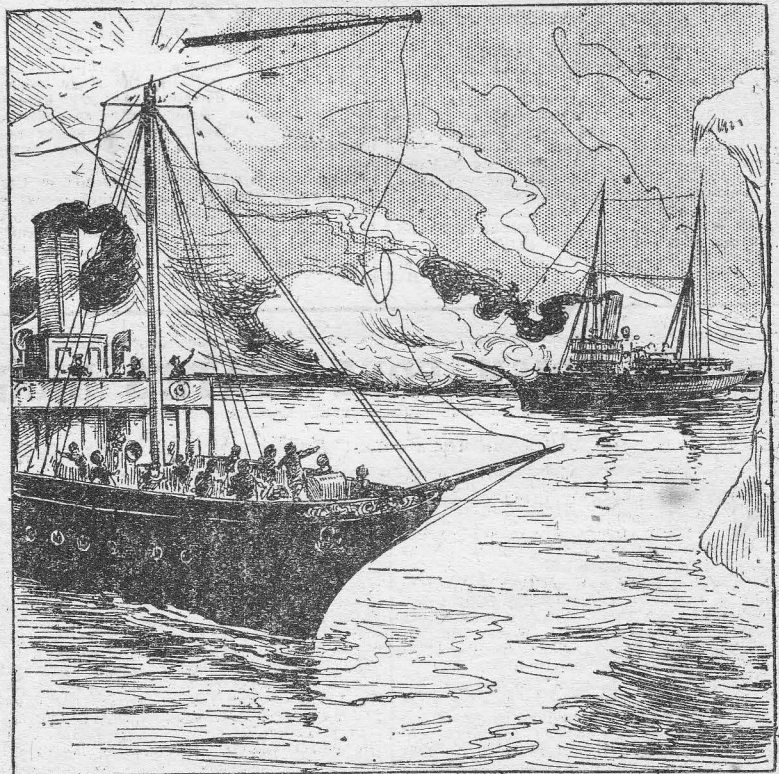
In the morning the yacht steamed out of the pear-shaped bay. In the pleasant sunshine the island still looked black and grim enough with its dark, rocky walls, but far more hospitable than usual. To the south the bergs still floated, flashing little mountains of crystal; but they had drawn apart, and there were wide gaps of open green water between them. At the masthead two men were on watch.

Five hours later the yacht swung round, and turned her prow northwards. Only one thing had been seen—a piece of floating ice strewn with packing-cases and sheets of corrugated iron. They had not lowered a boat, but they had gone near enough to know that there was no human being on the ice. Plainly enough, the floe had broken up, and no man lived to tell the tale. Until the sea gave up its dead, the grim story of the loss of the Lord of the Deep, her owner, friends, officers, and crew would lie unrevealed under the southern stars and aurora on the bosom of those icy waters.

Estaban Castaro rubbed his hands, and invited the captain to lunch with him. The captain was a Spaniard, who had been dismissed his ship when in the Spanish Navy for some offence which he was wise enough not to talk about. For all that, he was a capable and careful seaman.

"Your Excellency will please excuse me," he said. "I must not leave the deck until we are safely at anchor. It is as safe to be alone in a room with a mad dog, even though it is sleeping, than to be off one's guard in these waters. They sleep now, but, like the mad dog, they may awaken and bite."

So Senor Estaban Castaro lunched alone, drank his wine, coffee, and liqueur, and smoked his cheroot very comfortably. Lying back on his couch, a pasty-complexioned, swollen figure, he closed his eyes. He was perfectly at ease in body and mind. He had no conscience to trouble him. He had offered Ferrers Lord fair, even generous, terms. If the man had been fool enough to refuse them, that was his fault. The world was



THE LAST DUEL!—At the second shot the men on the look-out on Castaro's yacht had scuttled down at the deck with the speed of a couple of terrified monkeys. They were not too soon. Another shot from the gun on the Lord of the Deep carried the truck clean away, and it hung suspended, and swaying from the twanging stays. (See page 26.)

NEXT TUESDAY!

"GARDEW'S LAST CHANCE!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 177.
A NEW LONG TALE OF ST. JIM'S.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Full of fools, and the loss of a hundred or more of them would do it no harm. Lulled by the steady throbbing of the propeller, Castaro went to sleep.

When the propeller ceased to throb, the Mexican awoke, and went on deck. The engine started again, but only at half-speed. The weather had turned hazy, and the captain was picking his way cautiously. It was cold, and Esteban Castaro turned up his coat-collar and climbed to the bridge.

"How close are we now?" he asked.

"Within six or seven miles of the island," said the captain, in Spanish. "There are three bergs to pass yet, and it needs care. The big one should be on the port side of us; but I am not sure. I am more afraid of these cursed mists than of storm or snow. It is light, however, and perhaps it may clear. Once we sight the big berg, I am safe. Perhaps your Excellency will try? She should be over there."

Castaro took the glasses, but failed to locate the berg, and the yacht went nosing on at a crawl. A hail came from the mast-head, and suddenly the berg loomed up, huge and white, almost straight ahead.

"In the name of miracles, what's that?" gasped the captain. "Is it a ship, or the ghost of a ship? Yonder, señor—do you see it?"

Before Castaro could answer, something went whistling across the bows of the yacht, dashing out a cloud of spray. Out of the mist a gun boomed, and the noise of the shot rolled back in echoes from the icy side of the berg. The shot might have been a signal for the winds to blow, for a breeze came and swept the fog aside. Another yacht barred the way. Smoke and flame spouted from her bows, and again a gun roared. A shell struck the berg and exploded, tearing a great cavern in the ice—a warning. And then from the other vessel's mast fluttered a stream of signals.

"What is it? What do they say?" gasped Esteban Castaro, putting his hands to his fleshy throat. "What do they say?"

Both vessels were motionless on the quiet sea, and the greenish smoke from the shell was still wisping round the berg. With shaking hands Castaro's captain opened the code-book, and hesitatingly deciphered the message, mumbling it over to himself before he spoke it aloud.

"I am the Lord of the Deep. Send all your boats to me at once. Keep where you are or I will sink you."

"Fire on the demons!" said Castaro, in a choked voice. "Blaze into them!"

"Excellency, the gun is not cleared, and we have no shells on deck, and—"

At the second shot the men on the look-out had scuttled down to the deck with the speed of a couple of terrified monkeys. They were not too soon. A third shot carried the truck clean away, and it swung suspended and swaying from the twanging stays.

Then the Spaniard revealed the secret of his dismissal from the Spanish Navy. He

was not fond of hot corners or the smell of high explosives. White-faced, and with perspiration, he bawled the boats to be lowered. Esteban Castaro snatched the megaphone from him, and struck him a swinging two-handed blow across the face with it. The captain tumbled backwards, and, aiming a vicious kick at his head, Esteban Castaro ran down the ladder with surprising nimbleness for such a gross and flesh-encumbered man, roaring out orders for the crew to stand back from the boats, and man the gun.

But the crew had no wish to fight. A dark-faced sailor with earrings in his ears, who owed the Mexican many a grudge, saw his chance, and took it. He shot out his foot, and as Castaro stumbled over it, and went sprawling heavily to the deck, the man drove his boot hard against the Mexican millionaire's temple, and for the time being he lay as limp and motionless as a dead pig.

Then, with captain and owner lying senseless, the yacht's four boats were lowered. One after the other, manned by their full crews, they pulled to the Lord of the Deep.

Her sides bristled with rifles.

"So here you are, by honey!" said a gruff voice. "If you understand English, one boat at a time, and make fast. Then march up this ladder as lively as you like. March's crew stand ready to take possession as soon as she's empty, then pull clear and await orders!"

As soon as Castaro's men were aboard a crew from the Lord of the Deep took possession of the boat, and a second boat took its place. In twenty minutes they had secured eighty-four prisoners—deck-hands, stokers, engineers, greasers, and the second-in-command, for the crash of the shot that struck the berg had brought even the stokers up to see what was happening. With a smile of delight in his face, Barry O'Rooney welcomed them.

"Bedad, and that tomato tin had killed me stone-dead, and Oi'd not live to see this merry day, Oi'd not touch another drop of tomato-soup for the rest of my loife," he said.

"Sure ut's glad Oi am to mate you all. Move for'ard there, plaze, gentlemen, and take a free sate on the deck till Oi see phwat's to be done wid ye. For wance in my life, and from the very bottom of my heart, Oi'm glad Oi left swate Ballybunion and came to say. Let's have you here, bellows and scrap-iron," he added to Enoch Dalblair, the burly smith. "If these purty darlints have any knives and pop-guns on them kindly collect the same, Enoch. Troth, Oi'm so merry and bright Oi could write a poem as long as my leg."

There were barely half a dozen men on Castaro's yacht when the boats pulled across to her. The captain had recovered. He wiped the blood from his face and stood at salute as Ferrers Lord climbed aboard. The millionaire called for Senor Castaro, and the captain pointed to him.

"I do not know what has happened to him," he said. "Some of the sailors did not love him, and perhaps they have taken their revenge. I cannot tell you whether he is alive or dead. He struck me down for ordering the boats to be lowered, and I am still faint and dizzy."

The millionaire shrugged his shoulders and turned to Thurston.

"Will you attend to that brute, Rupert?" he said. "If he is dead, he is lucky. If he is alive, please get him away and keep him out of my sight for a time."

The moon had risen when Senor Castaro's yacht steamed into the harbour and took up her moorings. Dan Govan who was watching for her return from the window of the hotel, left a glass of whisky untouched and pulled out to her. He wanted to learn the truth. To do the ex-guerrilla captain justice, he was bitterly angry with his chief for his barbarity. He owed the Mexican many favours, but he had made up his mind to bring matters to an end if the yacht had brought back no survivors or if black murder had been done; for to cover his secret Castaro was quite capable of shooting down defenceless men. In the moonlight, suspecting nothing, he stepped on deck.

"Good-evening," said a quiet voice. "I am very pleased, indeed, to meet you again, Mr. Govan. I fancy you can be very useful to us. Here we are back again, half of us to be accurate, and there come the rest."

"By the great horn spoon can it be possible?" gasped Dan Govan, staring in amazement at Ferrers Lord. "Gee-whiz! The real limit."

The Lord of the Deep was entering the harbour, the moonlight gleaming on the muzzle of the gun in her bows and her portholes blazing with light.

"I size it up, then, that I'm a prisoner, Mr. Lord," said Govan, after a long stare at the yacht. "I see you've got a fine shooter out there, and I reckon there wouldn't be much left of poor old Carcase City if you let it off. I'm not showing any white flag, sir, or trying to curry favour when I tell you straight and pat that I'm glad to see you. Gladder than you'll ever think. Gee-whiz! You're not going to tell me that's the yacht you lost, are you?"

"I may tell you a few other things if you will come aboard her and have dinner with me, Mr. Govan," said the millionaire, "not as my prisoner, of course, but as my guest. I have a good many prisoners, but I am only keeping one. When certain arrangements have been made the rest will go free."

"You're sticking to Mexican Steve, then? I guess what happens to Steve now is up to you; but if it's all the same I'd sooner not discuss him for good or bad. I told you before what my opinion was, and if you'll allow to cut him out of the conversation I'll make one at your dinner table and welcome."

THE IRISH FREE STATE'S BIGGEST RAILWAY!

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

NO sane person is likely to predict forthcoming events in the Irish Free State, so that the future of its railways is very much in the nature of "a dark horse."

In the past the Great Southern & Western Railway has, in many respects, been Erin's premier line, although during the twentieth century the Great Northern, serving the more highly developed districts north-west of Dublin, has come very much to the fore.

Still, the G.S. & W.R. is the longest, has the biggest capital, and has as well the most locomotives, carriages, and wagons of all the Irish railways, and can therefore still claim first place in several respects.

The G.S. & W.R. attained pre-eminence because of the American mail specials, which were run for the English Post Office between Dublin and Queenstown, and vice-versa.

These trains were booked at high speed over the whole distance, and the permanent-way had to be maintained in first-class

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condition, which is not always the case on the Irish railways. The down mails from Dublin were run regularly to time-table on Thursdays and Sundays, but the running of the up-trains from Queenstown was irregular, being dependent upon the arrival of the steamers from New York. The schedule for these mail specials was four hours for the 177 miles—over 44 miles an hour for the whole distance, including stops en route.

The ordinary expresses between Cork and Dublin were also run at high speed, but the finest service was the Killarney tourist express, run during the summer months between Dublin and Killarney. At the latter place the G.S. & W.R. has provided fine hotels for first and second-class tourists, and did (and we hope will do again) much to make a visit to Killarney's beautiful lake a pleasure—weather permitting.

These Killarney expresses covered the 185 miles in four hours, equal to over 46 miles an hour for the whole journey. The line is single for the forty-one miles between Mallow and Killarney, and over this section the

speed was 40 miles an hour, which, allowing for stops, raised the average running speed for the 144 miles between Dublin and Mallow to 51 miles an hour. This special was timed to cover the 77½ miles between Ballyphroby (where a service stop was made) and Mallow in 88 minutes—53 miles an hour. Neither speed nor length of run is yet up to pre-war standard on the G.S. & W.R. The fastest run now only reaches 48½ miles an hour, and is only thirty miles long—from Kildare to Dublin.

The G.S. & W.R., the gauge of which is 5 ft. 3 in., or 64 in. under that of the British railways, has many fine types of locomotives. The heavy expresses are usually hauled by the 4-6-0 design, which, as a war measure, are similar to the colour-plate of No. 406 in this issue.

The engines have the following principal dimensions: Coupled wheels, 6 ft. 7 in. diameter, four cylinders 14 in. diameter by 26 in. stroke, heating surface 1,772 sq. ft., steam pressure 175 lbs. per square inch.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"A BLOW FOR BOB CHERRY!"

A GRAND STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

While dinner was in progress in the saloon there was a supper party in the glue-pot where Mr. Thomas Prout presided over a boiled leg of mutton, caper sauce, and the usual vegetables which accompany a boiled leg of mutton to table. The mariners were very jubilant. There was champagne. Maddock had supplied the champagne, but he did not divulge the source from which it had come, though they guessed it had been looted from the captured yacht. He handed round some long brown cheroots later, and then Barry O'Rooney gave him a stern, re-proving look.

"Mexicans," he said. "Ben, boy, you'll end your days behind stone walls in wan of them beautiful palaces wid charming names like jug, clink, and chokey. Bedad, they're sweet-tasting whiffs, so we'll let you off wid a caution this time and the solemn warning to collar as many more as you can when you get the lucky chance. Gentlemen, Oid make a speech, but my heart is too full, not to mention another portion of me whero Oid put the mutton, which is rarely mentioned by the best people loike ourselves. Who's at the desk? Sling him out, Ben, whoever he is."

But the newcomer was not thrown out. It was Gan Waga, and a roar of laughter and applause welcomed the owner of the island. Gan was attired in evening dress, and there was a broad gold band round his tall hat. Across his waistcoat was a gilded watch-chain, each link an inch long and an eighth of an inch thick. A glass door knob decorated his shirt, and he wore sham diamond rings of vast size on his eight fingers and two thumbs. Banknotes and Treasury-notes bulged from his pockets.

"By honey, here's the new millionaire," cried Prout. "Grovel to the king of Gan Waga's island and let him walk over you and wipe his boots on you. I wonder if he'd be mean enough to refuse if I asked him for a loan of fourpence till next Friday?"

"Down on yo' marrow bones, yo' pauper rubbishes," grinned the Eskimo. "Come and kisses my diamond-buckle slippers, yo' povertis. Ho, ho, hoo! I gotted twiceness

as much money as the man who busted the bank at Monte Carlo. I, the richest man in world."

"To be serious, how much do you think you're worth Gan?" asked Barry O'Rooney. "Has the prince, for instance, dropp'd a word to you about it?"

The fortunate Eskimo wrinkled up his forehead in deep thought.

"I not sureness how much my old Chingy say," he answered after much cogitation, "but it either four billion pounds or five-and-inpence."

"Oh, souse me, carry me out," groaned the bo'sun. "That fat imp owning gold mines and not knowing the difference between billions of quids and five bob and a few coppers. If the Chief allows him a tenner a week out of the profits it will be more than he deserves. Who rigged you up, blubber-bite?"

"You never minds," said the Eskimo. "I gotted a papers here. Chingy wroted it, and what it says I going to do, so smiles, my merry boy, smiles. I signed it at the bottoms," he added, pointing proudly to an inky scrawl at the bottom that looked like a young eel in a fit. "That my sign part, so read it, Tommy."

Prout took the paper and cleared his throat. As he read the first lines aloud a pleased smile crossed his face.

"For gallant conduct rendered I, Gan Waga, of the steam yacht Lord of the Deep, do promise, having now come into possession of my property, Gan-Waga's island, to pay to Thomas Prout, Esq., out of my first profits and dividends the sum of one thousand pounds. (Cheers.)

"Likewise to Benjamin Maddock, for gallant conduct and services rendered, a similar sum of one thousand pounds. (More cheers.)

"Also to Barry O'Rooney, for gallantry and services, the sum of fifteen hundred pounds, the extra five hundred being to comfort him for being bashed over the head with a tin of tomato soup. If his head had busted the tin the sum would have been two thousand. (Applause.)

"In addition to my old friend Joe, of the chips and chisel, one thousand pounds of the very best, either banknotes or gold. To which I hereby do affix my hand and seal in the presence of two witnesses to testify that—I hold on a minute," said Prout, "shout when I've finished—to which, etc., in the presence of two witnesses that—that—there's something wrote small here." That when you get the cash you'll wake up."

"Ho, ho, ho, hoo!" laughed Gan Waga. "I gotted yo' there, old beans. Yo' wake up all right, I do thinks. Ha, ha, ha, haah!"

Banging the door behind him the newest millionaire waddled, grinning, down the alleyway, and O'Rooney rubbed his sore head tenderly.

"Bedad, I guessed there was a catch somewhere, boys," he said. "And, bedad, pawat does ut matther? There'll be prize-money to come, that's wan sure thing; and av we're poor we're honest, so here's to Gan Waga's island."

The gold mines of Gan Waga's island proved rich and profitable, and the workmen are well paid, well-housed, and have plenty of amusement. One man there has no share with the others. He toils alone in remote places with an armed guard always watching him as a cat watches a mouse. His food is wholesome, but of the coarsest, and his tasks are of the hardest. No man speaks to him, and his fellow-workers turn away if they happen to meet him with his alert but silent guard.

The man is Esteban Castaro, working out his punishment as a convict in the mines he tried to steal, a punishment that is to last for seven dreary, bitter years. And for such a crime as he contemplated, although he failed, the penalty is not too harsh.

THE END.

(Next Tuesday will bring you the first instalment of Sidney Drew's great new serial, entitled "The Pearl Poachers!" Order your copy now.)

TOM MERRY'S GREAT CATCH!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Pup-pup-please we didn't know this place was private," lied Racke. "There are some more of our chaps by the pond."

The gamekeepers looked across in the direction indicated by the junior.

"The colonel and his son are a-talkin' to them," said the taller of the two men. "Maybe the governor knows 'em."

"Er—er—we're friends of the colonel, too," pleaded Crooke.

"Not you! The colonel's friends don't need to go a-sneakin' about like what you was a-doin'."

"Sides," said the other gamekeeper, "the colonel's a-lookin' over here now, an' he don't make no sign o' recognisin' 'em. The rips were a-poachin'. We'll take the varmint's, an' deal with 'em accordin' to orders!"

The two sturdy keepers hustled Crooke and Racke swiftly away towards the wood. There they picked up a couple of light whipping sappling branches.

"Ooch! Oo-er! Lemme go!" howled Crooke.

"Don't yell till you're hurt, young fellow-me-lad," grinned the keeper, who was holding him. "Now you can begin!"

Swish! Thwack!

"Yow—wow! Garoogh! Help!"

Swish, swish! Thwack, thwack!

The blows rained steadily on the backs

of the two St. Jim's juniors, while yells of pain rent the air. But at last the men threw the saplings away, and pushed Crooke and Racke roughly through the aperture in the hedge.

"There, let that be a lesson to you, young fellow-me-lads!" said one, as he speeded the parting juniors with his boot. "Keep out o' here in future!"

Sore and sad, the two juniors arrived back at St. Jim's. The half-holiday had been completely spoiled from their viewpoint. Seeking their study, they flung themselves into chairs and bemoaned their misfortunes.

Not until tea-time did they emerge from their retreat. Then, coming along the Shell studies' passage, they beheld Tom Merry & Co. Broad smiles wreathed the faces of the amateur fishermen. In addition to their tackle, they carried as fine a mixed catch of fish as any angling enthusiast could desire.

"Cheerio, you chaps!" cried Tom Merry brightly. "Thanks for putting us up to that stunt of fishing on Colonel Cuttle's place. The sport was grand!"

Crooke gave a vicious growl, but Racke's curiosity was so great that he was quite prepared to eat a little humble pie to gratify it.

"Did—did you fellows mention our names to the colonel?" he asked.

"We did, my pippins," grinned Tom Merry; "but not this afternoon. We took the precaution of walking across to his place last evening to ask permission before fishing in his pond. Needless to say, Colonel Cuttle had never seen nor heard of you. But he was jolly decent to us, and gave us permission to catch as many fish as we could."

"B-but the old bounder's got the reputation of being a regular fire-eater. We—we thought—"

Racke stopped and bit his lip. Thereupon Tom Merry & Co. smiled more broadly than ever.

"Yes," chuckled Manners, "you thought that we had fallen into your silly trap. You imagined that we should go and fish in the colonel's pond and get nobbled. That's why you were skulking among the gorse—to see the fun. Only, unluckily for you, the gamekeepers happened to roll along."

"And the lickings you got served you jolly well right!" added Lowther. "The fact was, old tops, you rather underrated our intelligence. It was that wonderful catch of 'carp' you displayed on Wednesday that gave you away."

"The—the carp?" gulped Racke.

"Quite so—except that those 'carp' happened to be mullet. You see, I once did a bit of angling on the Norfolk Broads. Consequently, I soon spotted that the things you showed us were sea fish. Mullet are going cheap at present in the fishmonger's at Rylcombe!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Tom Merry and Manners.

That Lowther had hit the right nail on the head was evident from the baffled expressions on the faces of the two eads of the Shell. Then, giving vent to snorts of disgust at the way that they themselves had been "caught," they shuffled off together down the studies passage. And, still chuckling heartily, Tom Merry & Co. entered their study to indulge in the finest fish and tea banquet of their youthful careers!

THE END.

