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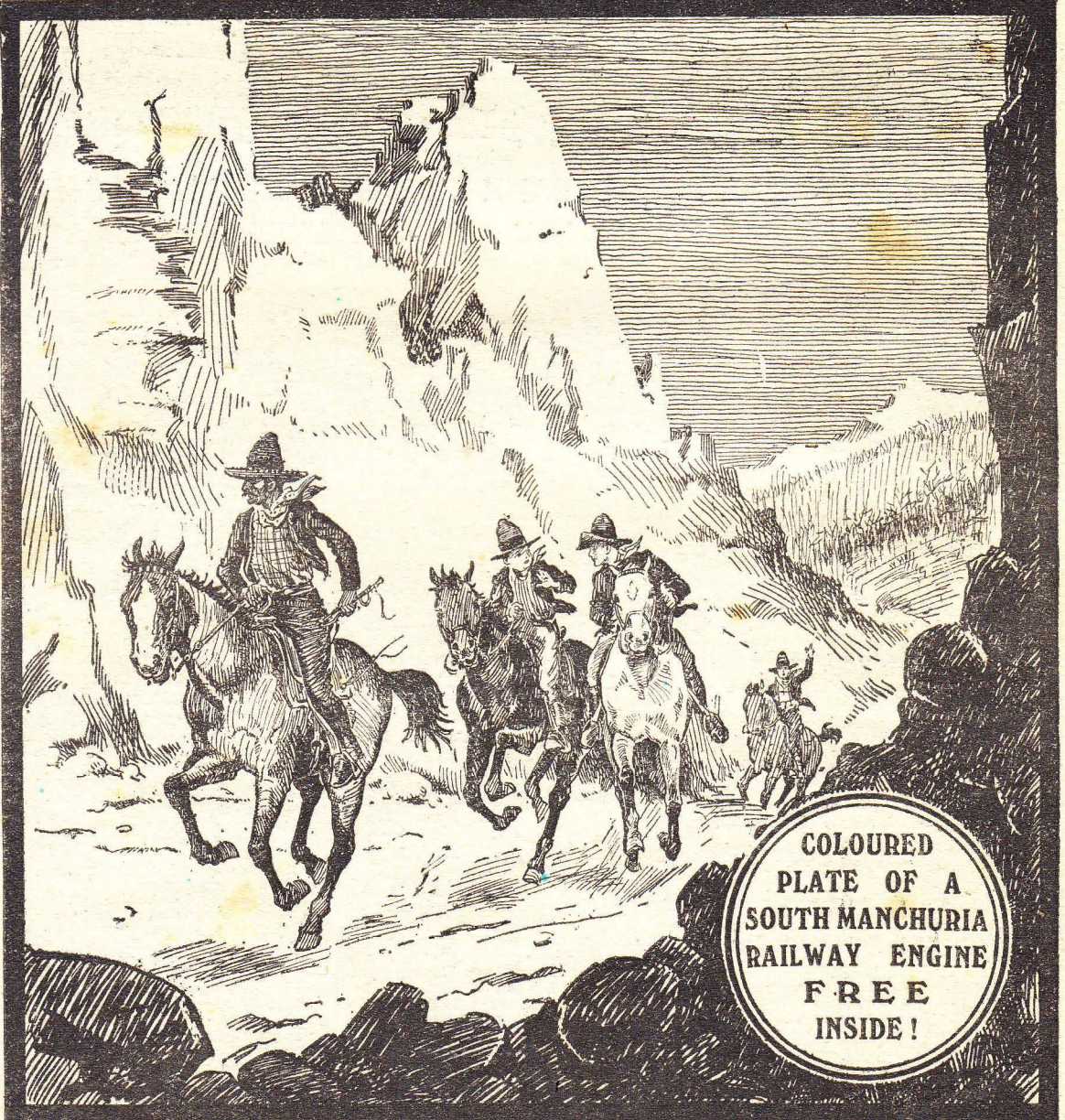
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No. 183.

28
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The POPULAR 2d

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SPECIAL
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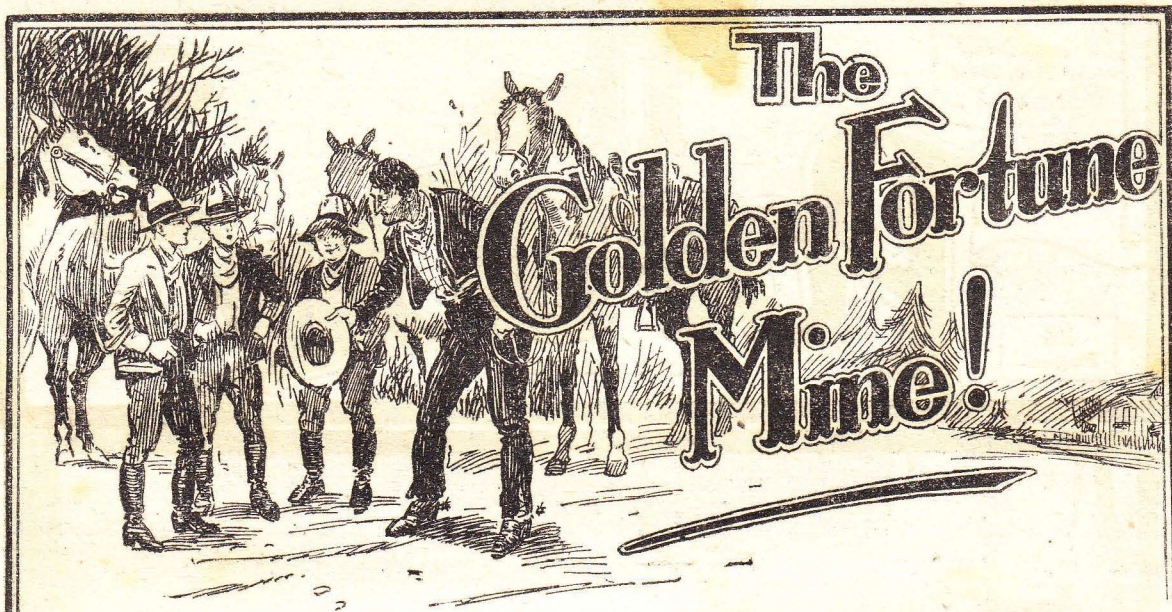


COLOURED
PLATE OF A
SOUTH MANCHURIA
RAILWAY ENGINE
FREE
INSIDE!

ON THE TRAIL OF GOLD!

(An exciting episode from the long complete tale of FRANK RICHARDS & Co. inside.)

A THRILLING STORY, TELLING HOW FRANK RICHARDS IS OFFERED A CHEAP SHARE IN A "GOLD MINE," AND WHAT CAME OF IT.



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

By MARTIN CLIFFORD,

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Chance of a Lifetime!

RICHARDS, old chap!" Frank Richards grinned. Chunky Todgers spoke in so affectionate and wheedling a tone that it was clear that he wanted something. "Well, what is it?" asked Frank good-humouredly. "I can manage twenty-five cents."

"Better your twenty-five cents!" said Chunky indignantly. "Do you think I want to borrow twenty-five cents?"

"Well, don't you?" asked Frank, in surprise, and Bob chuckled again.

"Nope!" growled Chunky Todgers. "Look here, Richards, old chap, I'm talking to you because—because you're a good chap, a real white man, and I like you. I want a hundred dollars."

Frank Richards jumped. Bob Lawless, apparently quite overcome, leaned against the gate of the lumber-school, and gasped for breath.

Vere Beauclerc stared blankly at Todgers. "A hundred dollars!" yelled Frank.

"You bet!" "Not a million dollars?" gasped Bob Lawless. "Not a billion? Not a wagon-load of thousand-dollar bills?"

Frank Richards & Co. were surprised and amused.

A hundred dollars was a sum far beyond the means of any fellow at Cedar Creek School.

Even Gunten, the son of the rich store-keeper at Thompson, never had a hundred dollars.

"I want it!" said Chunky firmly. "Are you going to buy the school?" inquired Bob.

"No, you chump! I'm going to buy a gold-mine."

"A which?" shouted Frank.

"A gold-mine!" said Todgers impressively. "That is to say, half a claim. The galoot naturally won't part with the whole of it for a hundred dollars."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob.

"It's pretty cheap, a half-share in a gold-mine for a hundred dollars, isn't it?" exclaimed Todgers eagerly.

"Awfully cheap, if there's any gold in the mine," grinned Frank Richards.

"There's heaps!"

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"How do you know?"

"I've seen it."

"You've seen the gold-mine?" ejaculated Beauclerc.

"You bet! I guess I'm not the antelope to buy a gold-mine I've never seen," said Todgers disdainfully. "It's Frisco Jo's claim in the Thompson Range. Simply reeking with gold."

"Rot!" said Bob Lawless tersely. "If it was reeking with gold, Frisco Jo wouldn't be selling a half-share for a hundred dollars. Don't you begin buying gold-mines from Mexicans, Chunky. You'll get left."

"I tell you, I've seen it!" exclaimed Chunky. "I rode over there on Saturday. Frisco Jo's hard up, and he's sold his tools in the Thompson, to go on a tear. The claim's all right, but he's sold his tools without raising the wind. I heard him making the offer in Thompson to a galoot who wouldn't have anything to do with it, and I asked him; and he was jolly civil, for a greaser, and offered to show me over the claim."

"And you looked at it?" asked Vere Beauclerc.

"Yep!"

"And saw the gold?" chuckled Frank Richards.

"Sure! It was there right enough; you could fairly scrape it up from the rocks with your paws!" said Chunky Todgers impressively. "Now, I haven't got a hundred dollars; in fact, I've only got two cents."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But it's a big proposition," said Chunky, his round eyes glistening. "My idea is to take you fellows into it. You find the money, and I take equal whacks in the half-claim for introducing the business. See? That's fair."

"Fair enough, if there was anything in the mine," remarked Beauclerc. "But the Mexican must have been fooling you, Chunky."

"Look here," said Chunky brightly. "I'll tell you fellows what. Come with me and see the mine on Saturday, and if you're not satisfied with it, I won't say another word about it."

"Work to do on Saturday," said Bob.

"You can get off—just to oblige a chap, you know," urged Chunky.

"You young ass!" said Frank.

But Frank looked inquiringly at his chums. He always found it difficult to say "No."

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And Chunky Todgers was in almost tearful earnest.

"Well, a ride in the hills wouldn't hurt us," said Bob. "I don't mind. What about you, Cherub?"

"I couldn't come," said Beauclerc. "I've got work to do at the shack. No reason why you fellows shouldn't go, though. You can convince Chunky that he is being taken in, and make an end of it."

"It's a go, then!" said Frank. "Saturday morning, Chunky, and we'll meet you here, and you can guide us."

"Right-ho!" said Chunky, with great satisfaction. "You won't be sorry for this. That mine is going to make us all rich."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Cedar Creek chuckled as they parted from the hopeful Chunky.

They were quite convinced that his hopefulness would not survive their visit to Frisco Jo's famous claim.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

'Frisco Jo's Bonanza!

FRANK RICHARDS and his Canadian cousin rode away from the Lawless Ranch bright and early on Saturday morning.

It was a clear, frosty morning, and the chums enjoyed the sharp gallop from the ranch to Cedar Creek.

As they came in sight of the school by the creek, Chunky Todgers' rotund figure met their glance.

He was early, and waiting for them, holding on to a fat pony.

But Chunky was not alone.

A slim, dusky-complexioned man, with keen, twinkling eyes, and black hair in ringlets, was with him, and he looked very quickly and sharply at Frank and Bob as they dismounted.

"Here we are, Chunky," said Bob Lawless.

"Jolly glad to see you fellows," said Chunky Todgers. "You know Frisco Jo?"

"I've seen the galoot about," said Bob rather dryly.

As a matter of fact, he had last seen Jose Lopez being "fired" out of a saloon at Cedar Camp, in a state decidedly the worse for fire-water.

Whether the Mexican had a gold-mine to dispose of, or not, he was certainly no fit company for a Cedar Creek fellow.

But Chunky Todgers, in his eagerness to get rich quick, overlooked that consideration:

"Frisco Jo was gilded, as it were, in Chunky's eyes.

The Mexican swept off his Stetson hat, and bowed to the two schoolboys with Spanish grace.

Loafer as he was, Frisco Jo was still a "caballero" in his own eyes.

"You are very welcome, senoritos," he said, with the soft, lisping accent of the South. "Senorito Todgero he say that you come to see the mine."

"Well, we are going with Senorito Todgero!" grinned Bob.

"I am guide."

"I guess I couldn't find my way without 'Frisco Jo,' said Chunky Todgers. "Jo is going to guide us there."

"Oh, all right," said Bob.

The Mexican jumped upon his horse, a sorry-looking beast, which 'Frisco Jo had probably borrowed for the day in Thompson.

The Mexican's own horse had gone the way of his pick and axe, and mostly everything else he possessed when he was on a "bender."

Frank and Bob remounted, and Chunky climbed into the saddle, and the Mexican led the way.

"Is it far, Chunky?" Frank inquired, as they rode down the trail at an easy gallop.

"Not much on a good boss," said Chunky. "The claims in the foot-hills. I ain't taking you on a trip up the Rockies, you know."

"Ha, ha! I suppose not!"

"I guess we shall do it in a couple of hours. I—I say, have you brought the money with you?" ventured Todgers.

Bob roared.

"Ha, ha! No fear! There won't be any money wanted, you jay!"

"But the mine's all right."

"I'll eat all the gold we find there," grinned Bob.

"Well, you'll jolly well see what you will see!" said Chunky Todgers warmly.

"No doubt about that," said Frank Richards, laughing. "Let's get on, and see what we shall see."

The quartette rode at a good speed, and the valley settlements were left behind.

'Frisco Jo was following a rough trail that led into a rocky spur of the Thompson Mountains, visible in the distance on a fine day from the town.

As the riders entered the hills, progress became slower.

There was snow piled in the crevices and gullies, and sometimes drifted in masses on the trail. But they kept steadily on.

That the Mexican had been mining in the foot-hills in that hard weather, the schoolboys did not believe for a moment.

'Frisco Jo was evidently "spoofing" Chunky Todgers, doubtless being ignorant of the strict limitations of Chunky's cash resources.

Or perhaps he had schemed for the simple Chunky to draw better-off fellows into the affair, as in fact Chunky had done.

But though they were "in the affair," they had not yet parted with any dollars, and they certainly had no intention of doing so.

Their object in visiting the claim was simply to convince their schoolfellow that the Mexican was swindling him.

On that point they had no doubt whatever.

'Frisco Jo's face was calm, almost expressionless, as he led the rough way onward.

Frank had to admit that the Greaser did not look like a swindler who was about to be bowled out.

The Mexican looked back, and waved his hand at last.

"Are we there?" asked Bob.

"Si, senor! Here is the Golden Fortune Mine!"

"This is the place," said Chunky Todgers, with much satisfaction.

Frank and Bob looked round them curiously.

The Mexican had led them into a rocky "gulch," in the foot-hills, a deep ravine shadowed by great rocks.

It was a spot where possibly quartz-mining could have been undertaken, but that, of course, would have required expensive machinery.

Still, if Jose Lopez had located a paying lode there, there was no doubt that money and machinery would be forthcoming as soon as the fact was proved.

It remained for the dusky adventurer to prove it.

The Mexican jumped off his horse on the bank of a little stream, which flowed out of the firs at the upper end of the gulch.

"Dismount here, senores," he said.

"Right-ho!"

The schoolboys left their horses.

The animals were tethered to a tree, and they followed the Mexican on foot over the rocky ground.

Bob Lawless cautiously kept one eye on the tethered horses as they went.

He would not have been surprised if some "pard" of 'Frisco Jo had appeared in sight, and made an attempt to run off with the horses.

'Frisco Jo had certainly, in his time, made more money by horse-stealing than by gold-mining.

But the Mexican did not lead them far.

He stopped in a deep, rocky gully, and, with a lofty gesture, pointed to the crevices in the surfaces of the weather-beaten rock.

Here, there were plain traces of a pick having hewed at the rock.

Frank and Bob looked at it, and they started.

In the clear, wintry sunlight there came yellow, precious gleams from every crevice in the surface.

Bob's expression changed.

"By Jerusalem!" he muttered.

Frank Richards did not speak.

He stared at the rocky wall of the gully with wide-open eyes.

For the yellow grains were visible to the eye wherever the pick had hewn the rock.

They gleamed and glittered in the light, and Frank, running his finger over the rock, gathered up three or four yellow specks.

Chunky Todgers eyed his companions triumphantly.

"What do you say now?" he demanded.

Bob Lawless could only gasp.

"Gold!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Golden Prospects!

"GOLD!" repeated Frank Richards breathlessly.

'Frisco Jo nodded and smiled.

"Si, senor!"

"Didn't I tell you so?" chirruped Chunky Todgers. "I told you I'd seen it! I can tell you this, you chaps, if this was known in Thompson, half the town would be rushing here."

Bob Lawless drew a deep breath.

He had not placed the slightest faith in the Mexican's story of a gold-mine, but he could not doubt the evidence of his own eyes.

"By thunder, Franky!" said Bob, almost huskily. "There's enough of the yellow stuff there to make us rich for life!"

"Looks like it," said Frank, in awed tones.

"But what the dickens is Lopez selling half of the claim for?"

Bob turned to the Mexican.

"The stuff's there, Jo," he said.

"Si, senor!"

"You're asking a hundred dollars for a half-share in this claim?"

"Si, si!"

"You know a half-share must be worth thousands of dollars?" exclaimed Frank.

"Quite that!" said Chunky Todgers jubilantly.

"Well, why are you going it, Lopez?" demanded Bob. "You've staked out the claim, I suppose, and registered it?"

"Si, senor! But I am poor!" said 'Frisco

Jo. "Bad men, they lead me to drink and to play, and I lose my money and my tools and my horse. I have nothing. I cannot even pay the register fee for the claim. I must have money, or I can do nothing."

"Well, there's something in that," admitted Bob. "But if we took a half-share in this claim for a hundred dollars we should be robbing you."

"I am quite content, senor."

"That's not the point; we couldn't do it. Besides, we couldn't raise a hundred dollars, I guess. But I'll tell you what—we'll take an eighth-share in the claim. That suit you, Franky?"

"Certainly!" said Frank.

"Oh, I say—" began Todgers.

"Don't you be a pig, Chunky! The place is the richest strike ever made in the country, from its looks, and we're not going to rob Lopez. We can raise fifty dollars among us, and we'll take an eighth share for that, if Lopez agrees."

The Mexican's eyes glittered.

"I am content," he said.

"Then it's a go."

"Look here, fifty dollars would corral a quarter share, on 'Frisco Jo's own terms!' exclaimed Chunky rebelliously. "Don't you be a jay, Bob!"

"We're not going to rob him, Chunky."

"But, I say—"

"Eighth share, to be divided into four equal parts among us—Frank, Chunky, self, and the Cherub," said Bob firmly.

"Oh, all right!" said Chunky resignedly. "I guess you're an ass, though, Bob."

"Is that a go, Lopez?"

The Mexican nodded.

"Si, senor; as you wish!"

"And it's a jolly good spec—a regular bonanza," said Bob Lawless. "You can get your claim registered, and pay the fee, 'Frisco Jo, and sign the paper making over our share to us. We'll raise the money somehow!"

"I've got a dollar towards it," said Chunky Todgers hopefully.

"I've got ten at home," said Bob thoughtfully. "You got any, Franky?"

"Fifteen, at home."

"That's twenty-six. We shall want twenty-four dollars more. No good asking the Cherub; he's on the rocks, I guess."

Bob knitted his brows.

"What about your pater?" asked Frank.

"If he knew—"

Bob shook his head.

"He'd think it was a gum-game, same as we did, and he wouldn't go a red cent," he answered. "I guess he wouldn't ride over here to see the mine, either. No good asking popper."

"Then it looks as if we're fixed!" said Chunky Todgers dolefully. "I've spoken to my popper, and he told me not to be a young idiot."

Bob grinned.

"No good telling you that. You can't help it," he remarked. "But about the durocks. We can raise it. Billy Cook will lend me twenty-four dollars if I ask him. I can fix that."

Chunky brightened up.

"Hurrah! We're all rich for life!" he chirruped.

"We'll take a nugget of this rock back to Thompson to be assayed," added Bob thoughtfully.

'Frisco Jo started.

"Not till the money is paid over, senor!" he exclaimed. "Until the money is paid my claim cannot be touched."

Bob's eyes flashed.

"Can't you take our word?" he exclaimed.

"The registering is not yet completed!" protested the Mexican. "It would be possible for any Gringo to jump my claim if it was known. Until you pay me the money I cannot complete the registering, and it is not safe that anyone should know."

"That seems right enough, Bob," remarked Frank.

"I guess so. We'll be getting back, Jo. I'll take a nugget away for assaying, and I give you my word not to show it to a single soul until the money has been paid to you. That suit you?"

The Mexican hesitated, looking keenly into Bob's candid face.

Probably he read there that the Canadian lad could be trusted.

"I agree, senor," he said at last. "But

**A WONDERFUL
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of a Monster Locomotive
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**PRESENTED FREE IN
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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"ON VENGEANCE BENT!"

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

I am in fear that my claim will be jumped before I can complete the legal steps. You will promise me to keep the nugget in your pocket, and not even bring it out into the light of day until you have paid me the fifty dollars?"

"On my word!" said Bob sharply. "Very good, senior. I agree." "That's fair!" said Chunky Todgers. "I shall be jolly glad to hear what the assayist has to say about it. Thousand dollars to the ton, I shouldn't wonder."

Bob Lawless examined the gold-gleaming surface rock again. Golden grains gleamed and winked at him from every inch of it. In his mind's eye the schoolboy could already see the mining gear installed in the gulch, the great stamps crushing the rock, and turning out the precious metal in a stream of wealth.

It was not easy to detach a specimen nugget from the rock, but Bob accomplished it at last by crashing a heavy stone upon the jagged portion.

A big chip of the gold-impregnated rock broke away.

Bob picked it up. It weighed about two pounds, and from its look it should certainly have contained at least three ounces of pure gold.

And for yards the rocky surface was similarly threaded with yellow. It meant a colossal fortune when the mine was worked.

For when the specimen had been assayed, and its value proved, there would be no lack of capitalists to take shares in so promising an enterprise and instal the necessary machinery.

The "big strike" in the Thompson foothills would go down in history.

"By gad, this will make the popper open his eyes when he sees it, and the mining johnny's report along with it!" chuckled Bob Lawless. "Come on, you fellows!"

And the party returned to their horses and rode away down the gulch.

Frisco Jo was looking as impassive as ever, but the three schoolboys were deeply excited.

Their eighth share of such a bonanza was enough to make them rich, and the seven-eighths that remained to the Mexican would make him a millionaire.

But he was taking that dazzling prospect quite calmly.

They rode rapidly homeward, and near Cedar Creek they parted with Frisco Jo. "When shall I see you, senors?" asked the Mexican.

"In a couple of hours," said Bob Lawless. "We're going straight home for the money, and we'll come on to Thompson and settle with you. Where shall we find you, Frisco Jo?"

"My shack is opposite Gunten's store. I will wait you there," said Frisco Jo. "And you have promised no eyes shall see the specimen till you have come to me and the papers are signed."

"That's a cinch!" "Adios, senoritos!"

Frisco Jo rode on to Thompson, and Frank and Bob started for the Lawless ranch. Chunky Todgers waved a fat hand to them.

"Call for me at Gunten's store when you come to Thompson," he said. "I'm going to stick to Gunten for a dinner."

"Right-ho!" Frank Richards and his cousin, in great spirits, galloped home to the ranch.

The gold of Golden Fortune Mine fairly dazzled them.

A dozen times Bob Lawless tapped his pocket, in which the specimen nugget reposed, to make sure that it was safe.

They arrived at the ranch a little tired, but extremely cheerful and satisfied.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Salted!

THE chums made a very hasty dinner. They were late for it, but Mr. Lawless did not make any inquiry as to where they had been.

Bob was glad of it.

He knew that the rancher would scout the story of the bonanza in the Thompson foothills, as he and Frank had scouted it at first.

True, he had only to produce the specimen from his pocket to convince anyone; but that he had promised not to do.

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"ON VENGEANCE BENT!"

The nugget was not to be shown until Frisco Jo had legally made good his title to the claim—a very reasonable stipulation on the part of the Mexican.

Bob chuckled as he thought of the rancher's surprise later, when he should tell him that he had become a part-owner of one of the most valuable gold-mines in British Columbia.

After a hurried dinner Frank and Bob secured their little savings and disposed the dollars about their persons in safe buckskin bags.

Then Bob interviewed Billy Cook, the foreman of the ranch.

Bob was very friendly with the gentleman, and Billy Cook, though surprised by a request for the loan of such a sum as twenty-four dollars, lent him the money without demur.

Bob simply explained that he wanted to make a purchase in Thompson, and did not care to ask his father for the money just then. The good-natured cattleman was willing to oblige.

With the money in a buckskin bag along with his own, Bob jumped on his pony, and rode away from the ranch with Frank Richards.

He led a pony with him, to lend to Vere Beauclerc, who had no horse.

The chums rode at a gallop for the shack by Cedar Creek, where they found Beauclerc.

Beauclerc's work for the day was done, and he was resting in the doorway of the shack when the chums rode up.

He jumped up, his face brightening as he saw them.

His father, the remittance-man, was away, and Vere had been alone all day.

"You fellows come to supper?" he asked cheerfully. "I'm jolly glad to see you!"

"No fear. We've called to take you to Thompson," answered Bob.

"You're going to Thompson this evening?" "You bet!"

"Anything on?" asked Vere in astonishment.

"Jump on that pony, and I'll tell you as we go."

"Right you are!"

Vere closed the door of the shack, and put on his hat and jumped into the saddle.

The three chums rode away for the town, and as they trotted along the darkening trail Frank and Bob eagerly explained.

Beauclerc listened in amazement. "But you thought the whole thing was a swindle!" he exclaimed.

"So we did," admitted Bob. "But it was the real white article all the same. I've got a nugget in my pocket to prove it, too!"

"By Jove!"

"We're paying Lopez fifty dollars for an eighth share in the mine, and it's going to be divided into four whacks—one each for you and Chunky and Frank and me," explained Bob.

"But I'm not entitled—"

"Rot!"

"I have no money to contribute," said Vere, colouring.

Bob laughed. "That doesn't matter. We're standing it."

"But—"

"My dear chap, if you're particular, you can make it up out of your first profits as a mine-owner," said Bob. "I don't mind. We shall be rolling in dollars as soon as the mine's going!"

"You're sure—"

"We've seen it!" said Frank Richards.

"But—but do you know much about gold-mining?" asked Beauclerc, hesitatingly.

"Dash it all, we know gold when we see it, I suppose?"

"Yes, I—I suppose so."

"Don't be a blessed Jonah, Cherb!" said Bob warmly. "Don't I keep on telling you it's all right?"

"Oh, all serene!" said Beauclerc, with a smile.

The remittance-man's son had his doubts still, as a matter of fact; but he would not attempt to dash the high hopes of his chums.

Not that he could have shaken their faith if he had tried.

Seeing was believing, in Bob's opinion—a maxim that is not always quite reliable.

The three chums arrived in Thompson, and called for Chunky Todgers at Gunten's store, and then crossed over to the shack where Frisco Jo dwelt.

They found the Mexican at home, and quite sober—the latter circumstance being

due to the fact that his prospective partners had not yet handed him any money.

"Here we are again, old scout!" chirruped Chunky Todgers.

"Frisco Jo bowed with Spanish politeness to his visitors.

"Pray be seated, senores," he said. "Shell out, Franky," said Bob.

The fifty dollars, mostly in paper, were poured out on the table.

"Frisco Jo's black eyes scintillated at the sight of the money.

"Ah, you keep your word senores!" he said. "Look, I have ink, paper, all ready! It will take but a few minutes."

"Go it!" said Bob.

"I suppose that paper will be legal?" remarked Beauclerc.

"What a chap you are for raising difficulties, Cherb!" growled Bob Lawless. "We'll call in a couple of witnesses, if you like."

"I have some friends without," said Lopez.

"Frisco Jo's friends were called in. They proved to be Eubree Dick and Dave Dunn, two of the most ruffianly characters in Thompson.

Still, that did not matter to the chums of Cedar Creek; they were not there to tell Frisco Jo that evil communications corrupt good manners.

Besides, Frisco Jo hadn't any good manners to be corrupted, if it came to that.

The transfer was duly drawn up and signed and witnessed, and the four schoolboys became the legal owners of a one-eighth share in the Golden Fortune Mine, staked out and registered by Jose Lopez.

The Mexican proceeded with such facility that one might have guessed that he had "been there before," so to speak.

And with great keenness, Frisco Jo picked up the fifty dollars and counted it.

"That's done," said Bob, taking up the precious document. "You won't lose any time in getting the claim registered, Jo?"

"Early on Monday morning, senior."

"Why not to-day—the office isn't closed yet?"

"Muy bien!" said the Mexican. "It shall be to-night. And you on Monday will have the nugget assayed."

"No fear, I'm going down to Mr. Penrose's with it!" answered Bob promptly. "I want to take his report home for my popper to see."

Lopez started a little.

"You are going now to the senior Penrose?"

"You bet!"

"Then in ten minutes, senior, you will know the value of the nugget."

"Exactly!"

"Come on, Bob," said Chunky Todgers eagerly.

"Good-night, Lopez!"

"Adios, senoritos!"

The schoolboys left the shack, and Frisco Jo looked at his two friends.

They held out their hands expressively.

Evidently understanding, the Mexican dropped a five-dollar bill into the hand of each of his precious friends, and they grinned and left the shack.

Frisco Jo followed them out.

Two minutes later, he was mounted, and riding out of Thompson in the deep dusk, a smile upon his face, and forty dollars in his pocket.

Apparently his successful sale of one-eighth of the bonanza had determined the Mexican to indulge in his next "bender" in another locality.

Meanwhile, Frank Richards & Co. hurried down the unpaved street to Mr. Penrose's cabin.

Mr. Penrose was proprietor and editor of the "Thompson Press"; he was also a veterinary surgeon and a mining expert, and several other things.

He was setting up type for his newspaper—being also his own compositor—when Frank Richards and his friends presented themselves.

"Too late!" said Mr. Penrose. "No advertisements accepted for this week."

Frank Richards laughed.

"That's not it," he said. "We want you to test a nugget, Mr. Penrose. Could you do it now; we've got to get home pretty soon."

"Let's see the nugget," replied Mr. Penrose. "Where in the name of goodness have you kids been raking a nugget from?"

"It's a specimen from a mine," explained Bob Lawless.

Mr. Penrose chuckled.



GOLDEN PROSPECTS!—In the clear sunlight there came yellow, precious gleams from every crevice in the surface of the hard rock. Frank Richards & Co. stared at the rocky wall with wide-open eyes. "Gold!" they muttered breathlessly. (See Chapter 2.)

"You've been prospecting?" he asked. "Not exactly; but we've bought a share in a mine."

"Wha-a-at?"
"A regular bonanza!" chirped Chunky Todgers. "One of the biggest things ever struck between the Rockies and the Pacific, Mr. Penrose."

"Well, carry me home to die!" ejaculated the astonished Mr. Penrose. "Whom did you buy it of, you young duffers?"

"Frisco Jo!"
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the editor of the "Thompson Press."

"Look here, will you assay the dashed thing for us?" asked Bob Lawless, warmly. "We want to know what it's worth."

"At your service," said Mr. Penrose, still chuckling, as he laid down the forme he was handling. "Let's see the precious nugget. If I was a betting man, I'd lay you a million dollars to a spavined mule that 'Frisco Jo' has sold you a pup."

Bob slammed the specimen down on the bench.

"Look at that!" he said.
Mr. Penrose looked at it, and burst into another roar.

"How much did you pay 'Frisco Jo'?" he asked.

"Fifty dollars!" said Frank.
"Great Rockies! The scamp ought to be arrested. I advise you to go to the sheriff at once, before he gets out of town."

"What are you driving at?," exclaimed Bob indignantly. "I tell you it's a real mine, a real bonanza, and we've seen it with our own eyes. I chipped off that nugget as a specimen, to have it assayed. Why, there are ounces of gold in that nugget alone."

"Can't you see it yourself?" demanded Chunky Todgers. "You've got eyes, haven't you, Mr. Penrose?"

"My dear boys," said Mr. Penrose kindly. "You've been done. Don't tell me the rock was fairly shining with gold—I know it was. Salted mines are always like that."

"Salted?" ejaculated Bob.

"Salted, sonny. Did you think 'Frisco Jo' had a real gold-mine to sell?"

"But—but—but what the dickens does salted mean?" exclaimed Frank Richards, in bewilderment.

"It means salted, my lad. There's various ways of doing it—judging by this specimen." Mr. Penrose grinned. "'Frisco Jo' has squirted gold-dust on the rock, to make it show golden in all the crevices. There's other ways, but that's the easiest way."

"Oh!" said Frank faintly.
"But—but how much is that nugget worth?" stammered Chunky Todgers, in dismay.

"That depends. If you're building a railway, and want a solid foundation, it might be worth a thousandth part of a dollar, as material."

"Wha-a-at?"
"In short, it's worth exactly as much as any other piece of rock you might pick up on the trail."

"Oh dear!"
Chunky Todgers fairly groaned.

"But—but—but there's gold in it!" stuttered Bob Lawless. "Dash it all, you can see the gold in it with your own eyes!"

"My eyes are not good enough," chuckled Mr. Penrose. "I can see traces of bronze powder squirted into it, that's all. I'll willingly eat all the gold there is in it, Bob Lawless."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" said Bob.
"It's too bad," said Beauclerc. "That swindling rascal ought to be put in the calaboose!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Chunky Todgers. "Oh dear! My dollar! My dollar's gone for nothing! Oh dear!"

"You fat coyote!" shouted Bob. "What about our forty-nine dollars?"
But Chunky did not heed.

Apparently the dollar that was his was more important in his eyes than the forty-nine dollars that were not.

He groaned dismally, mourning, like Rachel

of old, for that which was lost, and would not be comforted.

"And—and I've borrowed twenty-four dollars from Billy Cook!" mumbled Bob. "Oh, great snakes! The villain—the swindler—oh dear!"

"Buzz away to the sheriff, and he may be stopped before he gets out of town," smiled Mr. Penrose.

He had started type-setting again, having no time to lose, and the four schoolboys left the office, with dismal faces.
Chunky Todgers started for home, still groaning.

But Frank Richards & Co. were not thinking of home.

"That greaser villain's got our fifty dollars!" said Bob Lawless, breathing hard. "Let's look for him—and we'll have our money back, or else his scalp."

"Yes, rather!"
The dazzling prospect of boundless wealth had vanished; it was gone from their gaze like a beautiful dream.

All the chums had to show for fifty dollars was a piece of paper entitling them to an eighth share in a mine, which was just as valuable as any other heap of rocks in the foothills—and no more.

It was no wonder that they were wrathful. And they started on the trail of 'Frisco Jo, hunting that estimable character up and down the town of Thompson, up and down and round about, but they found him not.

It was only too clear, at last, that the astute greaser had "lit out" for fresh fields and pastures new—perhaps to sell his mine over again in another district.

And when the chums took the homeward trail at last, their feelings were too deep for words.

THE END.

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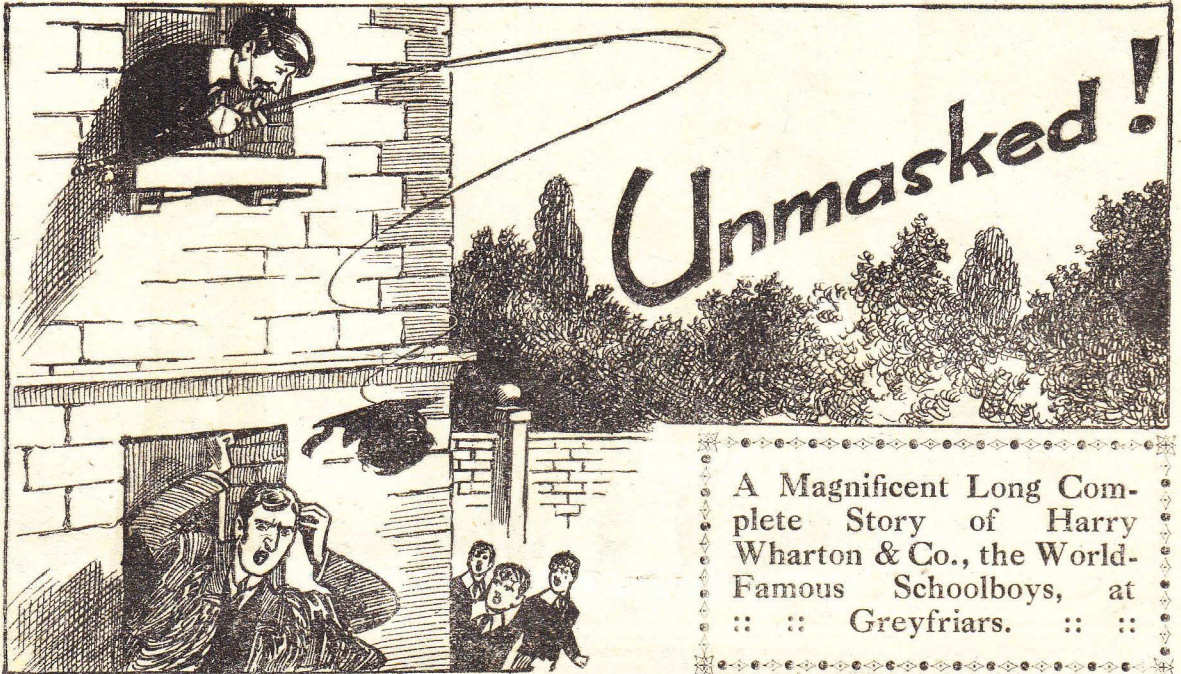
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By FRANK RICHARDS

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Information Wanted!

"**H** ALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"My hat! It's Spott again."

"Inspector Spott!" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith, his sharp eyes upon the stout gentleman who had entered the school gates in the early-morning sunshine. "Didn't you spot him yesterday when he left after calling on Quelch?"

"Can't say I did," said Harry carelessly.

"Well, I did," said the Bounder.

"Blessed if I see what a giddy inspector of police wants with old Quelch!" said Bob Cherry, with a puzzled look.

"Might be looking for a chap resembling Quelch—chap with sandy hair, who pays mysterious visits at midnight!" grinned Skinner.

"Oh, rats!" said Wharton.

"The rattfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Skinner is off his ludicrous rocker!"

The Remove Form at Greyfriars, to which the juniors belonged, was in a state of excitement. For days Mr. Quelch had been acting in a very queer manner, and though the juniors put it down to the fact that his cousin, Ulick Ferrers, was a fugitive from justice, such was not the case.

The real Mr. Quelch was in the vaults, a prisoner at the hands of Ulick Ferrers, who was actually taking the master's place in Greyfriars. Vernon-Smith had discovered the man he thought to be the Remove master taking food into the vaults, and Vernon-Smith, if he could, meant to make the best of his knowledge for his own selfish ends.

Vernon-Smith gave Skinner a warning look. He did not want his suspicions to be confided to all the Remove. The well-assorted comrades moved away, conversing in whispers. Inspector Spott entered the School House, but he did not ask to see Mr. Quelch. He sent his card in to the Head.

He was shown into the Head's study a few minutes later. Dr. Locke was looking very much surprised. It was early morning, and nearly time for chapel, and Dr. Locke always conducted morning prayers himself. It was not a propitious moment for a caller.

"I must ask you to excuse me for calling at such a time, Dr. Locke," said the inspector.

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"My card will have told you that I am here representing Scotland Yard Criminal Investigation Department."

"Quite so," said the Head. "I suppose you have some good reason for calling now?"

"A very good reason, sir. You have doubtless heard the name of Ulick Ferrers?"

Dr. Locke looked surprised.

"No, sir; the name is quite strange to me."

"Mr. Quelch has not mentioned the matter to you, then?"

"Mr. Quelch—the master of the Lower Fourth Form here? Certainly not: I do not quite understand you, Inspector Spott!"

"I will explain, sir. Probably you do not read news of that kind in the papers, otherwise you might have seen that Ulick Ferrers, tutor to Lord Upshott's son, had fled, after forging his lordship's name to a cheque for a thousand pounds, taking the money with him!"

"You are quite right, Mr. Spott—I do not read that kind of news," said the Head dryly.

"May I inquire how the matter concerns me?"

"Ulick Ferrers is Mr. Quelch's cousin."

"Indeed! That is very unfortunate for Mr. Quelch, and I am sincerely sorry. Surely, Mr. Spott," added the Head, frowning—"surely you do not tell me this in order to create distrust in my mind of my Form-master—one of the most upright gentlemen I am acquainted with?"

"No, sir. Yet I am surprised that Mr. Quelch has not mentioned the matter to you, as I called upon him yesterday in connection with it."

"Probably he does not wish to talk on such a matter, sir. It is not a connection he should be proud of."

"Quite so," agreed the inspector; but he was evidently not quite satisfied.

"But you have not called merely to acquaint me with this unfortunate circumstance with Mr. Quelch?" asked the Head.

"No, Ulick Ferrers has fled in this direction, and has not been captured. He has disappeared without leaving a trace behind, sir. I have made the strictest investigation, and there is no longer any doubt that he was seen in Friar-dale the day before yesterday. That he is still hiding in the neighbourhood seems to me certain. The whole vicinity has been searched, and searched again, without result. Now, sir, you will

not need telling what must have been his motive in coming so close to this school?"

Dr. Locke looked startled.

"Do you mean that you suspect that he has tried to obtain assistance in his flight from Mr. Quelch?" he exclaimed.

"I do not say so, but appearances are to that effect," said the inspector. "I asked Mr. Quelch about it yesterday, and he assured me that he had seen nothing of his cousin, and heard nothing from him."

"You may rely upon Mr. Quelch's word without the slightest hesitation," said Dr. Locke. "He is incapable of deception."

"I accept his assurance—and yours, sir. But there is no doubt in my mind that Ulick Ferrers has been in the neighbourhood of the school—probably to make some appeal to his cousin, whether he has carried out his intention or not. I cannot conceive any other reason why he should come here; but that he has come here is beyond question. My wish, therefore, is to question all who are in this school—masters and boys—as to whether they have seen anything of him. Of course, this cannot be done without your permission; but it may greatly help the course of justice."

Dr. Locke pursed his lips.

"Such a step would have the unfortunate effect of acquainting the whole school with Mr. Quelch's disgraceful connection," he said.

"That cannot be concealed in any case, sir; for the arrest, when it takes place, will most certainly take place near here, and it will be in the papers."

"If you really think that this will help you, Mr. Spott—"

"I certainly do think so, sir—and it may also save you from unpleasantness, and Mr. Quelch as well; for as the man is known to be in this vicinity, the police are now keeping this school under observation. The sooner that is ended, the better it will be, from your point of view, I presume?"

"Most certainly," said the Head. "I had no idea of this."

The inspector smiled.

"My men are doing their work well," he said. "But no one comes into this place, or leaves it, without my knowledge."

"It is very unpleasant, but I suppose you have your duty to do," said the Head. "I must do all I can to help you. You have an exact description of the man, doubtless?"

NEXT TUESDAY!

"THE FIVE HEROES!"

A GRAND TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"His description is that exactly of your Form-master, Mr. Quelch, with the exception that he has sandy hair," said the inspector. "If he were wearing some headgear that completely concealed his hair, he would be taken for Mr. Quelch anywhere!"

"How do you wish to proceed?" asked the Head courteously, but evidently very much disturbed and troubled by the matter.

"I should like everyone in this school to be asked whether he has seen a person resembling Mr. Quelch, but with sandy hair, in the neighbourhood of the school since Monday."

"Very well," said Dr. Locke, with a sigh. "I will order the school to be assembled, and you shall put the question."

"Thank you!" said the inspector. "That will be excellent!"

And a few minutes later the prefects of Greyfriars were shepherding the school into Big Hall.

All the Forms were gathered there, with their masters, when the Head made his appearance by the upper door with the inspector.

There was a buzz of voices in the hall, the fellows wondering very much what was in the wind.

Upon the brow of the Remove master was a shade of anxious thought, and when his eyes fell upon the stout form of the inspector he gave a violent start.

For a moment the heart of Ulick Ferrers almost ceased to beat.

It was a new move against him—he knew that; but exactly what was intended he did not know, and for a moment he had an almost irresistible inclination to bolt for the door.

But he held himself in hand.

The fact that the inspector's glance passed him carelessly showed that his identity was not suspected, so far, at all events. To Inspector Spott, as well as to all Greyfriars, he was still Henry Quelch, the master of the Remove.

The Bounder's eyes turned upon his Form-master's face, and he read the emotion there, though he gave a wrong meaning to it. For the Bounder, much as he knew and suspected, was far from dreaming that the man in Mr. Quelch's cap and gown was not in truth Mr. Quelch.

Dr. Locke, in a few short words, and with a dryness of manner which told how the whole affair disturbed him, explained to the assembled school what was wanted.

Every eye turned upon the Remove master. He stood with his eyes fixed upon the floor, as if in shame at having his disgraceful connection with a criminal thus abruptly revealed, and there were few who did not feel sorry for him.

"This man," resumed the Head, "who is unfortunately a distant relation of a gentleman whom I respect and honour highly—Mr. Quelch, the master of the Lower Fourth—this man bears a personal resemblance to my friend and colleague, Mr. Quelch. Inspector Spott supposes that he has come into this vicinity, perhaps with some intention of attempting to obtain assistance from Mr. Quelch—a very absurd proceeding, if it is the case. If any boy in this school has seen such a man during the past two days, he is requested to come forward and tell the inspector so."

There was a long silence. The fellows understood why the Head had "piled it on" about his respect and honour for Mr. Quelch. He wished it to be fully understood that this unfortunate revelation did not diminish his esteem for the Remove master in any way. It was very like the Head, who was always kind and considerate, and beloved by the masters as well as the boys of Greyfriars.

There was a rapid exchange of glances among the three chums of the Remove who had made that unlucky expedition to Uncle Clegg's—Wharton, and Nugent, and Bob Cherry. The Head's announcement had taken them by surprise.

"I suppose we'd better speak up," said Bob, in a whisper.

"We shall have to let out that we were out of bounds," murmured Nugent.

"That's all right. Quelch has licked us for that once, and we can't be punished twice for the same bizney, you know."

"I wonder Quelch hasn't told us to come forward," muttered Wharton. "But I suppose we had better do it."

The Head was speaking again.

"If any boy here can give any information to Inspector Spott, I command him to do

so, in the fullest possible manner. He will be doing a service to the law, and to the school, and to Mr. Quelch, in helping to get this wretched fugitive from justice removed from our neighbourhood."

"That settles it!" said Wharton. "Quelch isn't looking at us, even. He doesn't seem to care one way or the other."

"Come on!" said Bob.

"What about you, Smithey?"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Least said soonest mended," he said.

"But the Head's orders—"

"Oh, piffle!"

Harry Wharton did not reply to that. The three juniors left the ranks of the Remove and advanced towards the Head and the inspector.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Shadowed!**

DR. LOCKE fixed his eyes upon the three juniors at once. The inspector started a little and craned his head forward.

"You have something to tell the inspector?" asked Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir," said Wharton. "We have seen the man."

There was a buzz in the hall. Dr. Locke made a gesture to the inspector, intimating that he was to question the juniors himself. That the gentleman from Scotland Yard was only too eager to do.

"You saw the man, you say?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the three juniors together.

"A man resembling your Form-master?"

"We took him for Mr. Quelch, sir," said Harry.

"You observed the colour of his hair?"

"No, sir. He was wearing a cap, pulled down over his ears and his forehead," replied Wharton. "We couldn't see that, you see."

"When did you see him?"

"The night before last, sir."

"At what time?"

"Something before eleven."

"And where?"

"In Friardale Lane, and afterwards close to the school wall."

Dr. Locke fixed a frowning glance upon the juniors, and interposed.

"Wharton, what is this? What were you doing out of bounds at such an hour, when you should have been asleep in your dormitory?"

Wharton coloured.

"We got out to get some tuck from Uncle Clegg's in the village, sir. I—I know we oughtn't to have done it, sir, but—but—Mr. Quelch caught us as we came in, sir, and took the stuff away from us, and caned us."

"Oh! In that case I shall say nothing further about it, as you have been punished. Tell Inspector Spott everything."

"You saw this man twice, then?" the inspector asked.

"Yes, sir. When we saw him in the lane first, we thought it was Mr. Quelch, though we wondered at seeing him there. We were dodging him, when he suddenly bolted across the fields. Then, when we came back to Greyfriars, he was outside the school wall. We thought it was Mr. Quelch waiting to catch us as we came back. We got in a different way, and ran into Mr. Quelch in the Close, sir. And then we knew we had been mistaken."

"Did you mention to Mr. Quelch having seen a man resembling him so closely?"

"Yes, sir. He thought it was simply a fancy of ours."

The inspector shot a quick, sharp glance of suspicion in the direction of the Remove master. His instant thought was, why had not the Form-master mentioned this to him at their interview the previous day?

"You are quite sure that this person you saw was not, indeed, your Form-master, Mr. Quelch?" the inspector inquired. "You have made no mistake about that?"

"Oh, no, sir! Mr. Quelch told us, when he caught us, that he had not been outside the school walls."

"Since then have you seen the man?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know whether he entered the walls of Greyfriars?"

The juniors hesitated.

They did know it, of course, from what the Bounder had seen the same night, and had described on his return to the dormitory. But the Bounder had evidently deter-

mined not to come forward to give evidence, for what reason they could not guess. And it dawned upon them, too, that Mr. Quelch could have given information if he had chosen, since he had received the man into his study—according to the Bounder's story. Had Vernon-Smith been romancing?

"Come—come! Answer me!" said the inspector quickly. "Do you know whether this man entered the grounds or not?"

"We did not see anything further, sir," said Nugent. "We went back to our dormitory, and did not leave it again. Mr. Quelch caned us for being out of bounds."

"You returned to your dormitory at once?"

"Yes; at once, sir."

"Did you go to bed?"

"Yes."

"And did not even look from the window after that?" suggested the inspector.

"No, sir. We stayed in bed."

The juniors were on tenterhooks now.

The inspector's questioning had revealed what had not occurred to them at first—that Mr. Quelch was keeping secret that mid-night visit to his study. They did not want, of course, to betray their Form-master if he chose to conceal that mysterious visit. And there was the possibility, too, that the Bounder had romanced, for some reason best known to himself. At all events, they could not render themselves responsible for what Vernon-Smith had declared he had seen, since Smith himself refused to come forward and give his evidence.

Fortunately, the inspector was satisfied.

As no one else came forward to give information, the matter was at an end, and the school was dismissed.

The inspector tapped the Remove master on the arm as the boys were filing out.

"One word with you, please, Mr. Quelch!" he said.

"Certainly!"

"You did not mention what these boys told you about the man they had seen when I was with you yesterday," said the inspector, his eyes keenly on the Form-master's face.

"I had forgotten the occurrence, Mr. Spott," said the Form-master calmly. "I did not attach any importance at the time to what the juniors said, and it completely slipped my memory. Even now I think it was simply a fancy on their part. This questioning has put the idea into their heads, and they wish to make themselves of consequence."

The inspector looked dubious.

"It would have been more judicious to mention it, however," he said.

"I repeat that the matter had slipped my memory, as matters of no consequence are likely to do at any time."

"Very well, sir," said the inspector.

"You suspect, now, that the rascal has actually been here, Mr. Spott?" the Remove master asked, as the inspector was turning away.

"I am quite assured of it," said Mr. Spott curtly. "I had little doubt before, and now I am certain. He is concealed in this vicinity, and someone is supplying him with necessities. That is all I have to say."

The inspector said no more, but more was easily to be read in his looks. He suspected Mr. Quelch of helping to conceal his missing cousin, and of supplying his wants while he remained in concealment. And there was no doubt at all that from that moment the Remove master's movements would be closely watched, and that he would be shadowed whenever he quitted the school.

Inspector Spott took his leave, and the Form-master went into his study. As soon as the door was closed the calmness dropped from his face like a mask that is thrown aside. His features seemed convulsed with rage and terror.

"What infernal luck!" he ground out between his teeth. "That these boys should be out of bounds then—then—of all times! Ah! There is always a weak place in the armour—some accidental circumstance to ruin the most carefully-laid scheme. Now I shall be watched. That fat fool thinks I have hidden myself—ha, ha!—somewhere in this neighbourhood, and am taking myself food and drink! The fool! But I shall be shadowed, spied upon—watched without ceasing! Yet—in the long run it must cease—at all events, they cannot watch me within the walls of Greyfriars, and so I am safe."

And after morning lessons the false Form-master donned hat and coat and walked out of the gates.

THE POPULAR—No. 133.

A GRAND TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

THE FIVE HEROES!

8 More to Come! Don't Miss Next Week's Grand Coloured Engine Plate!

As he sauntered down to the village of Friardale a man in the dress of a country labourer lounged after him, never losing sight of him.

In the village the shadowing was taken up by a man in the garb of a mechanic.

The shadowers did their work well enough; but the Form-master did not lose a single detail of their movements, although from his manner no one could have guessed that he suspected that he was shadowed.

Certainly his visit to Friardale was harmless enough. He called into the booksellers and purchased a book, and gave an order for some scholastic volumes to be procured from London—and then walked sedately back to the school.

He had not excited further suspicion; but he had satisfied himself that he was closely watched—that he could never quit the precincts of Greyfriars without being followed and noted. And the scheme of a flight in the name and under the guise of Mr. Quelch faded from his thoughts now. It was impracticable so long as he was kept under such close observation.

There was but one course open before him—to play out the game to the end—to keep up the part he had assumed, and take his chance, and that was what the false Form-master resolved to do.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Defiance!

THE Removite did not have a pleasant afternoon in the Form-room that day.

Never had they known their master to be so harsh.

That Mr. Quelch's temper was suffering in some inexplicable way—perhaps on account of the trouble caused by his rascally cousin—the juniors knew from his treatment of Billy Bunter the previous day.

But this afternoon matters were worse than ever.

And curiously enough, Harry Wharton & Co. were called out in turn for the most trifling faults, and caned with a severity that sent them to their seats again with quivering nerves, and hearts burning with anger and indignation.

What was the matter with Quelch?

That was the question all the Lower Fourth asked themselves in great dismay. They were accustomed to severity from Mr. Quelch. But cruelty and brutality had always been foreign to his nature.

He was a severe master, but he could be very kind, and upon the whole he was popular with his Form. But there was no trace of kindness about him now.

The Removites guessed that he was troubled in his mind about the visit of the police and the disgrace of Ulrick Ferrers' connection with him. They fancied that perhaps he imagined they rejoiced over his misfortune—that he suspected them of triumphing over him. Some of them, indeed, like Skinner and Snoop, would have done so if they had dared. But most of the juniors had felt sympathetic, and Harry Wharton had suggested—and most of the fellows agreed heartily—that they should be on their very best behaviour for a day or two, so as to assure Mr. Quelch that they respected him as highly as ever.

As Bob Cherry said, it wasn't his fault if he had a cousin who was a wrong 'un. Bob had a cousin who was a "wrong 'un" himself, for that matter. And the Famous Five agreed that it was "up" to the Removite to be very respectful and attentive indeed—to show Mr. Quelch that their respect was undiminished.

But these good resolutions faded away when the Form-master showed his savage temper that afternoon.

For a whispered word in class Harry Wharton had received six cuts, so hard and stinging that his hands ached from them all the afternoon. Bob Cherry was caned with equal severity for shuffling his feet. Frank Nugent, for nothing at all, on a suspicion of having talked.

The chums knew very well what it meant. Their Form-master was angry with them for the information they had given the inspector. And as he could not punish them openly for obeying the Head's direct commands, he was "taking it out" of them in this underhand manner.

They were amazed, for they would never have dreamed of suspecting Mr. Quelch of such meanness. Yet they were very angry.

OF THE POPULAR—No. 185.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"THE FIVE HEROES!"

"If he didn't want us to say anything, why couldn't he give us a hint?" Bob Cherry muttered bitterly, as he squeezed his hands. "How were we to know that he was keeping it a secret about that clap coming here?"

"One word would have been enough, or a look," said Harry. "I'd have bitten out my tongue rather than have given him away, if I'd known. But—but he must have lied to the inspector, Bob—he must have said he hadn't seen the man, or else Mr. Spott wouldn't have needed to ask us questions at all. We told him less than Quelch could have told him. He has lied, and I suppose we gave him away without knowing it."

"And now he's going to make us suffer for it," said Nugent, with a grimace.

"I told you, least said soonest mended," said the Bounder, with a grin.

The Form-master turned round sharply from the blackboard. The words had been spoken in low whispers, but he had evidently heard a sound. His eyes fixed angrily upon Vernon-Smith.

"You were talking!" he rapped out.

"I, sir!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, you! Stand out before the class!"

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath. The Form-master had taken up his cane, and the Bounder knew what that meant. He did not intend to go through the same savage punishment as Wharton and Nugent and Bob Cherry, if he could help it.

Now, if ever, was the time to try whether his knowledge of the Form-master's secret was of any value. Skinner knew as much as he did, but the look on the Form-master's face would have sent Skinner hurrying out at his command without a thought of defiance. But the Bounder was made of sterner stuff.

He set his teeth, and remained where he was.

"Do you hear me, Smith?" rapped out the Form-master. In the course of a couple of days he had acquainted himself with the names of most of his pupils.

"I hear you, sir!" said the Bounder, with grim calmness.

"Stand out here!"

"What for, sir?"

"I am going to cane you for talking," said the Form-master savagely. "I will keep order in the class."

"Excuse me, sir," said the Bounder, in a tone of deliberate insolence, "but is it quite fair to punish us because you are worried by family troubles?"

The Removite simply gasped.

The Form-master stood as if transfixed, glaring at the junior. Vernon-Smith's heart was beating harder than usual, but he was quite cool. This was the kind of situation the Bounder enjoyed—amazing and startling his Form-fellows with an exhibition of courage and cool "cheek" upon which no other member of the Form would have ventured.



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"You ass!" murmured Bulstrode. "He'll skin you!"

"He won't skin me!" said the Bounder. "Vernon-Smith!" thundered the master, "stand out here immediately! Do you want me to fetch you, sir?"

"I'll come out there certainly, sir, but I am not going to be caned," said the Bounder.

"Are you dotty, Smithy?" muttered Wharton.

The Bounder smiled coolly, and walked out before the class. He had his hands in his pockets, and his look was cool and impertinent. All eyes in the Remove were upon him. At that moment the Bounder had a full share of the limelight he loved.

"Hold out your hand, Smith!" said the Form-master in a voice of concentrated rage.

The Bounder's hands remained in his pockets.

"He must be mad!" muttered Linley.

"Quelch will scalp him!"

"I guess he's going through it!" muttered Fisher T. Fish.

"The ass!"

"He will get it in the neck!"

The Removites had only one opinion about what would happen to Vernon-Smith for his defiance of the angry Form-master. But the Bounder was not dismayed.

"Will you hold out your hand, Smithy?"

"No, sir," said the Bounder, very quietly and distinctly.

And the Removites gasped again.

"What—what—what do you mean, boy?"

"It's not my fault your cousin is a forger and a thief, sir!" said the Bounder, with a grim coolness. "I've no doubt it worries you, but I decline to have it vented on me!"

It seemed to the Removites that an earthquake must happen after that. Even the Bounder was a little pale now, in spite of his iron nerve.

The Form-master did not speak again. He made a spring at the junior and caught him by the collar with his left hand, and raised the cane with his right. The almost ferocious expression of his face showed with what savage force the blow was to fall, if it fell at all. Some of the juniors shivered.

But the Bounder, turning his head so that his eyes met the angry glare of the master, spoke in a low voice, audible only to the man who was grasping him:

"Don't strike me, sir! You'd better not, unless you want me to tell Inspector Spott whom you're keeping hidden in the vault under the old chapel!"

The Form-master staggered back as if he had been struck.

He released his grasp upon the Bounder's collar, and the blow did not fall. The cane slipped from his nerveless hand, and clattered on the floor.

His face had gone deathly white, and his eyes were starting with terror.

The Bounder smoothed out his collar calmly and smiled, with a full enjoyment of his victory. It was evident that he would not be caned now.

The Removites looked on breathlessly.

The Form-master found his voice at last; but when he spoke his tones were husky, low, and uncertain.

"Vernon-Smith, follow me to my study!"

"Certainly, sir," said the Bounder cheerfully.

The Form-master strode from the room with rustling gown, and the Bounder followed him. There was a buzz of amazement in the Form-room.

In Mr. Quelch's study, the Form-master stopped and fixed his eyes upon Vernon-Smith. The Bounder met his gaze calmly.

"You said," muttered the wretched man—"you said—"

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"I know that you are keeping Ulrick Ferrers hidden in the vault, sir," he said.

To the Bounder's surprise, a look of relief flashed over the haggard face before him. The Form-master drew a deep, almost sobbing breath. His relief was too great to be concealed, and the Bounder saw it—and it astounded him! It was evident that the man had expected to hear something worse than that—though what, Vernon-Smith could not imagine.

"You—you—you know that, do you?" stammered the master at last.

"Yes, sir."

"And how do you know?"

"I saw you there last night, sir."

"You spied on me?"

A GRAND TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

"You may call it that if you like, sir. Spying isn't any worse than hiding a criminal from the police, that I know of!"

A strange smile came over the pallid face for a moment—a smile that puzzled the Bounder; but it was gone in an instant.

"Very well," said the Form-master, after a pause. "It is true that I have hidden my—my cousin, Click Ferrers—I do not deny it. I believe that he is innocent, you understand, and so I am helping him to escape. Vernon-Smith, you must keep this secret for me?"

"I am quite willing to do that, sir," "Have you told anyone?" "Only my pal Skinner, sir, and he will be mum about it. You need not be afraid that I shall talk—I know what the secret is worth," said the Bounder calmly.

"I understand. You think you have a hold over me now?" said the Form-master, his gaze searching the Bounder's face.

"I suppose it amounts to that, sir." "Very well. You and Skinner will keep this secret, and I will make it worth your while," said the Form-master. "You can ask me any favours you choose—anything that a Form-master can grant. If you want money—"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "I don't want money; I'm not a black-mailer. I want to have no lickings, and free passes out of gates whenever I ask for them."

"You shall have what you wish." "Thank you, sir!" "And I can rely on you?" "On my word, sir!" "Very well; you may go."

Vernon-Smith returned to the class-room. It was some minutes later that the Form-master returned. He found the room in a buzz, but it died away as he entered. The Bounder's successful defiance of the master had caused great excitement in the Remove; and Billy Bunter, with his usual cheerful obtuseness, ventured to follow his example. But a single impertinent reply from Billy Bunter brought down a cataract of wrath upon his head. He was yanked out of his place, and caned till his yells rang through the Form-room, and he sat gasping during the rest of the afternoon lessons.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Peter Todd Goes Fishing!**

"I SAY, my fellows, I've got a jolly good idea!"

The "Funny Four," as the denizens of Study No. 7 were sometimes called, were in their study, growling!

Even the gentle Alonzo was not looking as sweet and amiable as usual.

The unaccustomed harshness of the Remove master had fallen heavily upon all four that afternoon. The Form-master had been brought to terms by the Bounder, and he had indemnified himself by additional harshness to the others.

Peter Todd had been caned for talking. Bunter for impertinence, and Tom Dutton because his deafness had irritated the master. Even the gentle Alonzo had not escaped. He had ventured to put in a word for poor Dutton, and had been caned for his pains.

Hence the grim looks of the quartette.

Peter Todd had announced that it was too thick, and that if Quelch did not "chuck" it, Quelch would feel the weight of Study No. 7's wrath. It was then that the Owl of the Remove announced that he had an idea. His announcement was not received with enthusiasm.

Dutton did not hear him, Alonzo was fully occupied in rubbing his aching hands, and Peter Todd only gave a scornful snort.

"It's a jolly good wheeze," said Bunter. "I say, it's time old Quelch was made to sit up, isn't it? We're not going to take all this lying down! I've made a discovery about the beast!"

"Rats!" said Peter. "He wears a wig!" "What!"

"He wears a wig!" said Bunter triumphantly. "Nobody's ever suspected it before; but I've found it out! I suppose he's really bald, you know, and he's kept it dark for a jolly long time. But I've bowled it out!"

"Rot!" said Peter Todd. "I don't believe he wears a wig! Dash it all, he's been a Form-master at this blessed school for years on end, and do you think he could wear a wig all this time without being found out?"

"He's kept it awfully dark!" said Bunter. "But I know it. I spotted it to-day, when he was licking me. I tell you it's a fact. I was wriggling, you know—"

"Struggling like a bull, and yelling like a Red Indian!" sniffed Peter. "Well, he had to exert himself to hold me," said Bunter; "and, I tell you, his hair quite came awry. My arm knocked against his motor-board, and that caused it! Then I found out that old Quelch wears a wig!"

"Well, suppose he does?" said Peter. "Don't you see?" demanded Bunter eagerly. "When a middle-aged man wears a wig, what is it for?"

"To cover up baldness, I suppose." "Just that! And you couldn't give him a worse dig than by yanking his wig off, and showing him up in public!" chuckled Bunter. Peter grinned, in spite of himself.

"It would be a lark—if you're right about the wig!" he agreed. "But if it's true, I don't see how it hasn't come out before." "Well, it hasn't come out before; but it's true."

"And who's going to grab his hair, and yank it off?" asked Peter. "I'm not exactly a funk, but I don't think I should care to walk up to a Form-master and pull his hair. No, thanks!"

"It would be highly disrespectful," said Alonzo Todd solemnly. "My Uncle Benjamin wears a wig, and I am sure he would be extremely incensed if anyone should treat him in that manner!"

"Go hon!" said Bunter sarcastically. "I'm not thinking of walking up to Quelch and asking for a licking. Haven't you heard of a fishing-rod and line?"

Peter's eyes gleamed. "My hat! Fancy going fishing for old Quelch—and catching his wig, if he's got one! We could do it from a window without being spotted! Bunter, my fat tulip, you're not half such a silly ass as you look!"

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"My dear Peter, I am afraid our Uncle

Benjamin would not approve of such a proceeding!"

"Well, we're not going to ask Uncle Ben to do it!" said Peter. "I'm going to do it, to make up for the licking he gave me this afternoon. And if it turns out that he doesn't wear a wig, it will only be a fishhook wasted!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter. "It's all right, I know he wears a wig. Fancy his face, if he's shown up before all the fellows as bald as a billiard-ball!"

Peter roared. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can do it, Peter," said Bunter generously. "I was only suggesting the scheme, you know; you could carry it out better than I could. Ahem!"

"And take the licking if there's one going!" sniffed Peter. "I know! But I'm on, all the same. It would be worth a flogging to get a bite like that!"

Peter Todd reflected, grinning over the idea. The more he thought of it, the better he liked it. It was a "lark" after Peter's own heart, and the young rascal had nerve enough for anything.

"There's the passage window just over Quelch's study window," said Bunter. "If you were there, and somebody made Quelch look out, you could fish it off—"

"Good egg! You can throw stones at his window, and make him look out!" said Peter at once.

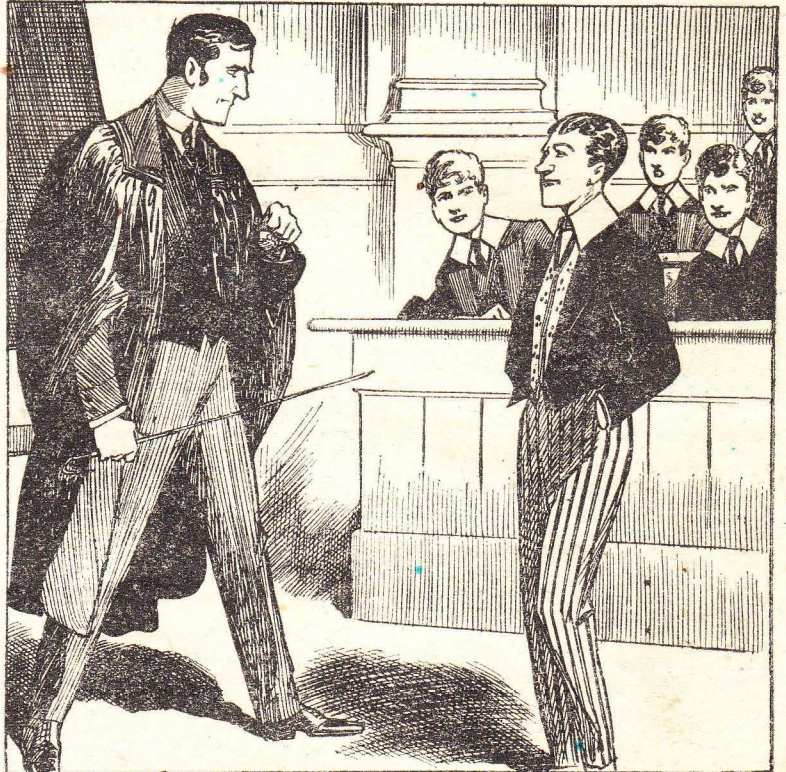
"I—I didn't mean that!" said Bunter, in alarm. "I—I—"

"I know you didn't!" chuckled Peter. "But that's what you're going to do. Or, better still, you can get into a fight with Dutton outside his window. I say, Dutton!"

"Eh?" said the deaf junior. "I want you to fight Bunter outside Quelch's window. It's a wheeze!"

"Sorry," said Dutton. "I haven't any!"

"Eh? You haven't any what?" "Any cheese." "Wheeze, you fathead! Not cheese—wheeze!" shrieked Peter. "You're to get up a fight with Bunter—see?"



THE BOUNDER'S COOL NERVE!—"Will you hold out your hand?" thundered the Form-master. "No, sir!" said Vernon-Smith, with grim coolness. "It's not my fault your cousin is a forger and a thief, sir. I've no doubt it worries you, but I decline to have it vented on me!" (See Chapter 3.)

NEXT TUESDAY!

"THE FIVE HEROES!"

A GRAND TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE POPULAR—No. 133.

THE FIVE HEROES

"What on earth does Bunter want a light in the daytime for?" demanded Dutton. "And why doesn't he get a light himself, if he wants one?"

Peter Todd groaned.

"It's a lark!" he roared.

"Where?" asked Dutton, looking round the study. "I don't see any sparks. Did you say sparks, or sharks?"

Peter Todd put his mouth to Dutton's ear, and shrieked out an explanation. The deaf junior nodded.

"All right!" he said. "Don't shout! Anybody would think I was deaf, to hear you!"

"Come on, Bunter!"

"I—I say, can't Dutton fight Alonzo, instead? It would be—ahem—better!"

"Come on!" roared Peter.

And Bunter unwillingly came on. Bunter had originated the scheme, but he would gladly have left its execution to his study-mates. Bunter was very modest in putting himself forward—where there were possibilities of a licking in store.

But Peter Todd's word was law, and he would take no denial. Ten minutes later Tom Dutton and Bunter were under the Form-master's window, ready to begin at a signal from their study-leader.

At the same time Peter Todd posted himself in the upper passage with a rod and line. One of the passage windows, with thick ivy clustering outside, overlooked the window of Mr. Quelch's study. The window was open, on account of the warmth of the summer's afternoon.

Two or three juniors immediately spotted Peter Todd with the fishing-rod, and inquired what the dickens he was up to.

"Going fishing," explained Peter airily.

"Going fishing indoors?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"No; in the Close!"

"Oh, he's dotty!" said Bob Cherry. "What are you going to catch in the Close, fat-head?"

"Hair!"

"You're going to catch a hare?" demanded the juniors.

"I didn't say a hare—I said hair! H-A-I-R—hair!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bob. "What's the little game? Explain before we bump you!"

"Bunter's discovered that Quelch wears a wig," Peter explained. "I'm going fishing for it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fellows gathered from all sides to watch Peter Todd as he adjusted the rod and line. As a rule, japes on a master were barred; but, after the late experiences in the Form-room, the Removites were only too glad to see Peter on the warpath.

"I don't believe he wears a wig, though," said Hazeldene. "Somebody would have spotted it before this."

"It's all rot!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's discovered a mare's-nest again!"

"Well, it will be funny to catch his mortar-board," said Peter. "But I think Bunter is right myself. Anyway, we shall soon see."

"You'll get an awful licking," said Bulstrode.

"Can't get it much worse than we're getting it lately," said Peter.

"Begad, yaas; that's so!" remarked Lord Maulvever.

Even the easy-going Maulvever had had painful experiences in the Form-room that afternoon.

"Pass the word round to the fellows, so that there can be a crowd to see him scalped," said Peter. "I'm just going to begin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It did not take long for the word to pass round. Fellows posted themselves in the Close with gleeful anticipation, to watch events. Peter Todd leaned out of the window, and made several casts with his line to assure himself that it was in working order. He grinned as he saw the gathering crowd in the Close.

Tom Dutton was looking up for the signal. Peter Todd waved his hand to him as a sign to start, and Dutton promptly pinched Bunter's nose.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Not so hard, you silly ass!"

"Certainly!" said Dutton, misunderstanding, as usual. "Better hit hard; it looks more like the real thing!"

"Ow! I— Oh! Yah! Oh! Yaro-o-oo!"

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NEXT
TUESDAY!

THE FIVE

roared Bunter, as Tom Dutton began hammering him right and left.

The terrific din Bunter made would have exasperated the most patient of masters. In about half a minute the study window was thrown up, and the Remove master looked out with a furious face.

"Stop that noise!" he shouted.

The struggling juniors did not seem to hear. Dutton was hammering industriously at Billy Bunter's fat person, and Bunter was struggling and roaring like a bull. The master leaned from the window, and shouted to them.

"Bunter! Dutton! Come into my study instantly! I— Oh!"

Peter Todd had made his cast.

The hooks fastened upon the Form-master's hair, and a smart jerk of the rod lifted the wig fairly from the Form-master's head.

In an instant Peter Todd had landed his "bite," jammed down the window above, and fled.

At Mr. Quelch's window, the Form-master stood transfixed.

His hands went up to his head wildly—his mortar-board and his wig were gone, and his own hair was revealed—sandy in colour!

There was a yell of amazement from the crowd of juniors in the Close.

They had expected a bald head to be revealed, if, indeed, it proved that the Form-master did really wear a wig.

The sandy hair struck them with astonishment, and some of them understood. There was a yell from the Bouncer, as the truth flashed upon his mind.

"Great Scott!" roared Vernon-Smith. "It's not Mr. Quelch at all; it's Ulick Ferrers!" And the name was repeated far and wide by the amazed juniors.

"Ulick Ferrers!"

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THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Brought to Light!

U LICK FERRERS seemed stunned for the moment.

Tom Dutton and Bunter had ceased their struggling, and were staring in blank amazement at the false Form-master.

The description Inspector Spott had given of the man was fresh in all minds. Exactly like Mr. Quelch in feature, but with sandy hair! And the Bouncer, who had seen Ferrers enter the Form-master's study that eventful night, knew him again at once.

"It's Ulick Ferrers!" he shouted. "Don't you understand? It's the man the police are looking for!"

"Great Scott!"

Even yet the fellows could hardly grasp it.

But the next action of the exposed impostor left no doubt upon the subject.

Ferrers realised that all was up. His cunning imposture, his deeply-schemed device, carried out with ruthless determination and unflinching resource, had been exposed—by the jape of a junior whom he had unjustly punished—his own harshness had brought it upon him.

He was recognised! For a few minutes, while the consternation lasted, he was free to act; but in a few minutes word would reach the detectives, who, at that very moment, were watching the school for him.

He had not an instant to lose.

He sprang back into the study, caught up

coat and cap and donned them, and leaped from the open window.

Some of the fellows gathered up, as if to bar his passage; but the ferocity of his face deterred them, and they fell aside.

The rascal darted towards the school gates. But it only needed the sight of the man running to determine the juniors. Until that moment they had hardly been able to credit the evidence of their own senses. But when he sprang from the window and fled, all doubt was at an end.

"After him!" roared Bolsover major.

"After him!" yelled the Bouncer.

And the whole crowd broke into whooping pursuit.

But terror lent the fugitive wings, and he reached the school gates far in advance of his pursuers. The gates stood wide open, and Ulick Ferrers bounded out into the road.

There for an instant he paused, panting.

Whither to fly? In Friarsdale were the police, searching for him; the other way lay Courtfield, equally dangerous. And even as he stood, trying to think, a man in a labourer's dress detached himself from the tree he was leaning against, and came towards him—it was the shadower he had noted before.

The detective was staring at him, and as he stared came the wild whoop of the excited juniors behind.

"Stop him!"

"It's Ulick Ferrers!"

The detective sprang towards the false Form-master. Ferrers could not pass him; he dashed down the road away from him, leaped a hedge, and fled across the fields.

The detective paused a single moment to blow a shrill blast upon a whistle, and then plunged through the hedge in hot pursuit.

From three or four different directions hidden men started up as if by magic, and dashed after the flying man.

The Greyfriars juniors stopped in the gateway, looking after the chase, in a state of the wildest excitement.

Pursuers and pursued vanished from sight along the towing-path. But there was little chance for the hunted man.

"Well, my only sainted uncle!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "If this doesn't take the whole giddy cake factory!"

"But where is Mr. Quelch?" exclaimed Wharton. "If that villain has been passing himself off on us as Quelch, where is Quelch?"

"I'll show you where he is!" chuckled the Bouncer.

"You! How on earth do you know?"

"Because I've kept my eyes open," said Vernon-Smith coolly.

The Bouncer dashed into the tool-shed, but it was only to get a crowbar.

"Follow me!" he said.

And he led the way to the old chapel. The juniors, amazed, but seeing that the Bouncer knew what he was about, followed him.

They rushed into the ruins with a whoop, and Vernon-Smith led the way down to the crypt. He crashed the crowbar upon the lock of the door.

"Get a light—a bike lantern—somebody!" he called out.

Bob Cherry rushed away for his bicycle lamp. He was back by the time the lock had yielded. Vernon-Smith dropped the crowbar and lighted the lamp, and led the way down into the gloomy vault.

"Mr. Quelch! Mr. Quelch! Are you here?"

There was a voice from the darkness.

"I am here! Thank Heaven you have come!"

"Great Scott!"

The light flashed upon the prisoner of the vault.

There was Mr. Quelch, shackled, fastened to the wall, pale as death, but with new life flushing into his pallid face at the sight of his rescuers.

"My boys—my boys!" he exclaimed.

"We'll have you loose in a jiffy, sir!" exclaimed Wharton.

He opened his pocket-knife in a twinkling, and began sawing away at the ropes. Two or three other fellows followed his example, and the Form-master's bonds dropped in pieces round him.

Mr. Quelch staggered from weakness, and leaned heavily upon Harry Wharton's shoulder.

"Ferrers has been discovered, then?" he said faintly.

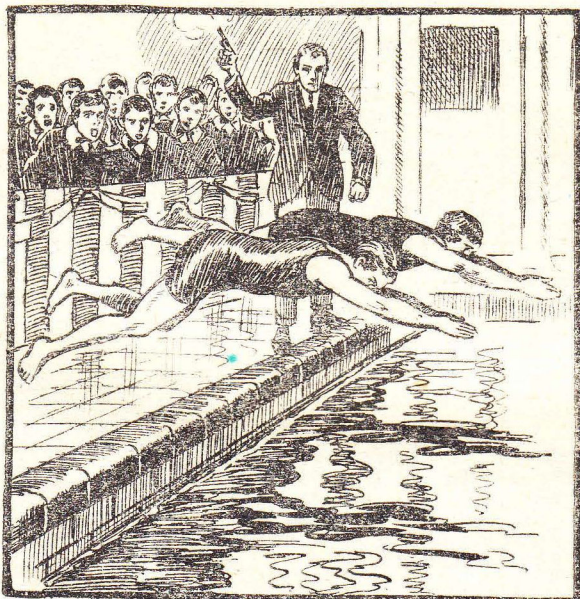
(Continued on page 26.)

A GRAND TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

TELLING OF THE GREAT FIGHT FOR THE SWIMMING RELAY RACE AT WAYLAND AND A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY!

CHAMPION or DUFFER?

BY
**MARTIN
CLIFFORD.**



A Grand, New
Long Complete
Story, dealing
with the adven-
tures of TOM
MERRY & Co.
the Chums of
St. Jim's School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. In the Limelight!

"IMPOSSIBLE!" said Manners of the Shell.
"Absolutely impossible!" echoed Monty Lowther.

"But it's here, in black and white," said Tom Merry. "There's no getting away from it! We've always regarded Baggy Trimble as a hopeless duffer at swimming, but this report proves otherwise."

Tom Merry was reclining in the arm-chair in his study. His eyes were riveted on a paragraph in the local paper.

The paragraph staggered Tom Merry. It staggered his study-mates also. Under the heading of "Swimming Notes and News" appeared the following:

"Our representative was present at the Wayland Public Baths on Saturday afternoon, when a truly wonderful exhibition of swimming was given by Baggy Trimble, of St. James' College.

"Trimble swam two lengths of the bath in record time for a boy of his age. He employed a powerful overarm stroke which took him through the water at a tremendous pace.

"This fine swimmer ought certainly to be included in the team which will meet Greyfriars on Wednesday."

No wonder the Terrible Three were staggered; for Baggy Trimble had always been looked upon as a rank duffer at swimming. He could flounder along for a few yards like an exhausted porpoise, and that was all.

"If you ask my opinion," said Monty Lowther, "Baggy Trimble wrote that paragraph himself."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry. "For one thing, Baggy can't spell, and for another, no paper would publish such a report without verifying the facts. The paragraph must be genuine."

"It takes some swallowing," said Manners.

"I know it does. But we can't get away from it. I expect Trimble has been practising swimming for some time without our knowledge, so as to spring a surprise on us later on."

There was a tap on the door of the study, and Baggy Trimble himself rolled into the apartment.

"Talk of angels," said Monty Lowther, "and you're bound to hear the flapping of their giddy wings!"

Tom Merry looked curiously at Baggy Trimble.

"Seen the local paper, Baggy?" he asked.

"Yes, rather!"

"Have you read that paragraph about yourself?"

Trimble nodded.

"Is it true?" demanded Tom Merry.

"Of course it's true! That's the 'Wayland Gazette,' not the 'Weekly Fibber'!"

Monty Lowther wagged his forefinger at Baggy Trimble, as if cautioning him.

"Do you solemnly and seriously assert, Baggy," he said, "that you swam two lengths of the bath in record time?"

"Yes, I lowered all records," said Trimble, with a grunt of satisfaction.

"You fellows have always sneered at me and said I was a born duffer, but I tell you quite frankly that there's nobody at St. Jim's who can hold a candle to me at swimming. I've been practising on the quiet for a long time."

"Thought as much!" murmured Tom Merry.

"Now that you've had proof that I can swim like a—water-rat," said Trimble, "I shall expect you to include me in the team on Wednesday, Tom Merry."

The captain of the Shell looked thoughtful.

A team of four was to meet Greyfriars at the Wayland Baths in a relay race.

The St. Jim's four had originally consisted of Tom Merry, Talbot, Dick Redfern, and Fatty Wynn. But the last-named was away for a few days. He had been summoned to his home in Wales to attend the wedding of a girl cousin.

This meant that there was a vacancy to be filled.

The obvious thing to do, after reading that paragraph in the local paper was to include Baggy Trimble in the team. But Tom Merry hesitated. He could not, somehow, bring himself to believe that Trimble was an aquatic marvel.

In spite of the paragraph, and in spite of Trimble's own confirmation of it, Tom Merry was unconvinced. He felt that there was a "wangle" somewhere.

As for Manners and Lowther, they were positive that by some crafty means Baggy Trimble had managed to smuggle that paragraph into the paper.

"Well," said Baggy, looking questioningly at Tom Merry, "am I going to swim for St. Jim's or not?"

"I can't say at the moment," was the reply. "If I find that this report is really true and genuine, I shall ask you to take Fatty Wynn's place in the team."

"Oh, really! You're an awful Doubting Thomas, you know! That report is quite true."

"I'm going to make sure of that," said Tom Merry, "before taking any action."

"How will you find out, Tommy?" asked Lowther.

"I'll bike over to Wayland and see Mr. Forbes, the reporter who writes the 'Swimming Notes and News.'"

"Good wheeze!"

Baggy Trimble did not seem in the least alarmed at Tom Merry's intentions.

"When you've thoroughly satisfied yourself, Merry," he said, "I shall expect

THE POPULAR—No. 183.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"THE PLACE OF HONOUR!"

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

12 More to Come! Don't Miss Next Week's Grand Coloured Engine Plate!

Tom Merry cycled over to Wayland without delay.

He saw Mr. Forbes, the energetic reporter, hurrying along the High Street, and he jumped off his machine and intercepted him.

"I say, Mr. Forbes, you've got a paragraph in your paper about a fellow called Trimble. He's supposed to have given a wonderful swimming exhibition."

"There's no supposition about it," said Mr. Forbes. "It's a fact. I was at the baths myself at the time."

"And Trimble's really a first-rate swimmer?"

"There's no question about it."

Tom Merry was gradually becoming convinced. The report must be genuine.

Mr. Forbes was an honest journalist. He didn't exaggerate. Like the celebrated Dickens character, his motto was "Stick to Facts."

"Do you know Trimble by sight?" asked Tom.

"Of course!"

"And you are sure there was no mistake?"

"Quite! Trimble gave a masterly display of swimming. If you are wise you'll let him swim against Greyfriars on Wednesday."

Any doubts which Tom Merry might have had were now dispersed. He was satisfied that Baggy Trimble was a talented swimmer, and he decided to include Baggy in the St. Jim's team. He thanked Mr. Forbes for the information, and cycled back to the school.

Baggy Trimble was hovering in the school gateway.

"Satisfied, Merry?" he asked, as Tom rode up.

"Yes. But I'm dashed if I ever thought you were a swimmer, Baggy. Why did you hide your light under a bushel?"

"Well, I'm an awfully modest sort of fellow, you know," explained Trimble. "I don't believe in blowing my own trumpet. Am I to swim against Greyfriars, Merry?"

Tom nodded.

"You'll take Fatty Wynn's place," he said.

"Oh, good!"

And Baggy Trimble rolled away, looking and feeling highly delighted.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Stormy Scene!

"I WEALLY must say," remarked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "that I nevah suspected Baggy Twimble of bein' a swimmah!"

"He isn't!" growled Jack Blake.

"But the papah says—"

"The paper's wrong."

"And Tom Mewwy declares—"

"Tom Merry's wrong, too."

Arthur Augustus adjusted his monocle and looked at Blake.

"Are you suggestin', deah boy, that Twimble is pwaictisin' a deception?"

"I'm jolly sure of it!" was the reply.

"I've seen Trimble bathing in the Rhyll, and I know perfectly well that he can't swim for toffee. He can make about half a dozen strokes, and that's all."

"But the papah says—"

"Oh, bother the paper!"

to see my name on the notice-board as a member of the team."

"The weportah wouldn't tell a whoppah—"

"The reporter's made a mistake," said Blake bluntly. "And Tom Merry's made a mistake, too, in giving that fat duffer a place in the team. I tell you, he can't swim for monkey-nuts!"

Jack Blake was feeling very sick about the matter. He himself had hoped to fill the vacancy created by Fatty Wynn's departure. It annoyed him intensely to know that Baggy Trimble had been given the honour.

"Tom Merry must be potty!" he growled. "He's got bats in his belfry. You can say what you like, Gussy, but he's made an appalling blunder. And he'll discover it to his cost on Wednesday, when Greyfriars win in walk-over style!"

Arthur Augustus looked thoughtful.

"It wouldn't be a bad ideah to go an' have a jaw with Tom Mewwy," he said.

"That's just what I'm going to do," said Jack Blake. "Afraid I sha'n't be any too polite, either. I'd been counting on taking Fatty Wynn's place. I'll undertake to go to the baths with Trimble, and beat him over any distance."

The two chums went along to Tom Merry's study. The Terrible Three were at home. They were tackling their prep.

Tom Merry looked up as Jack Blake and D'Arcy entered. He at once noticed Blake's scowling brow.

"Hallo! What's biting you?" he asked.

"I see you've been mad enough to stick Trimble's name on the notice-board," said Blake.

"There's nothing mad about that."

"Oh, isn't there? To my mind, it's the maddest thing you've ever done! Trimble's no swimmer."

"You're wrong there, old chap."

"I'm not wrong!" Blake's voice rose to a shout. "Trimble's no swimmer, I tell you!"

"He wasn't until recently. But he proved otherwise last Saturday."

"Rats! You can't transform a non-swimmer into a giddy champion in five minutes. That newspaper report's all tommy-rot! I don't know how it was wangled, but I'm perfectly positive that Trimble's a hopeless duffer at swimming."

"And I'm satisfied that he's a good man," said Tom Merry. "So there's nothing more to be said. Toodle-co! Mind the step!"

Jack Blake made no movement to quit the study. He stood glaring at Tom Merry.

"We'll go along to the baths to-morrow," he said, "and put Trimble to the test."

"We'll do nothing of the sort!" said Tom Merry.

He resented Jack Blake taking the initiative.

"What!" shouted Blake. "You're going to let that fat idiot swim against Greyfriars without testing him beforehand?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"I've heard of Trimble's swimming abilities from a reliable eye-witness," he said. "That's good enough for me."

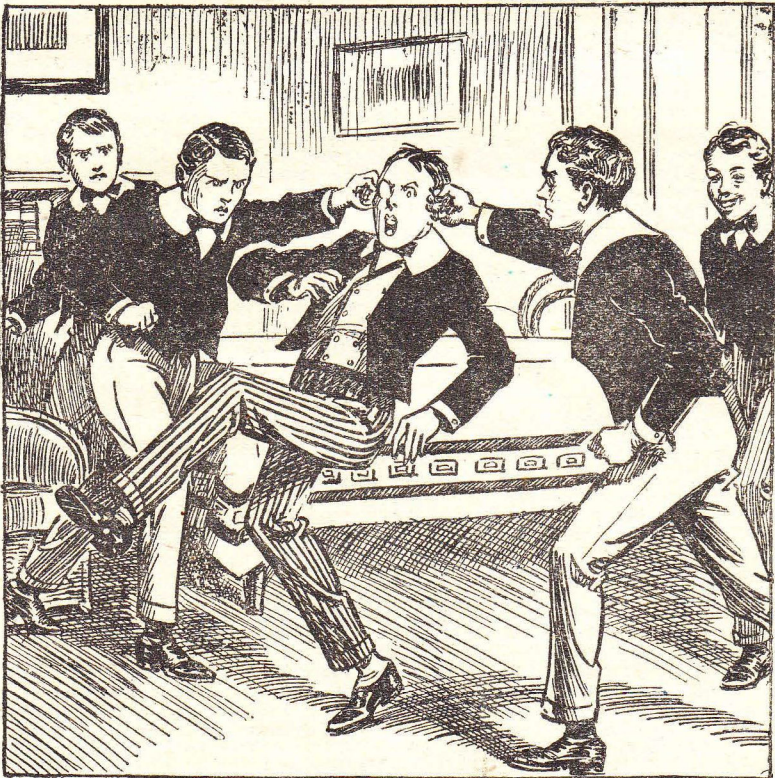
"But it's not good enough for me!" snorted Blake. "I want to see St. Jim's win, not make prize asses of themselves through being let down by Trimble!"

"You'll see us win all right," said Tom Merry confidently.

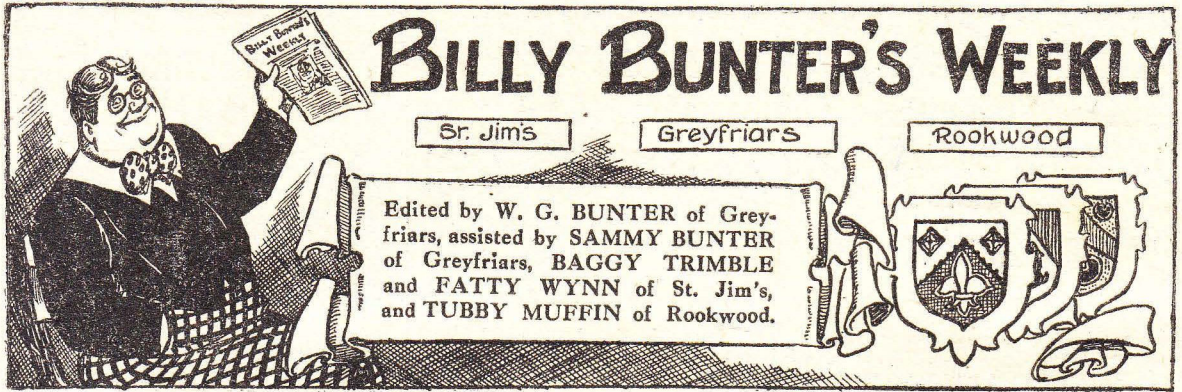
"Oh, you're mad!" said Blake, in exasperation. "Clean off your rocker! Besides, you're beastly unfair!"

Tom Merry bridled up at this.

"I've been very patient with you, (Continued on page 17.)



THE FALL OF THE PEACEMAKER!—As the two angry juniors rose to their feet, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rushed between them with the view of preventing a scene. Tom Merry's right and Jack Blake's left shot out simultaneously, and Gussy caught a terrific clump on each side of his noble head. (See Chapter 2.)



IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By BILLY BUNTER.

My Dear Readers,—I feel rather annoyed this week. In fact, I am very much put out—as the heckler said at the political meeting.

The cause of my annoyance is a letter I have received from a reader who signs himself "Doubting Thomas."

My correspondent writes as follows:

"You pretend to your readers that you are a good cricketer, but in reality I believe you are the most hopeless duffer that ever handled a bat. I wouldn't have you in my eleven—not even if you paid me five shillings for the privilege!"

Now, I call that distinctly rood. Over and over again I have pointed out to my readers that there is only one cricketer in the Remove worthy of the name, and that person—modestly forbids me from giving his name—is a certain plump fellow who occupies Studdy No. 7.

It may be truly said of me that I was cradled in cricket. Did not my grate-grate-grandfather play for Bunkumshire? When he was batting, did not the fieldsmen have to go down on their bended neeze and implore him to declare? Of course they did!

My ancestor's cricketing ability has been inherited by me. And when I make the statement that I am a wonderful player, I expect my readers to believe me. I am very angry with "Doubting Thomas." If he came along to Greyfriars, I'm not sure that I shouldn't give him a licking. When a Bunter gets his back up, there's trouble for somebody!

It is true that Harry Wharton still bars me from the Remove eleven. But you know why that is. He's afraid that I shall show him up!

To give Wharton his dew, he is not a bad player. But he isn't a patch on me. At batting, bowling, and fielding, I am his master, and he is my disciple. And he jolly well knows it!

"Doubting Thomas" says that he wouldn't have me in his eleven. I'm certain of that, because I should refuse point-blank to play! I am very particular what teams I play for. I don't mind turning out for Kent Reserves or the Hampshire Hogs; but I'm not offering my valuable services to any tin-pot team like "Doubting Thomas." So that's that!

Your sineer pal,

YOUR EDITOR.

BUNTER THE BATSMAN!

By DICK PENFOLD.

When Bunter's at the wicket
You ought to see the fun!
He shuts his eyes and blindly slogs,
But never makes a run.
He wears both pads and batting-gloves,
And then bemoans his luck;
For the bowler grins a knowing grin
And bowls him for a duck!

When Billy Bunter's bowling
It's fatal to his side.
The fieldsmen flee for safety,
The umpire bellows "Wide!"
For Billy's as erratic
As Prouty with his gun;
And when the ball comes whizzing down
It's time to cut and run!

When Billy Bunter's fielding
He is an awful guy;
The ball shoots upward from the turf
And hits him in the eye,
Or else it strikes him on the nose,
And there's a fearful roar;
When Billy's stopped one rising ball
He won't stop any more!

When Bunter's playing cricket
He is a comic card!
He forms a fitting topic
For any jesting bard
He doesn't know which balls to hit
And which to leave alone;
Half the spectators loudly jeer,
The other half just groan!

You'll never make a Jessop,
Friend Bunter, W. G.
You'll never make a century,
Nor even two or three,
To put the matter bluntly, Bill,
You cannot play at all;
And when we see you take your guard
We murmur, "Out first ball!"

NEXT WEEK THERE
WILL BE A

"Special Telephone Number!"

LOOK OUT FOR IT!

W. G. B.

MY BANKING ACCOUNT!

By SAMMY BUNTER.

When my Uncle Septimus sent me a shilling, I didn't spend it. I decided to open an account in the Post Office Savings Bank.

Lots of fellows in the Second and Third have got banking accounts, and I was inspired by their eggsample.

Young Dicky Nugent has got a shilling invested, and Bolsover miner is quite a Rockefeller. He's got one-and-six.

I took my shilling along to the post-offices in Friardale.

"I want to open a savings bank account, please," I said to the young lady behind the counter.

She handed me a book, and on the front page I had to fill in the following particulars:—

Signature: SAMUEL TUCKLESS BUNTER,
Address: Greyfriars School, Friardale, Kent.

Occupation: Fagg—and sub-editor in my spare time.

I then had a shilling placed to my credit, and I walked out of the post-offices with my nose in the air.

"At this rate, I shall soon be rich beyond the dreams of avariss!" I muttered.

On my way back to Greyfriars a bennever-lent-looking gent asked me the way to the lunatic asylum. I directed him, and he gave me a penny for his pances.

I hurried back to the post-offices to pay the penny in to my account, but the young lady informed me that no sum less than one shilling was axcepted.

When I returned to the school I puffed out my chest with pride.

"I'm a munnied man now," I said. "I've got a banking account of my own."

"What about that fourpence you owe me, young Sammy?" said Nugent miner.

"You'd better write to my bankers on the subject," I said loftily.

Alas! That banking account of mine was soon eggshasted.

On the next half-holiday I felt in need of a good feed at the village bunshop. So I popped into the post-offices.

"I want a form of withdrawal, please," I said to the young lady.

"How much do you want to withdraw?"

"One-and-sixpence," I said.

"Here, don't you try those trix on me," said the young lady severely. "You know very well you have only one shilling to your account."

"Then I'll take that, please."

"And close your account."

"Certainly not!"

"But you will have to, you stupid boy, if you draw out the entire sum."

"Then I'll draw out elevenpence-ha'penny," I said.

But the young lady pointed out that this couldn't be done. So I drew out the bob, and my account was closed forthwith.

It was very trajjick, and all that. But there's one consolation. I can always boast that at one time I had a banking account!

A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE!

By BAGGY TRIMBLE.

THE day will dawn, dear readers, when I shall be an Old Boy. I shall belong to the Past—not the Prozzant.

That day will not dawn yet. I shall be at St. Jim's for a good many years longer—much to my regret. St. Jim's is a horrible hole! A fellow never gets sufficient grub to keep body and sole together, and life is one long, painful tetcher.

And yet the day will come, mark my words, when I shall be Mr. Bagley Trimble, with lots of letters after my name. The finger of respect will be pointed at me as I strut through the quadrangle. And the St. Jim's fellows of that time will say: "There goes Mr. Trimble, C.M.G. (Chief Modern Gorgor). When he was at St. Jim's he was the fattest fellow in the Fourth. Famous, too! Nobody could hold a candle to him at cricket and football!"

When I leave school I shall get a job as a sheff at a West End hotel. I shall speedily climb the ladder and rise to the position of soul proprietor, managing director, and head-cook-and-bottle-washer of one of the biggest hotels.

I shall come down to St. Jim's in a hansom car and a coat with a fur collar—if it happens to be winter. If it's summer-time I shall wear a white soot, like they do in India and other hot countries.

I shall call at the old famelier tuck-shepp, where I spent so many happy hours in my youth. Dame Taggles will still be there, feeble and tottering and grey-haired. "Why, bless me, it's Mister Trimble!" she will eggscclaim. "What can I serve you with? Some jam-tarts? May I remind you that there's no credit aloud?"

I shall drop into the studdy which used to be mine, and the eggisting tenants will implore me to stop to tea. I shall have a chat with the Head—he will be in his dotage by that time—and I shall play chess with Mr. Railton, whose flowing beard will sweep the chess-board.

I shall hire the lecture-hall for an evening, and give the whole school a lecture on "How to Become Fat, Famous, and Flourishing."

"My boys," I shall say, "many years ago I was a little bratt like yourselves. On leaving St. Jim's I put my sholder to the weal, and behold! I am now a man of substance. I hope you will all follow in my footsteps, and suxceed as I have suxceeded."

I don't know whether Kerr of the New House, who is special artist to "Billy Bunter's Weekly," will draw a picture of me as a plump, prosperous man. If he does, it will be well worth seeing.

I am keenly looking forward to the day when I shall be able to visit St. Jim's in the kappacity of a suxcessful man of the world. But time drags slowly, and that grate day is far distant.

But it will come. Of that I am konfident. This artikle is of a profietick nature... The things I have prediekted will come to pass. Weight and sea!

THE POPULAR—No. 183.

THE OLD BOYS' DINNER!

By TUBBY MUFFIN.

THE Rookwood Old Boys' Dinner is an annual event. They all troop down to Rookwood, and hold the bankwett in the dining-hall.

The dinner is strictly for Old Boys. Not even the masters are aloud to partissipate in it.

Well, when the Old Boys came down this year, I happened to be feeling despritley hungry.

Now, when a fellow feels like that he will go to any lengths to appease his appetite.

I saw the Old Boys flocking into the hall, and I slipped in with them and sat down at one of the tables.

I wish I was a thin, insignificant-looking fellow. Then I should never be notissed on these occasions. Unfortunately, I am just a trifle plump, and my plumpitude—or should it be plumpness?—never fails to attract attention.

I found myself seated between a kernel in the British Army and a young nut who hadn't long left school.

The first course was served. It konsisted of soap. Nobody asked any questions while I sampled it.

But when the "hors doovers" were served, the kernel turned to me.

"You are an Old Boy?" he said in seprize.

"Certainly!" I replide, with all the dignitty I could muster.

"But you are very young. You don't look more than fifteen."

"Ahem! I left school rather early," I eggscplained. "My pater was anxious for me to become a partner in his bizziness."

"Oh!"

Then the young nut turned to me.

"What is your name?" he inkwired.

"Er—Tomkins," I said.

"And when did you leave Rookwood?"

"In 1920."

"So did I. But I don't remember anybody of that name."

I flushed krimson in my konfusion.

"This looks rather fishy," said the kernel, raising a sardeen to his lips. "I beleeve you are an impostor!"

"Oh, help!" I muttered.

At that moment the Head came into the dining-hall.

"Are you all happy and comfortable, gentlemen?" he inkwired, beaming.

There was a mermer of assent.

"One moment, Dockter Chisholm," said the kernel. "There is a boy here whom I suspekt has no right to be prezzant."

And he pointed to me.

I jolly nearly fell through the floor. It was a terribel moment!

"Muffin!" roared the Head. "What are you doing here? Leave the table at once, and follow me to my studdy!"

Alass! "Man is born unto trubble, as the sparks fly upward."

I had been looking forward to enjoying a topping feed; and I had only got as far as the "hors doovers" when the thunderbolt fell!

Shortly afterwards the Head's cane fell also!

Six cuts on each hand was the reward of my daring manoover.

POPULAR PERSONALITIES!

No. 7.—Dick Redfern.

I'm Reddy, I'm steady,
I'm famous already,

I'll never be left on the shelf.

If there's one who can swim,

And can fight in the gym,

That fellow is sorely myself!

I'm a sportsman of skill,

And I work with a will,

And honours are crowding upon me still!

Rather conceited, you'll say? Well, what does it matter? No harm in blowing one's own trumpet occasionally. Others will seldom do it for you. An excellent motto in life is "Never be backward in coming forward." I'm not conceited enough to think that I'm the leading light of the New House. I yield that honour to Figgy; but I don't mind saying I run him pretty close, and may out-rival him one of these days.

Let me tell you something about myself. I came to St. Jim's on a scholarship. Fellows of the Aubrey Racke kidney would turn up their noses at this. But it's nothing to be ashamed of. Better to get into a public school by merit than by influence.

I am the leader of a very go-ahead band of fellows in the New House. We are often at war with Figgins & Co., but the warfare is never malicious. Sometimes we score over our rivals; sometimes they score over us. But, on the whole, we are jolly good pals, and in an emergency we stand together, shoulder to shoulder, for the honour of the school.

My hobbies? Well, I'm very fond of journalism. I once ran away from St. Jim's and got a job on a local newspaper. Those were stirring times! When I came to St. Jim's one day to report a swimming gala, I gave myself away.

"I don't contribute a great deal to BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY. There isn't much chance. St. Jim's has only one page to itself, and that page is generally monopolised by Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble, who are Billy Bunter's first lieutenants. But I've got a column to myself at last, and I mean to make the most of it.

My favourite sport is swimming—though cricket runs it very close. My favourite master is Mr. Railton (wish he belonged to the New House!). My favourite chum—well, two fellows tie for that position. My favourite journal is NOT BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY!

So now you know as much about me as you probably wish to know. I will therefore conclude with the merry refrain:

I'm Reddy, I'm steady,

I'm famous already,

A dashing and go-ahead chap.

It's always my aim

To play the game,

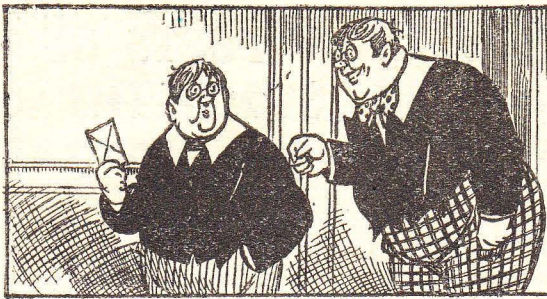
And I shine in a jolly old scrap!

I'm a fellow of vim

At the nets or in gym,

And when japes are invented, I'm well

in the swim!



Bunter Comes To Tea!

By GEORGE BULSTRODE.

FAG!" Sammy Bunter of the Second stopped short as that command rang along the passage. Then, with a startled gasp, he turned on his heel and scuttled away. Sammy wasn't in the humour for fagging just then.

But, alas! the owner of the voice had already seen him. And Sammy heard himself hailed by no less pompous a personage than his exalted cousin, Mr. Walter Bunter, Form-master.

"Bunter minor! Come here at once! How dare you run away when you hear me calling?"

Reluctantly, Sammy Bunter retraced his steps. Scowling sullenly, he rolled along the passage until he stood in the presence of authority, as represented by Mr. Wally Bunter.

"I hope you're not going to ask me to get tea for you, sir," he said, "because I'm not feeling up to the job. Fact is, I'm ill. I never got enough to eat in this place. I'm getting thinner every day. I shall be a skellington soon!"

"Not much fear of that!" said Mr. Bunter grimly. "Here, I want you to take this note to Wharton. Deliver it at once!"

Sammy took the note, and rolled away, still scowling. Things were coming to a pretty pass, he reflected, when one had to fetch and carry for one's own cousin.

On entering the Remove passage, Sammy bumped into his brother Billy.

"What have you got there, Sammy?" demanded the latter.

"A note for Wharton, from Wally."

"Let me see it." Sammy showed no desire to part company with the note; whereupon Billy calmly snatched it from his grasp.

"You can leave this with me," he said. "I'll take it to Wharton."

But it was not to Study No. 1 that Billy Bunter proceeded. It was to Study No. 7.

The two Podds and Tom Dutton were out, and Billy had the apartment to himself, which was precisely what he wanted.

He boiled a kettle, and then steamed open the envelope. The skill with which he performed this operation suggested that it was not the first time Billy Bunter had steamed open an envelope.

Extracting the note with his thumb and forefinger, Bunter read the written message, which ran as follows:

"My dear Wharton.—Many thanks for your kind invitation to tea. You may expect me at five o'clock. I may be a few moments late, as I am umpiring a cricket match.—Yours sincerely, WALTER BUNTER."

Billy Bunter had scarcely finished his perusal of the note when he suddenly became aware of the fact that he was being watched from the doorway. His minor Sammy was peering into the study.

"You worm!" said Billy wrathfully. "You're spying on me!"

"Steady on with your fancy names!" said Sammy. "You've no right to pry into other people's letters! If I were to tell Wally that—"

"Shush!" said Billy, raising a warning finger. "Look here, Sammy, you can come in with me on this stunt. There's a chance of a free feed for both of us!"

Sammy's eyes sparkled. "How are you going to wangle it, Billy?" he asked.

"It's simple enough. This letter is accepting an invitation to tea in Wharton's study at five o'clock. Well, I shall put on Wally's gown and mortar-board—they'll be hanging up in his study—and take his place."

"All very well," said Sammy. "But where do I come in?"

"You're to go down to the cricket-field at five, and keep Wally engaged in conversation," said Billy. "Keep him for about a quarter of an hour, if you can. I shall have eaten Wharton out of house and home during that time."

"But what about me?"

"I shall cram plenty of tuck into my pockets, and give it to you afterwards."

"Oh, good!"

Having hatched their plot, the firm of Bunter Brothers separated.

Sammy resealed the note, and took it along to Harry Wharton's study. Then he made tracks for the cricket-ground, in order to carry out his part of the compact.

When it was getting on for five o'clock, Billy Bunter proceeded to Wally's study.

On several occasions in the past he had disguised himself as Wally, by removing his



Billy Bunter sank down on the sofa, and covered his face with his hands. "Anything wrong, Sir!" asked Harry Wharton

spectacles, and donning Wally's garments of authority.

The only thing that gave Billy Bunter away was his voice. And he didn't mean to use his voice more than was absolutely necessary on this occasion.

The gown and mortar-board were hanging up behind the door. Billy donned them, and took off his spectacles, and surveyed himself in the looking-glass.

"Top-hole!" was his summing-up.

Then he crossed to the window, which commanded a view of the football-field.

He saw that a fags' match had just finished, and that Sammy Bunter was in the act of approaching Wally, with a view to holding him in conversation.

Billy then picked up a letter which lay on Wally's desk, and betook himself to Study No. 1.

He entered Study No. 1 with the letter in his hand, looking extremely agitated.

The Famous Five rose respectfully to their feet on the entry of the begowned figure.

Billy Bunter sank down heavily on the sofa, and covered his face with his hands.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on in astonishment and dismay.

"Anything wrong, sir?" asked Wharton.

"We trustfully hope nothing is amiss, honoured sahib?" murmured Huree Singh.

Billy waved his hand towards the door.

"Leave me for a few moments, you fellows," he muttered, in broken accents.

"I'm not quite myself. I've just had bad news. I want to be alone, to get accustomed to the shock. Come back in about a quarter of an hour."

The request seemed reasonable enough, in the circumstances. And the Famous Five, glancing sympathetically at the bowed figure on the sofa, fled out of the study.

As soon as the door had closed behind them Billy Bunter was galvanised into action. He sprang to his feet, and crossed over to the table, which was laden with good things.

Then, without even taking the precaution of locking the door, Billy Bunter "piled in."

For the space of ten minutes, his jaws were champing busily. And by the end of that time, every morsel of tuck had disappeared.

Owing to an unfortunate oversight, Billy omitted to load his pockets for Sammy's benefit.

Meanwhile, the Famous Five, greatly puzzled as to what was wrong with Mr. Bunter, decided to take a stroll as far as the cricket-field before returning to the study.

And the first person they saw, when they approached the ground was Mr. Bunter!

Bob Cherry rubbed his eyes.

"Do I dream? Do I wonder and doubt? Is things what they seem, or is visions about?" he murmured.

"We left Mr. Bunter in the study, and now we find him on the cricket-field!" gasped Wharton. "Wonders will never cease!"

It was Frank Nugent whose suspicions were first aroused.

"My hat!" he ejaculated. "I believe we've been spoofed, you fellows! That wasn't Mr. Bunter who came into our study with the letter. It was Billy!"

"Billy!"

"My only aunt!"

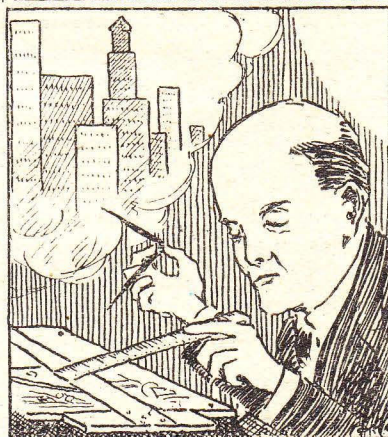
"We'll scrag him!"

"We'll spifficate him!"

The seragging and spiffication of William George Bunter duly came to pass. The Famous Five rushed back to Study No. 1, and bumped the fat marauder with great vigour and heartiness. It eased their outraged feelings somewhat. All the same, it did not cheer them to know that there was no tea that afternoon for five juniors and a Form-master!

PEEPS INTO THE FUTURE!

By George Kerr.



DONALD OGILVY.

ANSWERS TO KORRESPONDENTS!

By BILLY BUNTER.

(NOTISS!—Owing to eggstream pressure on my space, I am kompelled to hold over the replies to two billion letters which have reigned in upon me during the week.—Ed.)

"Invalid" (Worthing).—I am sorry to hear of all your troubles and infirmaries—I mean, infirmities. Pity you can't come and have a course of instruckshun at the Bunter School of Fizzical Culture. We'd undertake to build up your health in no time. Hope you will soon feel better. My advice to you is, froot walks and a country diet—that is to say, country walks and a froot diet.

Glady's R. (Wrexham) writes: "I often picture you, Billy, as a great strapping fellow, devouring a large tart, and with golden syrup oozing from your lips." What a tuching picture, dear lady! Reminds me of the old saying, "Out of the strong came forth sweetness."

J. H. P. (Carlisle).—"Could you lift a hundredweight, Billy?"—Yes, rather! Tons of them!

"Cynic" (Plaistow).—"You call yourself a boxer, but the truth is, you can't box for toffee!"—I can wrestle for it, though, directly the tuckshopp opens!

"Curious" (Canterbury).—"How far can you throw a cricket-ball?"—From here to the dome of your katedral!

"POP-ite" (Plymouth).—"You are so fat and heavy, Billy, that I doubt if there's a man living who could pick you up."—You are wrong, old chap. A man passed me in a dogcart the other day, and gave me a "lift"!

A. P. H. (Woolwich).—"What does it mean when I dream about you, Billy?"—It means that if you're not careful you'll have a Billy-us attack!

"Jester" (Birmingham).—"Have you heard the old saying, Billy, 'Pigs might fly'? There's a chance for you to be a brilliant aviator yet!"—Is that a kompliment, or are you trying to be rood?

Gerald R. (Rochester).—"Do you believe in ghosts, Billy?"—No, but I believe in walking skellingtons. I'm one myself! A fellow never gets enuff to eat in this place.

Jimmy D. (Dalston).—"I've got a dozen white mice for sale."—Keep 'em, old chap. I'm stony!

Admirer (Paisley).—"Week by week, in every way, your paper gets better and better."—Day by day, I'm glad to say, I get many a similar letter!

"Inquisitive" (Margate).—"Is it correct that Bolsover major punched you on the nose?"—No; he punched me on the cricket-field!

Loyal Reader (Leicester), and Many Others.—I am deeply grateful to you for your efforts to POPULAR-ise my Weekly!

THE POPULAR—No. 183.

HEALTH HINTS!

By FATTY WYNN.

I T was originally intended to fill this column with an article, entitled "Fizzical Fitness," by Baggy Trimble. But at the last moment Billy Bunter decided that Baggy's article clashed with one of his own. He therefore rang me up on the telephone, and asked me to write some Health Hints, and send them, post haste, to the printers.

* * *

Well, it is the natural desire of every fellow to be healthy. "He who has health is rich," runs the ancient proverb. And I—one of the fattest and fittest fellows at St. Jim's—propose to give you a few hints on how to gain good health.

* * *

To begin with, let me express my contempt for the old slogan:

"Early to bed, and early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

It does nothing of the sort. The man who toddles off to bed at nine o'clock, instead of spending a sociable evening with his pals, is a thumping nuisance. So is the merchant who gets up at five in the morning, and eats all the brekker before you are down. The wisest plan is to go to bed when you feel like it, and to get up when you feel like it. If you don't want to turn in till midnight—don't! If you want to take an extra forty winks in the morning—take 'em! Don't live by routine, or you'll be a misery to yourself, and to everyone about you.

* * *

Now, one of the greatest assets to health is good food—and plenty of it. Dry toast and weak tea will never make a man of you. It will simply get you down. You want to commence the day with a hearty meal—say, three rashers of bacon and half a dozen fried eggs, with toast and marmalade to follow. There's nothing like laying a solid foundation at the beginning of the day.

* * *

Lunch should also be a substantial meal. When on holiday, I have been known to consume a whole steak-and-kidney pudding for my lunch, and it has done me no harm. Plenty of exercise soon works it off. I have never yet suffered from indigestion, and I don't suppose I ever shall. In addition, I always devour an enormous tea, and finish the day with a substantial supper. Eat as much and as often as you can. That's my motto.

* * *

Of course, you must play games. Outdoor recreation and good health always go hand in hand. Fellows who slink away and smoke in secret barns are never healthy. Cricket is the thing—and an occasional spin on your bike or a swim in the river. Eat well, play well, and sleep well—and good health is yours for the asking.

* * *

I charge nothing for giving you these tips. Put them into practice, and it will pay you over and over again. Good Health is knocking at your door. Don't shut it out; for Good Health is one of the greatest factors of true happiness.

MY FEETS OF STRENGTH!

By BAGGY TRIMBLE.

I HAVE been making histery just lately, dear readers.

After taking a course of instruckshun at the Bunter School of Fizzical Culture, I became a new man—a giant among my fellows.

Some of the feets I have accomplished would do credit to Goliath. I've got so much strength that it's as much as I can do to keep it in cheque.

The other day I went to box Mellish's ears—just a gentle cuff, you know—and, to my horror, I nocked him clean across the quadrangle. He finished up in a heap on Taggles' doorstep.

What would have happened to Mellish if I had bit him with my fool force I shudder to think.

That same day, I played in a cricket match on Little Side. It was just a frendly match between the Shell and the Fourth.

Noble of the Shell was bowling, and he happened to send down a loose ball. I ran out at it, and slogged with all my mite.

Bang! Krash!
The face of the school clock, in the old tower, was smashed to attems! Kildare of the Sixth, who was looking on, said it was the finest drive he had ever seen.

I scored a sentury in that match. But I made no more mity hits. I was afraid I mite mame sumbody, or kill them for life!

When it comes to weight lifting, I am a perfect marvel. I can pick up a couple of fags, and toss them into the air one after the other, like a juggler with a couple of oranges.

I was doing this stunt the other day, with D'Arcy minor and Jameson. Unfortunately, I was interrupted during the performance, and I dropped young D'Arcy on the nut. I feered at first that I had frackchered his skull. He is now in the sanny, suffering from konkussion, and he will be about again in a few weeks.

My grate strength comes in very useful at tug-of-war. I am a team in myself. I can pull half a duzzer fellows over the line with perfect ease.

"Trimble's on the warpath!" comes the startled cry. And everybuddy scoots for their lives.

It is to Billy Bunter, the worthy editor of this jernal, that I owe my wonderful strength. Bunter is the finest Jimnastick eggspert that I know. He can turn a weekling into a giant at five minnits' notiss.

I shudder to think how fat and flabby I used to be. I used to have no mussels at all. Now, however, I am the best-developed fellow at St. Jim's.

As I said before, I shall have to keep my vast strength in cheque. I don't want to jeppardise the lives of the kommunity. If I start punching fellows with my fool force, the rezult will be too terrible to kontemplate.

Any St. Jim's fellow who reads this artikle, and is envious of my grate strength, should get in touch with Billy Bunter without delay, and menshun my name in his kommunikation, as I reseve kommission on every new client I inter-juice!

[Supplement IV.

YAGBEU

CHAMPION OR DUFFER?

(Continued from page 12.)

Blake," he said, "but if you accuse me of unfairness I'll punch your head!"

Instantly Jack Blake sprang forward. His fists were clenched.

"Punch away, then!" he exclaimed. Tom Merry rose to his feet with deliberation.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy rushed between the two juniors, with a view to preventing a scene.

Gussy would have been wise to have remembered the old couplet:

"Those who in quarrels interpose
Must often wipe a crimson nose!"

Tom Merry's right, and Jack Blake's left, shot out simultaneously. And Arthur Augustus caught a terrific clump on each side of his noble head. He sat down violently on the floor of the study and clasped his head, and yelled.

"Yavoooooh!" Mewwy, you feahful wuffian! Blake, you hooligan—"

"You shouldn't have interfered, Gussy!" snapped Jack Blake.

And he hurled himself at Tom Merry. The scene that followed was one of wild confusion.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, failing to get out of the way in time, was trampled underfoot by the combatants.

Manners and Lowther were on their feet, urging Tom Merry to desist. And Tom and Jack Blake were fighting wildly.

It was seldom indeed that these two came to blows. Though in rival Forms they were very good pals as a rule. But the inclusion of Baggy Trimble in the swimming team had goaded Blake to fury. And Blake's accusation of unfairness had the same effect on Tom Merry.

Jack Blake dealt his opponent a terrific thump on the chest. Then Tom Merry's right cannoned against Blake's jaw.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, after having been used as a doormat for some seconds, managed to crawl under the table for safety.

And high above the tumult rose Monty's Lowther's voice.

"Chuck it, you two, for goodness' sake! You'll have one of the beaks along in a jiffy!"

"He accused me of unfairness!" panted Tom Merry. "I'm going to lick him!"

"The boot will be on the other foot, I'm thinking!" growled Jack Blake.

And he threw himself into the fray with renewed zest.

Round and round the study the combatants tramped and swerved, to the detriment of the furniture.

A huge inkpot was overturned by Blake's elbow, and for some seconds it seemed to be raining ink.

A couple of chairs were sent jazzing across the study, and Tom Merry's boot crashed through the glass panel of the bookcase.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy peeped out in alarm from under the table.

"Pway desist, deah boys!" he implored. "You're smashin' up the happy home. If you weally must scwap, why don't you go along to the gym?"

Neither of the combatants heeded Gussy's words. It was doubtful whether they even heard them. They went on fighting; and by this time both were in a sorry plight. Tom Merry's right eye was closed, and Blake's lip was bleed-

"This has gone far enough!" exclaimed Manners.

And he was about to lay hands on Tom Merry, and swing him back, when a tall form loomed up in the doorway, and the stern voice of Kildare of the Sixth made itself heard.

"Merry! Blake! Stop this scrapping at once, you young rascals!"

The two juniors dropped their hands to their sides. For Kildare's word was law.

"You'll take a hundred lines each!" snapped the captain of St. Jim's. "What was it all about?"

Jack Blake dabbed at his lip with a handkerchief. It came away crimson.

"Tom Merry's gone clean off his rocker!" he growled. "He's given that fat duffer Trimble a place in the swimming team!"

"And rightly so," said Kildare. "I've read of Trimble's prowess in the Press—"

"It's faked!"

"Nonsense, Blake! That report would not have appeared unless it were genuine. In any case, I don't see what it has to do with you. Merry is captain of the swimming team."

"We shall lose on Wednesday!" growled Blake.

"On the contrary, I think Trimble will prove a rod in pickle for the St. Jim's team, and that they will win!"

MORE COLOURED ENGINE PLATES TO COME!

Look Out for them.

"Well, we shall see!" muttered Jack Blake.

And he strode out of the study in high dudgeon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, having emerged from beneath the table, followed his chum, shaking his head sadly. And Tom Merry, surveying himself in the mirror out of his one sound eye, despatched Monty Lowther to the school kitchen for a beefsteak.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

At the Baths!

TOM MERRY and Jack Blake were not on speaking terms during the next few days. When they happened to meet there was no friendly nod of recognition.

Jack Blake still declared that Tom Merry had acted like a madman in giving Baggy Trimble a place in the swimming team. Further, he predicted that St. Jim's would be hopelessly beaten.

As for Trimble himself, he was consumed with self-importance. He strutted and swanked and swaggered, and puffed out his chest, and declared that he was the hope of St. Jim's.

"We shall win hands down, of course," he said. "But I shouldn't like to think what would happen if I wasn't in the team!"

Wednesday came at length, and with it the Greyfriars team.

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, and Vernon-Smith—these were the Greyfriars four, and they were magnificent swimmers. For weeks past they had been practising in order to "put it across" their St. Jim's rivals when the time came.

The visitors were entertained to lunch at St. Jim's.

"What sort of a team have you got?" inquired Harry Wharton of Tom Merry.

"Oh, pretty good," said Tom. "Talbot and Redfern and myself and Baggy Trimble."

Wharton gave a violent start. He dropped his fork to the floor with a clatter.

"Trimble!" he gasped, wondering whether he had heard aright.

"Yes. Baggy's been going great guns lately in the swimming world. He's covered two lengths of the bath in record time."

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "I had no idea that Trimble could swim!"

"Well, he can, as you'll know to your cost this afternoon," said Tom Merry, with a grin.

"Wonders will never cease!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "You'll be telling us next that Trimble's a Jessop on the cricket field, and an Alfred Shrubbs on the running-track!"

Tom Merry laughed.

"Baggy can't play cricket, and he can't run, unless somebody explodes a jumping cracker behind him," he said. "But he certainly knows how to swim. Fatty Wynn's away in Wales, and Baggy's taking his place."

After lunch there was an interval of an hour. Then an adjournment was made to the public baths in Wayland.

Practically all St. Jim's went over to witness the struggle.

The rivalry between the two schools was tremendously keen, and a St. Jim's victory would be hailed with great satisfaction.

The seats which ran round the sides of the bath were packed with spectators.

The two teams disappeared into their respective dressing-rooms, and there was a mighty cheer when they came out, clad in their bathing costumes.

Baggy Trimble's appearance was comical in the extreme. He wore a costume which seemed to embody all the colours of the rainbow. Joseph's celebrated coat of many colours would have had to play second fiddle to Baggy's costume.

Engraved on the front of the garment were the letters "S. S. C." These apparently stood for St. Jim's Swimming Club, though Cardew of the Fourth declared that they implied "Superior Swimming Costume."

Baggy Trimble was almost bursting with self-importance.

"Am I first man in, Merry?" he inquired.

"No," said Tom. "Talbot's starting off for us against Wharton. I shall go next against Cherry. Reddy will be our third man, and Vernon-Smith is theirs. You'll be last, Baggy, against Linley."

"And he'll make a priceless ass of himself!" snorted Jack Blake, who was standing near.

Tom Merry turned his back on Blake, and did not reply.

"If I were you, Jackie," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "I should go an' change into my swimmin' costume."

"Why?"

"In case of emergency, you know. If Trimble were to show the white feather when his turn came, we should want somebody to take his place."

"But Tom Merry would never agree—"

"You can't study Tom Mewwy. It's the honah of St. Jim's that you've got to think about."

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

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"THE PLACE OF HONOUR!"

Jack Blake turned on his heel and promptly darted into the dressing-room. He came out shortly afterwards in his costume.

"What's the little game, Blake?" inquired Levison.

"I'm going to stand by in case anything goes wrong," was the reply.

"Oh!"

Mr. Railton, who was to act as starter, motioned to the first pair of swimmers to get ready.

Talbot and Harry Wharton crouched low on the edge of the bath, ready to take the plunge.

Mr. Railton lifted the pistol in the air and fired, and three hundred voices framed one word:

"Talbot!"

Both juniors had dived gracefully, both were now striking out strongly.

Harry Wharton sped through the water with the precision of a machine, and Talbot had all his work cut out to keep up with his Greyfriars rival. But he succeeded.

It was a neck-and-neck struggle, with nothing to choose between the swimmers. They completed one length of the bath and turned, and kept together the whole way.

Talbot and Wharton finished the second length at precisely the same instant. And then Tom Merry and Bob Cherry dived.

The crowd cheered lustily.

"Go it, Tom Merry!"

"Swim hard!"

Again there was a neck-and-neck tussle.

Although Tom Merry went along like a house on fire, so to speak, he could not get the better of his Greyfriars rival. For Bob Cherry employed a very fast overarm stroke.

As in the case of the first pair of swimmers, Tom Merry and Bob Cherry completed their allotted two lengths at the same instant.

It was proving a rare tussle, with neither side giving way an inch.

Everything would depend upon the last two men. A victory for St. Jim's could only be made possible by Baggy Trimble, who would be pitted against Mark Linley.

The third men, Vernon-Smith and Dick Redfern, took up the running. Both were splendid swimmers, and they cut through the water side by side.

Tom Merry, panting after his swim, stood at the top end of the bath and beckoned to Baggy Trimble.

"It's up to you, Baggy," he said. "As soon as Redfern gets home, dive in and swim as if your life depended upon it. Mark Linley's a good man; but if you really broke the two lengths' record, you'll have no difficulty in beating him."

Baggy Trimble strutted to and fro, awaiting his turn. He was beginning to look rather uneasy, but he attempted to conceal it by brag and bluster.

"Oh, I shall win hands down!" he exclaimed. "I'm in ripping form! Have you fellows ever seen a torpedo cutting through the water? Well, I shall remind you of one when I plunge in!"

Baggy Trimble plunged in much sooner than he had anticipated. Whilst he had been speaking, he had moved nearer and nearer to the edge of the bath. He had his back to the water, and did not notice the danger.

"Look out!" cried Levison.

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But the warning came too late.

Baggy Trimble staggered and swayed for one dizzy second. Then he completely lost his balance, and landed in the water with a mighty splash.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Tom Merry.

All eyes were on Baggy Trimble as he rose to the surface.

Everybody—excepting Jack Blake—expected to see him strike out strongly. But Baggy did nothing of the sort. He thrashed the water like a wounded whale, and at the same time sent up a shrill cry of "Help!"

"Well, I'm dashed!" muttered Tom Merry, looking dazed. "He—he can't swim, after all!"

"Of course he can't!" snapped Jack Blake. "Pity you didn't realise that in the first place."

Somebody threw Baggy Trimble a rope with a lifebelt attached, and he was hauled in to safety.

The calamity had not affected the race. Vernon-Smith and Dick Redfern had just turned after completing one length, and now they came speeding back, each striving for the mastery.

Tom Merry's eyes met those of Jack Blake.

"Will you swim for us, Blake?" he muttered. And there was contrition in his tone.

Blake merely nodded. But he looked very grim. His chance had come—his chance of snatching a victory for St. Jim's—and he meant to take full advantage of it.

Vernon-Smith contrived to gain a slight lead over Dick Redfern.

The Greyfriars fellow finished his course, and in went Mark Linley—the last of the four.

Linley had already got a few yards' start before Jack Blake was able to dive.

"Go it, Blake!"

A lusty roar of encouragement came from the assembled throng.

A neat, clean dive, and Jack Blake was in hot pursuit of Mark Linley.

He realised at the outset that the fellow would take some catching.

Although Blake swam his hardest, he seemed to make no impression on the swimmer in front. They were still separated by a distance of half a dozen yards.

When Blake turned to commence his second length, he changed his stroke. He knew a very good racing stroke—a variation of the trudgen—which could only be kept up over a short distance, owing to the fact that the swimmer's head was immersed.

Jack Blake tried this stroke, and there was a roar from the crowd.

"He's gaining!"

"He's gaining hand over fist!"

"Good old Blake!"

Mark Linley realised the danger, and he put on a terrific spurt. But he could not ward off Blake's challenge.

The St. Jim's fellow came on swiftly, relentlessly, determined to be the first to reach the final goal.

It was touch and go at the finish. But Jack Blake, drawing level with his rival three yards from home, beat him at the finish by a mere arm's length.

A storm of cheering burst forth. And willing hands assisted Jack Blake from the water.

Tom Merry was the first to grasp his hand.

"Jolly well played!" he said heartily.

Blake said nothing. But he smiled. In that moment of victory, there was no room for animosity.

"I'm going to put through a trunk-call on the telephone to Fatty Wynn, and tell him the news!" exclaimed Figgins.

And he hurried away to the post-office, with Kerr and French, of the New House, hard at his heels.

It took some time to get through to Fatty Wynn's home in Wales. But Figgins, after employing the patience of Job, was successful. Faintly over the wires came the voice of his chum.

"That you, Fatty?" cried Figgins.

"Yes!"

"Figgins speaking. I say, my plump old tulip, we've licked Greyfriars at swimming!"

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Fatty Wynn. "Who took my place?"

"Jack Blake. And he swam like a Trojan!"

"I'm jolly glad to hear it, Figgy! Mr. Forbes, the newspaper reporter, told me last Saturday that St. Jim's could never hope to win unless I swam for 'em. But he was wrong."

"Where did you see Mr. Forbes?"

"At the baths. I gave an exhibition swim, and lowered the two lengths record."

"My hat!" gasped Figgins. "Mr. Forbes thought you were Baggy Trimble!"

Fatty Wynn gave a chuckle.

"Yes, I know," he said. "When he asked me my name, I told him Trimble. I knew he was going to put a lot of gush in the paper about my performance, so I thought I'd give Baggy Trimble the benefit of it!"

"You silly chump!" shouted Figgins. "Do you know what happened? On the strength of that newspaper report, Tom Merry went and included Trimble in the St. Jim's team."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Fortunately, we found out just in the nick of time that Baggy couldn't swim," said Figgins. "And Blake happened to have his costume on, all ready, so he took Baggy's place. Fatty, you prize idiot, you nearly lost us the contest. Still, all's well that ends well."

"Yes, rather!"

After further conversation with his chum, Figgins rang off. And he hurried back to the baths with Kerr and French to explain matters to Tom Merry & Co.

All's well that ends well, Figgy had said. And things ended very well, considering that St. Jim's had won the swimming contest, and the breach between Tom Merry and Jack Blake was healed.

But things did not end well for Baggy Trimble. That bumptious youth was given a severe ducking, and an equally severe bumping. But nobody felt sorry for him. He had tried to make capital out of an incorrect newspaper report, and he had come a nasty cropper at the finish, as he invariably did.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's splendid long complete story of the adventures of Tom Merry & Co., the chums of St. Jim's, entitled "The Place of Honour!")

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

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"THE PLACE OF HONOUR!"

THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS COME UP AGAINST THEIR OLD RIVALS, ADOLPHUS SMYTHE & CO., IN PECULIAR AND AMUSING CIRCUMSTANCES!



A CRICKET REVENGE!



A Splendid Long Complete Story, dealing with the holiday adventures of JIMMY SILVER & Co., of Rookwood, on their Caravan Tour.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Famous Tales of Rookwood, now appearing in the "Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Old Acquaintances!

BY gad!" "What a crowd!" "Awfully dusty lot!" Those remarks fell upon the ears of the Rookwood caravanners as they jogged cheerily along in the drowsy warmth of the summer afternoon.

Jimmy Silver was leading the horse, and Lovell, Raby, and Newcome were sauntering along, while Tubby Muffin sat on the van.

The chums of Rookwood were following a deep lane between high hedges, and there was chalky dust in the lane in plentiful quantities.

Certainly Jimmy Silver & Co. were rather dusty.

The caravanners had been on the road since early morning, and a fastidious regard for appearances is not consistent with caravanning.

Upon a stile by the roadside, three extremely elegant-looking youths were seated in a row, and they made remarks as the caravanners came along.

The three elegant youths did not look dusty; in fact, they looked spotless, without speck or stain, from their straw hats to their white shoes.

Also, they had cigarettes in their mouths.

They made their remarks all at once, so that their opinions fell in a sort of chorus upon the caravanners, who looked round wrathfully.

"Smythe!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

"Hallo, Rookwood chaps!" said Lovell. The caravanners had felt hostile for a moment, but now they nodded cheerfully to the three youths on the stile.

For the three were Smythe, Howard, and Tracy, of the Shell at Rookwood School.

At Rookwood, Jimmy Silver & Co. were far from chummy with Adolphus Smythe and his merry set.

But, having suddenly and unexpectedly fallen upon Adolphus & Co. on holiday, they were prepared to let bygones be bygones.

Jimmy Silver pulled Robinson Crusoe, the horse, to a halt.

"Hallo, Smythey!" he said.

"Fancy meeting you!" said Raby.

Adolphus Smythe extracted an eyeglass from the pocket of his fancy waistcoat, jammed it in his eye, and surveyed the caravanners with a lofty glance.

At school or on vacation, Adolphus was evidently the same Adolphus; in fact, his loftiness seemed more pronounced than ever.

"By gad!" he repeated. "That you, Jimmy Silver?"

"Little me, old birdy!" answered Jimmy.

"What are you sellin'?"

"Sellin'!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Yaas. Brooms an' brushes an' things?" asked Smythe.

Howard and Tracy chortled.

"We're caravanning," answered Jimmy Silver.

"By gad, you look a precious crowd for Rookwood fellows!" said Howard disdainfully.

"When did you wash last?"

"No room in your caravan for soap, I suppose?" remarked Tracy.

"Don't let people know you belong to Rookwood, Silver!" implored Adolphus

Smythe. "Think of the giddy reputation of the school, you know."

The Fistical Four glared at the nuts of the Shell.

"You silly chumps!" said Jimmy Silver, in measured tones. "You'd be doing much better caravanning than sitting on a stile smoking, like three silly owls. Have you anything more to say before we bump you over?"

"Here, none of your fag larks!" exclaimed Smythe, in alarm.

The Fistical Four did not heed.

Jimmy Silver rushed towards the stile, and his comrades followed him.

In a twinkling Smythe and Howard and Tracy were collared, and they went rolling off the stile into the field.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three nuts of Rookwood sat in the grass on one side of the stile, gasping, while the Fistical Four stood in the road on the other side and roared with laughter.

The eclipse of Smythe & Co. had been sudden and complete.

The shout of laughter was echoed from the field.

A game of cricket was going on there, and the cricketers had seen Smythe & Co.'s sudden fall.

Adolphus Smythe spat out his cigarette, and groped wildly for his eyeglass.

"Ow! You rotters! Yoooop!" mumbled Adolphus.

"Have some more?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Apparently the nuts did not want any more.

Neither apparently had they any further disparaging remarks to make to the dusty caravanners.

Jimmy Silver went back to the horse, and the caravan rumbled on, the nuts of Rookwood being left to sort themselves out—somewhat dusty themselves now.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Lost Ball!

BANG!

"Smash!"

"Holy smoke!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Silly asses!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell wrathfully.

The caravan window was in fragments.

A cricket-ball, evidently hard hit, had whizzed over the hedge, and smashed the little window fairly in the centre.

The ball dropped inside the van.

From within the van came a tinkling of crockery. The window was not the only casualty.

The caravan halted again. A shout was ringing from the cricket-field.

"Well hit, Sticker!"

"Lost ball!"

"Well, of all the howling idiots!" exclaimed Raby.

"Look at that window!"

"I—I say, it might have biffed me, you

know!" spluttered Tubby Muffin indignantly.

"That wouldn't have mattered, ass! Look at that window!"

Half a dozen faces looked over the hedge into the deep lane.

"Give us our ball, please!"

"What?"

"Would you mind giving us our ball?"

A sunburnt, cheery-looking fellow asked that polite question.

He had a bat under his arm, and was apparently the batsman who had made that effective drive.

The Rookwood caravanners glared at him.

"Do you see what you've done?" roared Lovell.

"Oh crumbs! Your window busted?"

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" snorted Newcome.

"Sorry! I never expected to get a bullseye like that, I'm sure!"

"Will you mend the window?" snapped Lovell.

"Well, I dare say I could," said Sticker.

"My father could, anyway. He's a glazier. If you like to hang around till this evening I'll get my father to mend it for you free of charge—honest."

Jimmy Silver smiled genially.

After all, accidents would happen, and Master Sticker was sorry for the damage done, anyway. Besides, Jimmy had a fellow-feeling for a cricketer.

"All serene!" he answered. "I'll get your ball."

He disappeared into the caravan, and returned in a few moments with the cricket-ball.

"Catch!"

From a spirit of mischief he gave Dick Sticker a very difficult catch.

Somewhat to his surprise, Sticker caught the ball quite easily, using only one hand for the purpose.

"Thanks!" said Sticker.

"I say, that chap would be useful in the field," remarked Lovell, his wrath quite evaporating at the sight of that neat catch.

"Yes," answered Jimmy Silver.

Sticker tossed the ball to someone in the field, but he did not return to the pitch.

He seemed really concerned about the accident to the caravan.

"About your window?" he began.

"Oh, never mind that," said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Can't be helped. Don't keep away from your game."

"That's all right; only practice," answered Sticker.

"Look here, I meant what I said. My father will mend your window if you can stop for it. If you're going to camp in this part—"

"We're looking for a camping-ground," said Jimmy Silver. The Rookwooders were feeling quite friendly now. "As you're a native, I dare say you can tell us of a good place."

"Certainly I can. If you keep on nearly to Deepden you'll find a first-rate place—a little meadow close by the river," said Sticker.

"You'll have to ask permission at the house—it's a big place, Deepden Lodge—but I've no doubt they'll let you camp there. If you do, I'll bring my father along this evening to mend your window."

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ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

NEXT TUESDAY!

"THE UNWELCOME GUEST!"

ANOTHER GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS. By OWEN CONQUEST.

"Good man!" said Jimmy Silver. "Thanks no end."
 "You'll know the meadow—there's a red gate," said Sticker. "I'll look for you there as I come home."
 "Right you are!"

Master Sticker went back to the cricket, and the caravanners went on their way, leaving a sprinkling of broken glass where their caravan had rested.

"Decent sort of kid," remarked Lovell. "I suppose that's a village cricket team. They've got one good man, anyway."

Jimmy Silver looked reflective.
 "I'll tell you what," he said. "Caravanning is topping sport, but a dash of cricket would make a ripping change. We might hang around here for a day, and fix up some cricket with those fellows, if they're willing. If they've got a match on with anybody, they might be glad of some jolly good recruits."

"Good egg!" said Raby. "We'll have a jaw about cricket with that fellow Sticker, if we see him again."

The caravan rumbled on along the winding lane.

The red gate was sighted at last. It gave admittance to a green meadow, with a bunch of trees shading a little stream at one end, which certainly looked very enticing as a camping-ground.

"That's the place," said Newcome. "What about going straight in?"

Jimmy shook his head.
 "Better get permission first," he answered. "The owner may be a stickler for pomps and ceremonies, you know. You two fellows look after the van, and Lovell can come with me. Put your jacket on, old scout."

"Right-ho!"
 And leaving the caravan halted by the gate, with Raby and Newcome and Tubby Muffin in charge, Jimmy Silver and Lovell proceeded to look for Deepden Lodge.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not a Polite Reception!

"HERE'S the show," remarked Jimmy Silver.
 Deepden Lodge was rather an imposing place.

There was a big drive, an extensive lawn, and a pile of buildings and outhouses, and on the lawn the Rookwood juniors caught sight of some straw hats, between the trees.

As the two juniors walked up the drive there was a sudden ejaculation from Lovell.
 "Smythe!" said Lovell.

"Great pig!"
 As they came past the lawn the two juniors came in view of the straw hats again, and their wearers.

They were not pleased to recognise Smythe, Howard, and Tracy, lolling more or less gracefully in garden-chairs on the lawn.

Smythe & Co. had restored their elegance since the encounter with the caravanners that afternoon.

They looked as nobby and natty as ever. Several other fellows were with them, two of them being Townsend and Topham of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, and the others fellows whom Jimmy Silver did not know.

A fat man, with a bald head and a purple complexion, and gold-rimmed glasses perched on a podgy little nose, was seated in a big chair, and he blinked at the two dusty juniors on the drive.

Smythe & Co. stared at them. Jimmy Silver and Lovell halted.

They guessed that the purple-faced man was the colonel, though there was nothing at all military in his appearance.

By sheer chance, or, rather, sheer ill-luck, the caravanners had been dropped into the home of Adolphus Smythe of Rookwood.

Smythe's father, as Jimmy knew, was, in point of fact, a "rich City gent," who lived in the country, and affected the manners and customs of a country gentleman.

Evidently he was one of the wealthy "gents" who had picked up a military title somehow or other during the war.

"By gad!" ejaculated Adolphus Smythe. "That lot again!"

"Check, to come here!" said Tracy, in wonder. "By Jove, you know, this is piling it on too thick!"

"Who are they?" asked Townsend, affecting not to recognise the caravanners.

"I've seen 'em somewhere before," said Topham reflectively.

The purple gentleman sat up in his chair. His red and podgy face wore a frown as "THE POPULAR—No. 183.

he looked at the dusty pair on the drive.
 "Adolphus!" he rapped out.

"Yaas, dad?"
 "Who are these—these young persons?" asked "Colonel" Smythe irritably.

"Rookwood fellows," said Adolphus reluctantly. "They're the gang that bumped us off the stile this afternoon. I told you, dad."

"Good gad!" said Mr. Smythe. Jimmy Silver and Arthur Edward Lovell were quite crimson, and they were not feeling happy.

The colonel raised a podgy finger, and beckoned to them to approach.

They came across the lawn.
 "What are you—ah—doin' heah?" demanded Mr. Smythe.

"We are caravanning, sir," explained Jimmy Silver quietly, though his cheeks were burning. "We called to ask permission to camp in the meadow up the road, which we were told belongs to you."

"Good gad!" said Mr. Smythe.
 "Of course, we undertake to do no damage in the field," added Jimmy Silver. "There are five of us, one caravan, and one horse."

"Well, of all the cheek!" said Adolphus. Jimmy Silver did not care to add that the caravanners were willing to pay for the use of the meadow.

A few shillings could not be an object to Mr. Smythe, who counted his cash by the thousand pounds.

"If you will kindly permit us to camp in the field, sir—"

"Bless my soul! Certainly not!"

"Oh!"
 "I consider it—ah—impertinence to make such a request!" said Mr. Smythe. "I shall certainly not allow anythin' of the sort!"

"Very well," said Jimmy.

"Better tell Plummer to see them off the premises, dad," said Smythe.

"Did you say that these—ah—young persons belong to your school, Adolphus?"

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"Yaas. All sorts at Rookwood," explained Adolphus.

"Good gad! I am surprised! I am certainly—ah—surprised!"

Lovell was turning away with Jimmy Silver, but he turned back at that.

He had been suppressing his wrath with difficulty, and now it refused to be suppressed any longer.

"Nothing to be surprised about, Mr. Smythe," said Lovell distinctly. "There are decent fellows at Rookwood, as well as rank outsiders like Smythe!"

"What-at?"

"Come on, Lovell!" murmured Jimmy. "Plummer!" roared Mr. Smythe.

A plump man in livery approached.

Mr. Smythe pointed a fat forefinger at the caravanners.

"See those persons off the premises, Plummer!"

"Yessir."
 "Oh, we're going!" said Lovell disdainfully. "Don't burst your crop, colonel!"

"What-a-at?"
 "By the way, what are you colonel of?" pursued Lovell deliberately. "The Bandy Battalion of the Slocum's Pond Ganders—what!"

Mr. Smythe's purple complexion intensified, until he seemed on the verge of a severe attack of apoplexy.

Some of Smythe's nutty comrades grinned at Lovell's question.

"Turn them out, Plummer!" gasped Mr. Smythe. "Turn them out! Kick them out! Good gad! Throw them out!"

"Now, then, out you go!" said Plummer, hustling the caravanners officiously.

Jimmy Silver and Lovell were in an exasperated frame of mind, which was very natural in the circumstances, and they were not safe to hustle just then.

They collared the plump Plummer, and sat him down on the lawn with a crash that completely winded him.

"Yoooop!" spluttered the unhappy Plummer.
 "Turn them out!" shrieked Mr. Smythe.

"Grooogh!"
 "Do you hear me, Plummer? Get up! Turn them out!"

"Gerrooogh!"

"Perhaps you'd like to try your hand, Adolphus?" asked Lovell.

"Get out, you rotter!" gasped Adolphus.

"Come on, Lovell, for goodness' sake!" said Jimmy Silver, and he fairly dragged his warlike chum away.

A mocking cackle of laughter from Smythe & Co. followed them.

Adolphus Smythe felt that he had certainly scored this time, and Jimmy Silver and Lovell felt that it was so, as they tramped back with burning ears to the spot where they had left the caravan.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Friend in Need!

"ALL serene?" asked Raby.
 "Not quite," answered Jimmy Silver grimly.

"Not got permission to camp?" inquired Newcome.

"No."

"Anything happened?" added Raby, with a curious look at his chums.

"It turns out to be Smythe's place," said Jimmy Silver. "And old Smythe and young Smythe were—were—well, Smythical!"

Jimmy coined that new word on the spot to explain the situation, but it conveyed his meaning.

"Rotten luck!" said Raby. "Never mind, we can camp somewhere else. We don't want to ask favours of a worm like Smythe."

Lovell sparred into the air.
 "Let that worm wait till we get back to Rookwood!" he said. "I'll make him sit up for his cheek! They treated us like dashed tramps! That purse-proud old fool doesn't know a decent chap when he sees one; but Smythe knows better. I'll warn him at Rookwood next term!"

"Never mind; keep smiling!" said Jimmy.

"The question is, where are we going to camp? Hallo, here's that chap!"

Dick Sticker was coming along the road, with a ruddy face, and a bat under his arm.

He stopped as he came up to the caravan. "Camping?" he asked.

"No; can't get leave to use the meadow," said Jimmy Silver. "Perhaps you can tell us of another place?"

"Well, there's the common," said Sticker. "Anybody can camp on Deepden Common, of course. It's a bit farther on. I'll show you, if you like. You'll have to fetch water rather a long way, but there's a pond for your horse."

"Good man!" said Jimmy Silver. "Get on, old hoss!"

Robinson Crusoe was set in motion again, and the caravan rumbled on. Dick Sticker, walking with the Rookwood fellows.

They chatted very agreeably on the way. The Rookwooders had taken rather a fancy to Master Sticker.

They found him keen on cricket, which was a subject they naturally had in common, and they learned that he was captain of the Deepden village club.

"You chaps play cricket, of course?" said Sticker.

"Well, a little!" smiled Jimmy Silver. "We're rather keen on cricket at Rookwood!"

"Rookwood! The school?" asked Dick. "Yes."

"I've heard of Rookwood School," explained Sticker. "Young Mr. Smythe belongs to it. You're his schoolfellows?"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"We're not on good terms with Smythe at Rookwood," explained Jimmy Silver. "In fact, quite the reverse."

"Oh, I see! I'm sorry I sent you to his place, then. Of course, I didn't know. I—I shouldn't have thought—"

Sticker paused and coloured.
 "What wouldn't you have thought?"
 "Well, I naturally supposed that Rookwood fellows were like Smythe," said Sticker.

"I shouldn't have expected them to be civil to a chap like me—a workman's son."

"Smythe isn't a fair specimen of Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver. "There are silly snobs like Smythe everywhere, as well as at Rookwood. Smythe is more or less of a butt at Rookwood—simply a silly ass!"

"Yes, he's captain of the junior eleven," said Sticker.

"Nothing of the kind!"

"I understood—"

"The cheeky ass!" exclaimed Lovell indignantly. "He was captain of the junior eleven once, and was turned out because he couldn't play the game, Jimmy Silver's junior captain of Rookwood."

"Little me!" exclaimed Jimmy with a smile.

"Oh!" said Sticker, with visibly increased respect. "I understood from Smythe—he didn't exactly say so, but that was what he made me think. Of course, I don't see much of Smythe." He laughed. "Smythe wouldn't touch me with a barge-pole, personally. But he's fixed up a match with my club because there's nothing else doing, I suppose, and he wants to entertain his friends."

"Oh, you're playing that crowd, then?" said Jimmy, with interest.

"Yes, to-morrow. I didn't care for it specially," said Sticker. "But, naturally, we liked the idea of playing a public school team. We don't get a chance often, you may be sure. We don't expect to win; but I thought the match would be a good experience for us—first-class cricket."

"You won't get first-class cricket from that lot!" grunted Lovell. "They slack at cricket, same as at everything else."

"Still, they're bound to be in better form than my crowd," said Sticker. "You see, we all have to work. Every member of my club works at helping the farmers, and at this time of the year there's lots to do. We don't get much time for practice; and, to be candid, we don't play much of a game. We do our best, but we haven't much chance."

"I suppose so," assented Jimmy.

The captain of the Rookwood Fourth understood even better than Dick Sticker did. "You ought to beat Smythe's lot, though," remarked Newcome.

Sticker shook his head.

"We might have had a chance," he said. "But I've just lost some of my men. Six chaps have been called away to work on a farm fifteen miles from here, and they couldn't get over for the match, you see. They were the best of the bunch, too. I really don't know how I shall be able to make up a full eleven at all to-morrow. I shall have to put in some kids. Here's the place for you chaps."

The common was reached.

The obliging Sticker guided the caravanners to a suitable spot, where Robinson Crusoe was allowed to halt once more.

It was certainly not so favourable a spot for camping as the meadow belonging to Mr. Smythe; but the caravanners had learned not to be particular.

"This will be all right," said Jimmy Silver. "We're much obliged."

"Not a bit! I'll bring my father along this evening to mend your window," said Sticker. "Ta-ta!"

And Dick Sticker went on to the village, leaving the caravanners to camp.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Recruits for Dick Sticker.**

THE caravanners had just disposed of their supper that evening, when Dick Sticker and his father arrived at the camp.

Mr. Sticker brought his tools with him and the necessary glass, and after a few words with the caravanners, set to work on his task.

Sticker joined the caravanners at the camp-fire, and then Jimmy Silver broached the subject of cricket.

"You're short of men for your game to-morrow?" he began.

"Yes. It's rotten!" said Sticker, ruefully. "What I'm afraid of is that that crowd will gey us. I'd give a week's wages to dish them!"

"Would you care to play us?"

"You!" ejaculated Sticker.

"Us!" said Jimmy Silver. "We're pretty keen cricketers at Rookwood, and I'm skipper of the junior eleven. We can play. If you'd care for us as recruits, we'll stay here over to-morrow. Don't mind saying so, though. It's just as you like."

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"THE UNWELCOME GUEST!" ANOTHER GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

Sticker looked at him curiously.

"I'd be glad," he said. "I don't know what your cricket's like, but it must be a bit above our form, anyhow. But—but—" He hesitated.

"Out with it!" said Jimmy, with a smile. "If you'd rather play your village chaps, I understand. No bones broken."

"It isn't that. I don't quite know how I should get an eleven together, even playing duds. But we're a team of village working lads, and you fellows belong to a public school. You'd be rather out of your element. I don't know whether you've thought of that."

"My dear chap, what difference does that make?" said Jimmy Silver. "Don't put us down as being silly chumps like Smythe."

Sticker smiled.

"Well, if you'd care to play, I'll be jolly glad to have you," he said cheerily. "Smythe couldn't object. I can play anybody I like in my team. If you really mean it, Silver—"

"Of course!"

"Then it's a go!" said Sticker, his ruddy face brightening. "I'll be jolly glad, and so will the fellows when I tell them. It'll save me no end of trouble. I should have had to put in two or three kids of twelve; and we should have looked a lot of duffers if

Jimmy Silver & Co. chuckled a good deal over the prospect of a cricket revenge.

And when, returning to camp, they found Tubby Mullin scoffing the last tin of pineapple, they magnanimously forgave him in consideration of the excellent idea he had suggested.

**THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
A Surprise for the Nuts.**

DOLPHUS SMYTHE looked at his big gold watch.

"May as well be getting along," he remarked. "Awful shame to drag you fellows out so soon after lunch. But we agreed to have the stumps pitched at two, and it's past two now. The weird team we're playin' can't play in the mornin'. Workin' or farmin', or somethin' or other."

"Queer lot of beggars!" said Topham. "Yaas. Really I ought to apologise to you men for lettin' you in for a match with that lot," said Smythe. "But I thought it was kindness to them. And it's one way of killin' time, too."

"Oh, we don't mind!" said Howard liberally.

"No harm done," agreed Tracy.

Adolphus & Co. in their natty cricketing things, looked quite cheery and very elegant as they started for the ground.



RUCTIONS AT DEEPDEN LODGE!—Jimmy Silver & Co. collared the plump Plummer and put him down on the lawn with a crash that completely winded him. "Yaroooop!" spluttered the unfortunate Plummer. "Turn them out!" shrieked Colonel Smythe. (See Chapter 3.)

Smythe mopped us up in one innings. All four of you going to play?"

"If you'll have us—rather!"

"Oh, I'll have you fast enough!" said Sticker, laughing.

"You'll have to lend us bats," said Jimmy Silver.

"That's easily done!"

"Then it's a go!" said Jimmy Silver.

"When do we play, and where?"

"The pitch is in that meadow where they wouldn't let you camp," said Sticker. "It's an afternoon match. We can't get off in the morning, even on Saturdays. Stumps are pitched at two."

"Right-ho!"

"We shall pass this way going there," added Sticker. "We'll call for you, if you like, about half past one."

"We'll be ready."

There was great satisfaction on all sides when that arrangement was made.

Dick Sticker was evidently gratified.

The juniors chatted cheerily until Mr. Sticker had finished his work at the caravan window, and then they walked home as far as the village with Dick and his father.

They returned to camp in great spirits.

A dash of cricket was very welcome, by way of variety, on a caravanning tour, but still more welcome was the prospect of dishing the superb Adolphus and his nutty crowd.

If cricket had consisted wholly in appearances, no doubt Adolphus & Co. would have beaten the M.C.C.

As it didn't, it was doubtful if Adolphus & Co. would beat even the Deepden village lads at the great summer game.

But they were full of airy confidence as they sauntered along, with Plummer in attendance laden with bats.

Dick Sticker and his men were waiting at the tent when the nuts arrived.

There were over a dozen fellows in all with Adolphus. The nut of Rookwood was entertaining quite a large party at the Lodge.

Eleven of them, including the great Adolphus himself, were in flannels.

Dick Sticker looked rather grimly at them as they came up, for it was past the time arranged for pitching stumps.

"Here we are, Sticker," said Smythe graciously.

"We've been waiting half an hour!" said Sticker, rather gruffly.

"By gad! Have you?"

"Yes."

"Then we'd better get goin'," said Smythe calmly.

"Got all your men here?" asked Tracy, looking round.

"Oh, yes!" answered Dick Sticker. "Some

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in the tent. They're not all Deepden chaps. Some of my men are away, you know, and I've taken in four chaps who don't usually play with my club."

"Yaas, really?" said Smythe, with a plentiful lack of interest.

"Here they are," added Sticker, as the Fistical Four came out of the tent. "You know them, I believe. Schooffellows of yours."

Adolphus Smythe jumped.

He blinked at Jimmy Silver & Co.

"By gad! You fellows again!" he exclaimed. "What are you doin' here?"

"Cricketing," answered Jimmy Silver.

"You're not playing for Sticker?"

"You've hit it!"

"Oh, gad!"

The nuts of Rookwood stared at Jimmy Silver & Co., not by any means pleased.

The rest of Smythe's party, who did not know the Fistical Four, were quite indifferent.

"Look here, Smythe, we're not playin' those fellows!" muttered Tracy.

Smythe hesitated.

He had no grounds for raising any objection to Dick Sticker's recruits, of course, and as Sticker had no one on the ground to take their place, raising an objection meant the match falling through.

"Can't withdraw now, Tracy," he answered, in the same tone. "We don't want to scratch the match, after takin' the trouble of comin' here. Besides, I've got an idea. Those four can play a fair game, but they've got seven duds along with them, and we shall beat them easily enough. Rather amusin' to tell the fellows at Rookwood that we beat Jimmy Silver at cricket—what?"

Tracy nodded.

"Somethin' in that," he agreed.

"We're ready, if you fellows are," said Sticker pointedly.

"Yaas, we're ready."

The two skippers tossed for choice of innings, and it fell to Smythe & Co. to bat.

The villagers went into the field.

Dick Sticker had compared notes with the Fistical Four, and he kindly arranged the field to their liking.

He had not seen them play yet, but he was quite able to see that they were valuable recruits, and that their form was likely to be far above that of his own men.

His own men were keen enough, but want of leisure for practice, naturally, had kept them back.

Adolphus opened the innings with Tracy.

The two nuts of Rookwood strolled to the wickets, and Sticker himself bowled the first over.

Sticker was a good bat, but at bowling he was not so good, though in that he was the best of the bunch.

Smythe, poor bat as he was, was equal to the bowling, and he knocked it all over the field.

The over gave the nuts six runs, and the waiting batsmen, looking on, grinned at one another.

Had the nuts been playing only the villagers, the easy victory that Smythe desired would doubtless have been a foregone conclusion.

It was only the presence of the Fistical Four that made the result doubtful.

Jimmy Silver met Sticker's eyes as the field crossed over.

Sticker tossed him the ball.

Jimmy Silver went on to bowl against Tracy.

Allan Tracy looked rather thoughtful as he found himself facing the champion junior bowler of Rookwood.

He was very careful indeed with that ball, which Jimmy Silver delivered in a careless-looking way.

But Tracy's care was wasted. His leg-stump wet out of the ground, his bat missing the ball by a yard.

"How's that?" called out Jimmy Silver. The umpire grinned.

"Out!"

Tracy gave Jimmy a dark look as he carried out his bat.

Howard came in next.

Howard stayed exactly long enough to score a duck's egg.

Townsend was next man in, and Towny earned a big round nought for himself, and there was a cheer from the field for the bowler.

"The hat-trick!" grinned Lovell.

"That's bowling, if you like!" said Sticker.

"Jimmy isn't finished yet, my infant! I fancy this is going to be the double hat-trick," answered Lovell.

Lovell knew his chum's bowling, and the prophecy was a safe one to risk.

Topham came in next, and was dismissed without making a run.

Then two more of Smythe's nutty friends followed him, and went bootless home.

It was the double hat-trick, and not a single run had been taken for the over.

The nutty batsmen looked blue as they gathered at the tent.

Adolphus Smythe looked blue at his wicket.

This was the easy victory he had been mapping out!

Apparently, he would not be able to tell the fellows at Rookwood, next term, how he had beaten Jimmy Silver at cricket in the vacation.

Dick Sticker and his friends were grinning. They had not expected their new recruits to turn out like this.

One of the villagers bowled the next over, and Smythe scored three before he was caught out by Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Seven down for nine!" murmured Raby.

"Ye gods!"

Next man in was caught out by Newcome

after taking two runs. It was eight down for eleven.

Then Jimmy Silver went on to bowl again. Two wickets in succession fell to his bowling, and there would have been three if the laws of cricket had allowed it.

The "not out" batsman was not out for the excellent reason that he did not receive a ball to put him out.

Dick Sticker clapped Jimmy on the back, with a loud chuckle.

"You can bowl!" he said. "All down for eleven! Did you ever?"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Quite a game, isn't it?" he said.

"Your schooffellow doesn't seem to be enjoying it."

"Well, no; this isn't the cricket Smythe was looking for."

Adolphus Smythe was, as a matter of fact, looking daggers.

The procession to and from the wickets was so funny that even Smythe could see the comic side of it.

He would have been very glad, just then, to lay his handsome and expensive bat round Jimmy Silver.

"Looks like a win, I don't think!" grunted Tracy.

"Never mind! We'll beat 'em bowling!" said Adolphus. "You chaps know how I bowl!"

This was apparently meant to be reassuring; but Smythe's friends did not look reassured, doubtless because they did know how Adolphus bowled.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Alas for Adolphus!

"WILL you open the innings, Silver?" Jimmy shook his head.

"Put us last on the list," he said.

"Just as you like."

Dick Sticker and one of his comrades went out to open the innings, the nutty cricketers going into the field.

The first innings had been finished with unexpected rapidity.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stood looking on from the tent, while Adolphus Smythe prepared in a leisurely way to bowl the first over.

"Why didn't you let us go on first, Jimmy, and put the silly asses out of their misery?" asked Lovell.

"We didn't come here to bag all the lime-light, old chap," answered Jimmy Silver.

"We should have knocked up enough runs to declare on. Let the village chaps have their game."

"Yes, I didn't think of that," admitted Arthur Edward.

"Trust your Uncle James to think for you," said Jimmy Silver benignantly. "These chaps are enjoying seeing Smythe taken down a peg, but they came here to play cricket, not wholly for an entertainment."

Which was really thoughtful of Uncle James!

Dick Sticker was quite equal to Smythe's bowling, and he proceeded to make the running.

But as over succeeded over Smythe & Co. took wickets, and they looked more hopeful.

Sticker was out at last for fifteen runs on his own, and by that time the village team were down for thirty.

Only the Fistical Four remained to go to the wickets.

Dick handed his bat to Jimmy Silver.

"Man in," he said.

"Right you are!"

There was a villager at the other end when Jimmy came on the crease, and he had the bowling.

He fell to a catch by Tracy, and the score stood at seven down for thirty.

Arthur Edward Lovell joined Jimmy Silver at the wickets.

Lovell received the rest of the over, and made hay of it. Four runs rewarded his efforts.

Then the field crossed over, and Jimmy Silver had the bowling.

Jimmy Silver's batting was an eye-opener to the Deepden crowd.

Jimmy was not the best bat in the Rookwood Fourth by any means. Bowling was his strong point, and Erroll and Mornington were rather better at the wickets.

But his batting was miles above the heads of Smythe & Co.

Jimmy Silver knocked the ball all over the field and the amount of leather-

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THE POPULAR—No. 183.

NEXT TUESDAY! **"THE UNWELCOME GUEST!"** ANOTHER GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS. By OWEN CONQUEST.

hunting the nuts had to do left them quite winded and breathless.

Smythe & Co. were looking decidedly ill-tempered by this time.

The runs piled up between Jimmy Silver and Arthur Edward Lovell, while Raby and Newcome and Sticker & Co. grinned from the tent.

Raby and Newcome were not likely to be wanted. But they did not mind.

They had come there to see Smythe & Co. dished, and they were seeing it, and that was enough for them.

Jimmy Silver could have knocked up a century quite easily against the nutty bowling; but Uncle James was considerate, and he did not want to keep the Deepden fellows standing about watching him enjoying himself.

When the score was at a hundred for the innings he called out to Sticker:

"What price declaring, Sticker?"

Dick nodded at once.

"I was thinking so, but I wouldn't stop you!" he called back.

"Go it, then!"

There was a general grin round the field as the captain of the Rookwood Fourth went on to bowl. The fieldsmen knew what to expect, and they were not disappointed.

Jimmy Silver put his very best into that over, but he need hardly have taken the trouble.

Adolphus & Co. could not stand against his bowling when they were fresh, and now they were very far from fresh.

Smythe, with a desperate sort of feeling, stood very much on his guard against the first ball, determined to do or die.

But it booted not, as the poets say. The first ball whipped out his middle stump, leaving his wicket with a toothless look.

"How's that?" cooed Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Adolphus Smythe, with feelings too deep for words, tramped back to the tent. He was fed up with that game.

A happy procession to the wicket followed. After Adolphus five batsmen came and went, and, without a single run being taken, they walked off again.

runs, I think. They'll be entertained when you tell them about this at Rookwood."

Smythe gritted his teeth.

"I've a jolly good mind—" he began, his hand closing on the cane handle of his bat.

Jimmy Silver smiled at him.

"You've a jolly good mind—to-what?" he asked sweetly.

"Nothin'!" mumbled Adolphus. And the nutty eleven took an inglorious departure, leaving the victors in that peculiar match chortling in great spirits.

"I say, Silver, I'm jolly obliged to you fellows for helping us out," said Dick Sticker, laughing. "I didn't know you were in such form. You've won the match for us."

"Well, I think we've helped a little," said Jimmy Silver, with a smile. "It's closed rather early. Will you chaps come along to the caravan and join us at tea? We'd like you to."

"You bet!" said Dick cheerily.

Tubby Muffin was taking a nap—a very long nap—in the grass by the caravan when Jimmy Silver & Co. arrived with their guests.

Tubby had looked on at the beginning of

Across Manchuria Behind An English Locomotive!

BY A RAILWAY EXPERT. All About the Famous Engine Which Forms the Subject of Our Grand Free Plate.

AS a result of the Russian-Japanese war, in the early years of this century, the Russians gave up to the Japanese an important railway system. The line runs from Darien (Dalny), on the coast of the Yellow Sea, across Manchuria to Ching-Chun, a distance of 437 miles—about the distance from London to Perth.

There were also the Port Arthur branch, 39 miles long, and various other branches, making a total of about 450 miles. The railway had been intimately connected with the great Russian-Trans-Siberian Railway system, and was laid on the national gauge of Russia, which is 5 ft. As the Russian Army retreated towards Siberia, the rolling-stock was taken homeward in the retreat, the rails were taken up, and also taken towards Russia in the last train. The Japanese advance followed quickly upon the Russian retreat, and the Japs laid down a new railway on the course of the torn-up Russian line. The Japanese railway was, however, laid to the Japanese national gauge (3 ft. 6 ins.), and locomotives and other rolling-stock were brought over the sea from Japan to work the railway in conquered South Manchuria.

When the Russians and Japanese made peace, the railway passed over to the latter.

Although the railways in Japan are State-owned, the Japanese Government did not want to be encumbered with a railway system in South Manchuria, so a company

was formed to acquire the railway. Half the capital was to be allotted to the Japanese Government for the line.

Only Japanese and Chinese were allowed to subscribe the other half of the capital, which was required for the rolling-stock and improvement of the line. As the line was expected to carry heavy traffic, it was decided to again alter the gauge. This time the English gauge of 4 ft. 8½ ins. was chosen. This prevented the railway being of any great use to Russia, should it, during the fortunes of a possible later war, again fall to them.

The traffic was carried on during the conversion of the gauge without interruption. The whole line was single, but the Japs, at the same time as they altered the gauge, doubled an important section of the main line 283 miles in length, between the sea terminus at Darien and Suchiatun, a few miles east of Mukden, where the Imperial Railways of North China join the South Manchuria Railway. The Japanese and Chinese were not very anxious to subscribe the capital necessary for improving the railway and providing the new locomotives and rolling-stock necessitated by the adoption of the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge, so after all, London was applied to for the capital, and £8,000,000 were subscribed in this country, the interest being guaranteed by the Japanese Government. It thus came about that English locomotives, etc., were supplied. Various

additions to the mileage have been made, but during the war little was done on the railway; since that, however, things have again gone ahead, and we illustrate with this issue of the POPULAR one of the latest locomotives constructed for the South Manchuria Railway.

It will be observed that it is a fine, powerful 2-cylinder engine of the 4-6-0 wheel arrangement.

The Japanese were anxious that the rail route between Europe and the Far East should be over the South Manchuria Railway, so Pullman Expresses were run between Darien and the Siberian Railway system at Ching-Chun, where a change was made into the Russian-Siberian trains which ran between Moscow and the coast of Vladivostok.

The Japanese also ran steamers between Darien and Japan, and every endeavour was made to influence traffic over this route from Europe to Japan, etc. The present state of Russia had upset the through arrangements, but the South Manchuria Railway itself is working as well as ever. The chief directors are appointed by the Japanese Government, so that it is virtually a Japanese Government concern; all the officials, also, are Japanese—but natives are employed in the lower positions. There are now over 700 miles of railway, about 220 locomotives, 400 passenger carriages, and 2,000 goods wagons owned by the South Manchuria Railway, all being of modern design.

Smythe & Co. were glad when Sticker declared for the hundred runs.

Perhaps Adolphus thought that that gave him a slight chance of pulling the game out of the fire; and, at all events, it gave him a rest, of which he was sorely in need.

With the scores eleven and a hundred respectively on the first innings, the result of the match did not seem in much doubt.

There was a long pause before Adolphus & Co. opened their second innings.

They simply could not begin for a while. They wanted a long rest, and they took it. But their opponents did not mind; the match was going unexpectedly rapidly, and there was plenty of time on their hands.

Adolphus and Howard went to the wickets at last.

Dick Sticker tossed the ball to Jimmy.

"Wouldn't your fellows rather have a bit of a game first?" asked Jimmy, with a laugh.

"We want to watch you," answered Sticker. "Cricket like this doesn't often come our way, you know. Go in and scalp them."

"Right you are!" said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

Then the field crossed over, chortling.

As if inspired by the example of Jimmy, Dick Sticker took a wicket with his first ball.

On the second there was a catch by Newcome in the field.

On the third there was a smart return by Lovell which ran out an unhappy batsman making a desperate attempt at a run.

On the fourth there seemed a chance of keeping the innings alive, at least, till Jimmy Silver's hand was seen to shoot up, and a snack announced that the ball was in his palm.

"Oh, gad!" murmured Smythe feebly.

"Oh, my hat!" mumbled Tracy. "Hang the rotters! You were a silly fool to play 'em, Smythe!"

"All down for nix!" chortled Arthur Edward Lovell. "Did you fellows ever see a game like this?"

"Never!" grinned Raby.

"Hardly ever!" chortled Newcome.

"Hard cheese, Smythe, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver cheerily. "Lemme see, Deepden wins by an innings and eighty-nine

the cricket match, but had soon returned to camp for an extra meal.

Jimmy Silver awoke him by gently jamming a boot into his fat ribs, and Tubby sat up with a yell.

"Yow-ow!"

"Tea-time!" said Jimmy Silver. "Buckle to, Tubby! We've got guests. Kill the fatted calf!"

And there was a plentiful repast at the caravan camp, and enough and to spare for the numerous guests of the caravanners.

Jimmy Silver turned in that night in a very satisfied mood.

Bright and early in the morning Robinson Crusoe was harnessed, and the caravanners started on their way once more.

Their encounter with the nuts of Rookwood had not begun agreeably, but there was no doubt that the honours rested with the caravan cricketers.

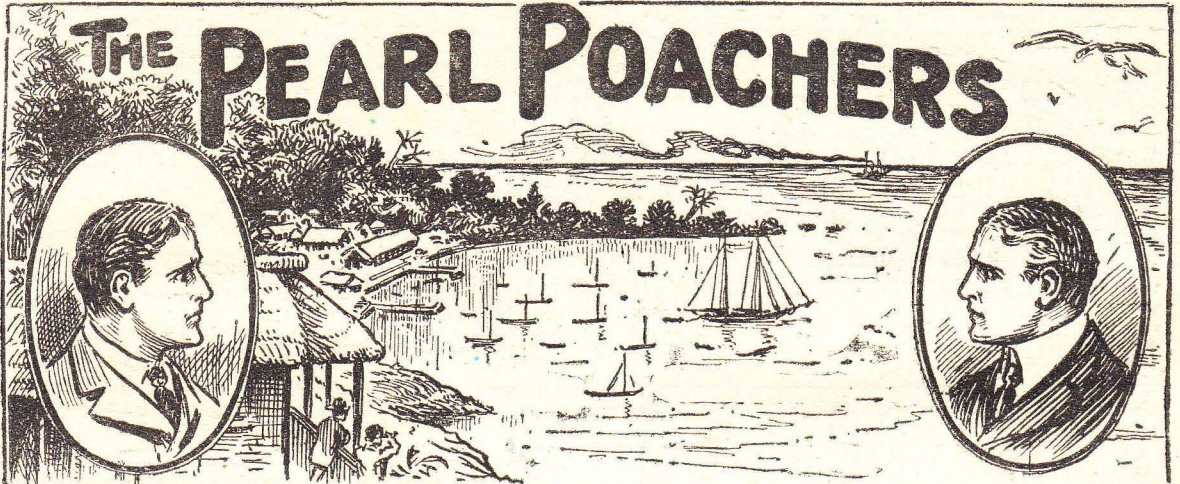
THE END.

(Another grand long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, entitled "The Unwelcome Guest!" in next week's issue.)

THE POPULAR—No. 183.

NEXT TUESDAY! "THE UNWELCOME GUEST!" ANOTHER GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS. BY OWEN CONQUEST.

THE STORY OF A DARING IMPERSONATION AND A BATTLE OF WITS BETWEEN FERRERS LORD AND THE MYSTERIOUS PEARL RAIDER!



A Grand New Serial, introducing Ferrers Lord, the Millionaire Adventurer, Ching Lung & Co., and the Daring Pearl Raider, Harper Blaise, the Terror of the South Seas.

By **SIDNEY DREW,**
(Author of "Gan Waga's Island.")

INTRODUCTION.

A meeting between Bruce Donelan and Harper Blaise, the mysterious pearl raider takes place in the manager's bungalow on Ferrers Lord's pearling station the day before the arrival of the millionaire. Donelan, the manager of the station is struck by the amazing resemblance between Ferrers Lord and Blaise, and he unfolds a daring scheme for raiding the strong-room on board the Lord of the Deep. Blaise is to impersonate Ferrers Lord, get away in the yacht, then after taking the thousands of pounds of pearls and gold from her, sink the yacht in the lagoon. The plan is successful. Ferrers Lord is kidnapped; then Blaise sets sail on the Lord of the Deep.

On board the yacht Harper Blaise comes to the conclusion that Rupert Thurston is a dangerous man, so he drugs him one day at dinner, and Thurston is laid up on the sick-list, in his cabin, unable to move.

Soon after Ferrers Lord's yacht leaves the station Ching Lung arrives, with Hal Honour and Gan Waga, in the prince's yacht. They hear of Donelan's daring scheme from Jimmy, the black. The trio questions the pearling station manager to find out if the story is true. Donelan is furious, and tells them the black is lying.

(Now read on.)

THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Donelan Refuses to Speak.

"THAT'S niggers all over!" said Donelan. "They're thinking of the hold-up, when those swine collared me and cleared out the pearls. They—"

Donelan paused abruptly. Honour had risen lazily, as if sitting in the low chair had cramped him, and was stretching himself.

"Mr. Donelan," said Ching Lung, "asking questions seems only a waste of time. Mr. Honour and myself have very strong suspicions that you have not been playing the game. We are quite convinced that you had white visitors—and very disreputable visitors at that. We believe that your story of the raid was a lie, and that you were in league with the pearl-raiders. In brief, Mr. Donelan, our opinion of you is that you are a dirty rogue and a black-hearted traitor!"

The blood rushed into Donelan's bronzed face. His fists clenched, and then his right hand went to the knife in his belt. Hal Honour gripped him by the shoulder.

"Sit down," he said, and forced Donelan into a chair.

Then Donelan understood. Two men were on the veranda—Jimmy, the black, with his shock of hair and staring yellow eyes, and Barry O'Rooney. It was not the shrinking, terrified Jimmy of an hour or two ago. He grinned defiantly at Donelan, who would have leapt at him and strangled him, except for the heavy hand on his shoulder. Ching Lung turned to the black.

"Show, Jimmy," he said.
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The black backed to the veranda, and then came forward and nodded to Donelan. Then, pointing to the doorway at the back, he lay down and pretended to sleep. Rising again, he pointed to the side of the table.

"Big boss fella, good fella there," he said. "Donelan there. Bad fella all so like good boss here."

Jimmy stepped into the little bed-room, and then put out his head.

"Good boss fella not watch," he jabbered on. "Good boss fella, big boss fella, he stoop down. Out jump bad fella, and do like so."

"Sthop him, bedad!" roared Barry O'Rooney.

There was no time. Where Jimmy had obtained the stick, no one could tell. Before a hand could be raised to stop him, the black had bounded forward and brought down the stick with a thud on Donelan's head. Donelan rolled off the chair and lay still. Jimmy had avenged some of his wrongs.

* * *

Now that the truth was out, Ching Lung felt almost stunned. He and Hal Honour had taken the law into their own hands, and made a prisoner of Donelan. The prisoner had a very sore head. At first he had blustered and raved and threatened; but Donelan was no fool, and he soon discovered the futility of threats and ravings. He was getting over his headache when he heard the key turn in the lock, and the door opened to admit Ching Lung.

"Enter the chief-gaoler!" said Donelan. "I know what you want, Chinky, but you've come on a fool's errand. Are you still as mad as ever?"

"Probably," said Ching Lung. "We don't always improve as we get older, Donelan. Are you going to listen to reason, and tell me where Mr. Ferrers Lord is?"

"Look here, my little yellow friend," said Donelan, "it's impossible for you to talk reason, and if I talked it you're too crazy to understand it. This thing is worse than craziness—it's rank lunacy! There's no other word for it. You're as mad as a hatter, and you've infected your pal Honour with the same disease. You're raving! At the word of a maggoty-brained nigger you accuse me of things that no child would believe from his own mother. I'm in league with these pearl-poachers, you say, and, instead of handing over Lord's bunch of pearls to them, I've gone shares!"

"That is what I think," said Ching Lung. Bruce Donelan put his hand to his bandaged head. He was going to say something offensive about Ching Lung's race and colour, but changed his mind.

"That's the only thing in the whole lunatic's yarn that might be possible, or even probable," he said. "I'm a poor man, but I'm not an idiot. If a chap poked a gun at me, and told me to stand and deliver my boss' goods, I reckon I'd part up. If he told me I could keep half, and cry bluff to a boss I'd never seen or cared a rap for, the chances are I might go halves and cry a bluff later, if it looked a safe one, for I'm not bragging I'm honest. You follow me—eh?"

Ching Lung nodded.

"Well, that's all you've got, and that's where you stop," went on Donelan. "That might have happened; but it didn't happen. It was a hold-up, and the goods were lifted from me at pistol's-point. After that you go screaming mad. Here on this pestiferous, scorched, lonely reef, you figure it that I can dig up a white man so like Ferrers Lord that Lord's own mother or wife—if he's got one—couldn't tell the difference between them or t'other from which. Isn't that lunacy?"

"I admit that it has every appearance of it, Donelan," said the prince truthfully. "I quite agree with you that it seems almost incredible."

"In any civilised community the man who sprung such a yarn would be put in his proper place, and that's an asylum," said the prisoner.

"I'm not relying on Jimmy altogether," said Ching Lung. "Other blacks in the village have told me that white men visited you by boat, and that they came from the vessel that hides among the islands."

"Of course they'd tell you that!" said Bruce Donelan, with contempt. "They'd tell you exactly what you wanted them to tell you.

Besides, they hate me, because you can take it from me that I don't handle such lazy dirt with kid gloves when I've got a whip handy or can use my boot. By thunder, you tire me! Here on the reef we don't take a nigger's evidence—not on oath. You could bring a thousand of them, all swearing the same tale, and no magistrate would believe them. And that's that. And now Mr. Ching Lung—or Prince Ching Lung—we'll change this topic. I'll just add that I don't know where Ferrers Lord is, or how he got there, and I don't care a tinker's cuss, either! And now what about me?"

As he spoke, Donelan stood up, and put a match to the half-smoked cigar that he had allowed to go out.

"What about you? That's rather a problem, Mr. Donelan," said the prince. "If you'd only speak out and tell the truth—"

"By thunder, I've had enough of that rot and crazy drivel, and I'm fed to the teeth with it!" snarled Bruce Donelan. "I don't know what crazy fancy you fly, but I'm a Britisher, and I fly the Union Jack! You're asking for carloads of trouble, and you'll get it. You, a durn yellow foreigner, have arrested a British subject on British soil, kidnapped me in my own house, shanghai'd me like I was a drunken sailor in some cock-eyed Chinese port. You'll squeal over this job before you've finished! You'll pay for this game through your snub nose! The British bulldog may have lost a bit of fur in the Great War, but I guess he didn't lose any of his teeth. If you've a grain of sanity left, you'll put me ashore, and scuttle out of this. All the same, I'll get you, however hard you scuttle! You can't run as fast as the wireless, sonny, and when you sight a British cruiser, and she asks you to stop, you can bet she'll be making a few gentle inquiries about Bruce Donelan, Esquire, and the cheerful little kidnapping stunt. And you'll come with her quiet as a lamb!"

Ching Lung smiled. "That's perfectly true, the latter portion of your remark," he said; "but it has not happened, nor is it likely to happen. I'm quite aware that the British Empire knows how to protect her subjects—better, perhaps, than any other country in the world. So the Lord of the Deep went back for more gold—eh?"

The question came quite unexpectedly—so unexpectedly that Donelan was taken completely off his guard, and it was a master-stroke, for he gave a slight start.

"You're at it again," he growled—"the same old drivel! How do I know where the Lord of the Deep went? Cut that foolery out!"

Ching Lung nodded to him, and went out, smiling.

As the lock clicked and Donelan heard the bolt shoot into its socket, he kicked the chair across the cabin.

"Gosh, we're beat!" he said madly. "Oh, you thundering, dough-brained ass! He's got me! The cunning, little yellow dog has got me—got me down and out! Of all the blundering, crazy fools! To be trapped like that! He was working up to it all the time, and I never guessed! To be led all up the garden by that jaundice-faced monkey, and never dream that he was leading me up the garden! Gosh! And then he fired the bullet into me, and knocked me dead!"

Ching Lung's parting smile had told him that he had betrayed himself—that by giving that one slight start of surprise he had lost everything! The uncanny cleverness of it all almost astounded him, for it was uncanny. His lips would never have betrayed the truth, and yet with one unguarded movement he had betrayed all.

They were hoisting anchor. They would, of course, make for the island, and probably intercept the Lord of the Deep.

"She's got a gun," he thought. "Harper Blaise is a fighter."

The thought that the Lord of the Deep was armed did not afford Bruce Donelan any great satisfaction on further consideration. Her officers and crew were probably well acquainted with Prince Ching Lung's yacht, and would not fire on her even at Harper Blaise's bidding. Even if they did, which was almost unbelievable, and she went down, Donelan himself would go down with her.

The Chinese sentry outside the door could hear the prisoner stamping up and down the cabin as far as his chains would allow him, and at last he put his yellow face round the door, and Donelan snatched up a book and hurried it at him.

Jimmy, the black, had recommended a pilot. Unfortunately, his knowledge of the

English language was almost as scanty as Jimmy's, and, as he knew nothing at all about steam steering-gear, he was useless at the wheel. He had a name that it was almost impossible to pronounce, so O'Rooney called him "Daisy."

On the deck, as the yacht swung round and headed slowly away from the reef, Ching Lung found Harold Honour, the engineer.

"It's as we suspected, Hal," said the prince. "I got the beast off his guard, and then jumped in unexpectedly, and asked him if the Lord of the Deep had gone back for more gold. That did it. He just gave a little start, but it satisfied me. If it hadn't, the bang I heard when I got outside would have satisfied me, for it sounded as if he had started to chuck the furniture about. He knows I caught him, and I'll bet he's savage enough to cut his own throat!"

"Good!" said Hal Honour, nodding.

"If you call it good, I wonder what you'd call bad, Hal?" said Ching Lung. "I think it's rotten! The Chief—well, I'll be hanged!"

"Possibly!" answered the engineer dryly. "Good-bye!"

The prince had made a sudden dash across the deck. He pulled up, and came back at a much slower pace.

"I was going to be a bit too quick," he said—"going to play what Gan Waga would call the giddy goat. My notion was to go and tackle Donelan at once, but I fancy I'd better give him time to simmer down. Now that the game is up with him, and he knows we're dead on the track of things or a very important part of them, I don't see why he shouldn't tell us where they've marooned the Chief. I'm still sticking to it that he is marooned, not dead."

"Good! But does he know?"

The prince shrugged his shoulders. It was what he hoped to find out. He gave Donelan an hour in which to compose his feelings, and then went below, and found the prisoner smoking a cigar.

"What do you want now? Can't you leave me in peace?"

"Your company fascinates me so much that I absolutely had to come back," said Ching Lung; "and you converse so intelligently and politely that it's a pleasure to listen to you! Now I'll tell you a few things. If your friend the impersonator pulls off his big bluff, we're going to pull him off without blissing once. It was a great scheme, Donelan—big enough to make everybody gasp. If it was yours, I tell you honestly I can't help admiring you for it in a sneaking sort of way, and your partner who is doing the impersonating must be a walking wonder! A bit awkward for you I happened to turn up—eh?"

"So you seem to be telling me," said Donelan, with a snarl.

"You needn't growl at me," said the prince cheerfully. "We've got you, and snarling is as useless as wriggling. Where's Mr. Ferrers Lord?"

"Still at it," said Donelan. "Just as crazy as ever! Are you trying that stunt of the American police on me—the third degree? Are you trying to worry the life out of me asking the same old silly question, till I'm worn out, and admit something that never happened? By thunder, you may as well sling it out!"

"But you forget that you told me the Lord of the Deep had gone back to the island to fetch more gold," said Ching Lung.

"Liar—shameless liar!" said Donelan, his eyes blazing. "I told you nothing! I know nothing, so how could I tell you? You're a bunch of lies!"

"If I could only get you in a reasonable frame of mind we might do some business," said Ching Lung. "Your partner is settled, anyway, Donelan. You were talking about the British Empire just now, and what not. You also mentioned wireless and British cruisers. I have wireless, and very useful stuff it is. Now, suppose I wireless a message to the Lord of the Deep that your partner is an impostor, and must be clapped in irons? How's that for telling?"

Donelan checked a lurking grin.



A PRISONER ON THE YACHT!—The door of the cabin in which Donelan was imprisoned opened to admit Ching Lung. "Enter the chief gaoler," said Donelan. "I know what you want, but you've come on a fool's errand. You will never make me speak!" (See Chapter 14.)

"Come, my lad, it's no use," said Ching Lung; "I'm a lot too good for you! I know jolly well that if your partner had the nerve to tackle what must be one of the biggest bluffs in history, he'll look after the yacht's wireless all right. I'm not going to waste coal and time on chasing the Lord of the Deep all the way to Gan Wagga's island. I'll find a British cruiser, and ask her to do that little job for me. How will that suit you? Do you like the prospect?"

Bruce Donelan watched through half-closed eyes.

"It won't wash!" he said. "By thunder, for a Chink, you're smart! You can wireless the whole darn British Navy, but Harper Blaise would bluff the lot, from the Lord High Admiral to the cabin-brats, that he was Ferrers Lord, and that he was boss of the yacht! What do you want now?"

"It seems rather a pity you didn't own up, for a start," said Ching Lung, lighting a cigarette. "What a lot of breath it would have saved, and what a lot of lies! So Harper Blaise, the great impersonator is, I take it, the boss of the pearl-poachers and the gentleman who runs this ghost-ship round the islands?"

"So you're telling me!" growled Donelan. "We seem to have come a bit unstuck somewhere. How do I go if I tell you where Ferrers Lord is?"

"You've got me guessing," said Ching Lung, for this was an awkward question. "I only wish I could inform you. You see, Donelan, I don't know."

"You mean that Ferrers Lord himself will have to settle that—that you're not sure that any promise you made me would hold good?" asked Bruce Donelan.

"Absolutely!" said Ching Lung. "Then you may go to Jericho, for I'm done!" said the prisoner. "If I can't make safe terms, you can wipe me out of it, for I've finished!"

This was just the finish Ching Lung had been afraid of and had been trying to evade. It was impossible for him to pledge the millionaire to anything. Though he was one of Ferrers Lord's greatest friends, he felt that he could make no terms. The crime had been against the millionaire. It was an unpleasant dilemma, and the prince regretted it, and was helpless. For another quarter of an hour he argued with Donelan, almost pleaded with him, but Donelan was adamant, so, finally, Ching Lung left him in despair, and went on deck.

THE FIFTEEN CHAPTER.
The Ghost Ship.

CHING LUNG had plenty to think about. He was confident that Ferrers Lord was not dead—only a prisoner or marooned on one of the islands. He had no chart. These waters, swarming with atolls and coral reefs, were as dangerous as any in the world. To go poking about amongst them was to take big risks, and he had not such a liberal supply of coal that he could afford to waste

any until he had replenished his bunkers. He had a talk with Barry O'Rooney on the bridge. Barry, who never seemed to take life very seriously, was impressed for once.

"The merry old days of thumb-screws being over, Oi don't know how we can make the spalpeen talk av he manes to kape quiet," he said. "Bedad, ut's an amazing sort of business intirely. Oi can't believe they've took the Chafe far away, for who should they?"

"There's reason in that," said Ching Lung. "I don't suppose they have taken him far away. Any of these islands would do, but which one?"

"Faith, there's a moighty good sprinkling of them, sor, so we can only kape our oes open. The Chafe will be watching, too, ready to put up a smoke or floy a signal. And, wid all respect, Oi can hardly swallow ut yet. Oi can't gulp ut down. Ut sticks in my throat loike a lump."

"It does take some swallowing," said Ching Lung. "I'm almost expecting myself to wake up suddenly and find I've been dreaming it. I wish I could."

"Sure, ut's impossible, sor," said Barry O'Rooney. "The silly old thing can't be done. There's Maddock and there's Tom Prout. Oi wouldn't say ut so they could hear, but they're not a couple of fools. Wouldn't they see through a mad swindle loike this in five minutes? Av course, av ut's really happening, and a chap is personating the Chafe, he'd kape to himself, and come in contact wid them two bloys as seldom as he could. But phwat about Mr. Thurston? He must come in contact wid Mr. Thurston unless he's shamming ill. He couldn't throw dust in Mr. Thurston's oies all this time even if he's as loike the Chafe as these two brass buttons on the sleeve of my coat."

"I've thought all that myself, Barry," said the prince, "and the more I think of it, the more absurd it seems. It's just one of those preposterous things that to a reasonable man could not happen. As you say, it's impossible. Nobody with ordinary common-sense would believe it, so, as I do believe it, I must be lacking in common-sense and intelligence. I can't help that. And what's the best thing to do?"

Barry lifted his telescope and took a steady look ahead.

"Bedad, Oi don't know," he said. "Av we go nosing and poking about those reefs, we'll crumple up the yacht. And phwat about the boat?"

"What boat?"
"Whoy, the boat belonging to these pearl robbers, sor," said Barry. "Oi've been talking to Jimmy. The ould chap says he saw her wance. You can't believe phwat Jimmy says, but according to him, she's the soize of an Atlantic liner, and as fast as a destroyer. He didn't take her wid him."

(You must not miss next week's grand long thrilling instalment of our wonderful serial of adventure in the South Seas.)

UNMASKED!

(Continued from page 10.)

"Yes, sir. Peter Todd bowled him out."
"I say, you fellows, I bowled him out, you know—"

"Where is he?" asked Mr. Quelch.
"He's bolted, sir. But the police are after him. I expect they've got him by this time," said Wharton.

"And he told you I was here?"
"No fear! He didn't stop to speak. He cleared out when his wig came off," said Wharton. "Smithy knew you were here. I don't know how he knew."

"I was suspicious of the man," said the Bounder calmly. "I'd been keeping an eye on him, sir, and I saw him come here last night. So when he was shown up to-day, of course I knew he had done something with you, so I guessed you were here."

"Thank you, Vernon-Smith! Thank you all, my dear boys!" said Mr. Quelch.

The juniors aided the exhausted Form-master from the crypt. When they emerged into the Close, there was a roar. All Greyfriars knew what had happened now, and the whole school gathered round Mr. Quelch as the juniors assisted him back to the School House. In the doorway the Head met him, in a state of flurry and excitement the fellows had never seen their reverend head-master in before. Someone had explained matters already to the Head, and he understood what had happened. He grasped the hand of the rescued Form-master warmly.

"Mr. Quelch! Thank Heaven you are safe!" he exclaimed. "This is a most—most extraordinary occurrence! I am amazed—astounded! Pray accept my arm to your room."

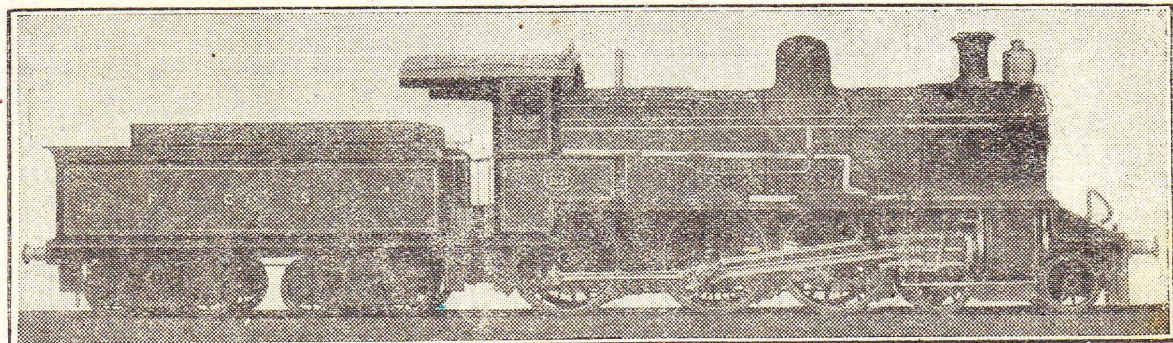
Two hours later Inspector Spott called upon the Head, in a state of great satisfaction, to report the arrest of the fugitive. After a hard chase and a desperate struggle Ulick Ferrers had been captured and taken to the police-station. The stolen thousand pounds had been found upon him, sewn up in his clothes.

It was a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch, who had been very much shaken by his terrible experience, was not able to resume his duties immediately, and he left the school for some time for his health. The Greyfriars fellows eagerly read the reports of Ferrers' trial, and no one was sorry to learn that he had been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. It was likely to be a long time before the Removites forgot their exciting experiences with the false Form-master.

THE END.

(There will be another magnificent long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., the famous chums of Greyfriars, entitled, "The Five Heroes!" in next week's grand number.)

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TUESDAY!

"THE PLACE OF HONOUR!"

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

**SOLUTIONS TO
"POPULAR PUZZLE
LETTER" COMPETITION!**

(Results were given last week.)

No. 1.

Greyfriars.

My dear Tom Merry.—We are thinking of winding up the football season with a splendid match in aid of the local hospitals. In the first match we should like to play your team, and then we intend asking Rookwood to be good enough to turn up. Bob Cherry suggested boxing, but Frank Nugent and Inky suggest football. Do you not think this a grand idea? Let me know if you can come over.—Yours sincerely,

HARRY WHARTON.

No. 2.

St. Jim's.

My dear Harry.—Topping wheeze of yours, old chap! We shall be jolly glad to come over, and we can further promise to give you a good hiding. We think it rather nice of you to squash Bob Cherry's idea of boxing—he might smash us! Gussy hereby sends you an offer to sing a tenor solo—also in aid of the hospital. But whether that means that he will fill up the place with paying patients—So-long, my boy.

TOM MERRY.

No. 3.

Greyfriars.

My dear Tommy.—Thanks for your letter. Needless to say, we are pleased to hear that you will come. The hospital authorities are no end delighted, too. There is no chance of our taking advantage of Gussy's offer. We want to help the hospitals—not ruin them! You needn't tell him so, of course, but we'd much rather have Monty Lowther's poor puns than Gussy's awful songs!—Yours

HARRY.

No. 4.

Greyfriars.

My dear Jimmy Silver.—We are having a topping series of three footer matches at Greyfriars, in aid of the local hospitals, and have already invited Tom Merry and his team over for a match. We hereby extend to you our greetings, and hope your crowd will give us a second game. We are prepared to put a ripping team into the field to meet yours. Will you reply as soon as possible?—Cheerily yours,

HARRY WHARTON.

No. 5.

Rookwood.

Dear Harry Wharton.—Uncle James has received your sporty letter, and it took him just five seconds to come to the conclusion that you're a jolly sort of ass who should be encouraged. Therefore, my merry men will come with me to Greyfriars, and wipe up the field with you! Pity we couldn't have tackled Tom Merry & Co. as well. We simply live to conquer!—Sincerely yours,

JIMMY SILVER.

No. 6.

Remove Form.

Dear Wingate.—I am arranging for football matches to be played between Greyfriars Remove and Rookwood, and Greyfriars Remove versus Tom Merry's team from St. Jim's. The idea is to raise funds for the local hospitals. We ask you, as Head of Games, to be good enough to referee the matches, and we invite you to explain the scheme to the chaps of the Sixth, so that they will hand over subscriptions. The games will be contested at Greyfriars.—Yours sincerely,

HARRY WHARTON.

No. 7.

Sixth Form.

Dear Wharton.—You are a good kid to get up those matches for the hospitals, and I shall be pleased to referee the games. You can reckon on a decent number of Sixth Form fellows turning up, and I suggest that you send some juniors round the ground, and let chaps throw contributions into a sheet held out for the purpose.—Yours sincerely,

GEORGE WINGATE.

No. 8.

Friardale Cottage Hospital.

My dear Master Wharton.—I have received your letter, and should like to mention that I consider your scheme a very noble one. Greyfriars School has always been willing to give help where it is most needed, and I think you could not have found a better cause. If I can aid you in any way I shall be only too pleased to do so. My cordial good wishes.—Yours sincerely,

ARNOLD TATEMAN.

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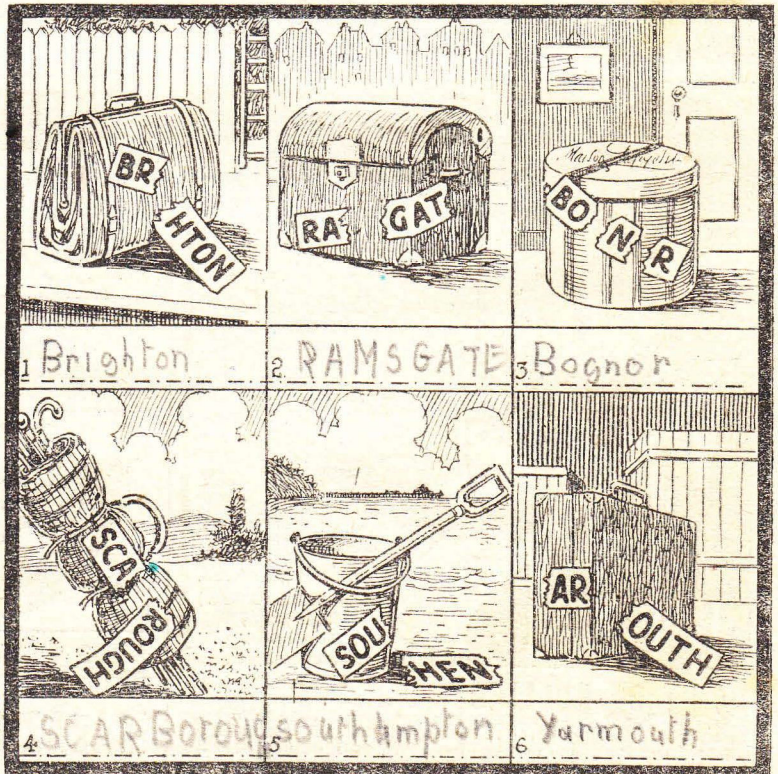
WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO. On this page you will find six picture-puzzles. Each one contains a label which a careless porter has damaged, and you are invited to write, in the space provided under the picture, the full name of the place originally on the label. For instance, No. 1 represents BRIGHTON, and the others are equally simple.

DO NOT SEND IN YOUR SOLUTIONS YET. There will be six sets in all, and when the sixth and last set appears you will be told when and where you are to send your sets.

The **FIRST PRIZE** of £10 will be awarded to the reader who succeeds in sending a set of solutions exactly the same, or nearest to, the set now in the Editor's possession. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit.

It must be distinctly understood that the Editor's decision is final in all matters concerning this contest, and entries will only be accepted on this condition.

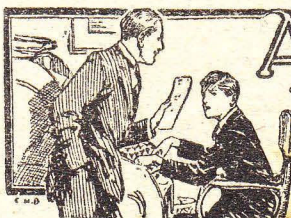
Employees of the proprietors of this journal are **NOT** eligible to compete.



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OUR COMPANION PAPERS.

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- "THE MAGNET" Every Monday.
- "THE POPULAR" Every Tuesday.
- "THE GEM" Every Wednesday.
- "CHUCKLES" Every Thursday.
- "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" Published Yearly.

HAVE YOU SEEN THEM ?

This week the famous group of periodicals known all over the world as the Companion Papers continue to give away magnificent FREE REAL PHOTOS to every reader. In the "Magnet" Library, which is on sale now, there is given away, absolutely FREE, a wonderful REAL ACTION PHOTO of Syd Puddefoot, English International and member of the Falkirk F.C. If you have not done so, go to your newsagent at once and buy a copy of our Monday Companion Paper before it is too late. The "Boys' Friend," also on sale now, contains a FREE REAL PHOTO of Dick Smith, one of the finest boxers of the day. In this issue of the POPULAR you will have received a Splendid COLOURED ENGINE PLATE of a Monster Locomotive of the South Manchuria Railway. In next week's issue there will be given away FREE a coloured engine plate of

a giant Express Locomotive of the famous Buenos Ayres and Great Southern Railway of the Argentine Republic. To-morrow, in the "Gem" Library, there will be TWO REAL PHOTOS Presented FREE to every reader, of George Wilson, of the Wednesday, and J. Fort, of Millwall. In next week's issue of the same paper you will find a magnificent FREE ACTION PHOTO of C. M. Buchan, of Sunderland and England.

OUR GRAND STORIES.

There is another splendid batch of stories in preparation for our next issue, which will appear at all newsagents next Tuesday morning. The first school story on the long list will be entitled

"THE FIVE HEROES!"

By Frank Richards, and will deal with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars School. In this story you will read how the Famous Five fearlessly face death in aiding a shipwrecked crew of seamen, in the bay of Pegg, during a terrible storm. This is, without doubt, one of the finest stories Frank Richards has given us, and I am sure it will meet with a cordial reception at the hands of my many reader-chums.

There will be a splendid long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, included in the programme, which will be entitled

"THE UNWELCOME GUEST!"

By Owen Conquest.

The story deals with the further exciting and amusing adventures of the cheery caravanners on their tour through Kent. To follow this will be a grand new story of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, entitled

"THE PLACE OF HONOUR!"

By Martin Clifford,

and another long complete tale dealing with the schooldays of FRANK RICHARDS, the famous author, in the Backwoods of Canada. The story is entitled

"ON VENGEANCE BENT!"

By Martin Clifford,

and in it we learn how the Chums of the Cedar Creek School come up against their old enemy, 'Frisko Jo, the Mexican horse-thief. Only a few days ago 'Frisko Jo had swindled Frank Richards & Co. out of fifty dollars in a salted mine affair, and when they meet with the Mexican a little later there comes a great reckoning.

To complete this splendid number, there will be another long and thrilling instalment of our New and Amazing serial of adventure, "The Pearl Raiders!" by Sidney Draw, and an extra special number of our famous school-boy journal, "Billy Bunter's Weekly," which will be found in the centre of the paper. There will also be a chance for you to win a big money prize in our new "Labels" competition, which commences in this week's issue.

Finally, please tell all your non-reader chums about our grand bumper issue for next week, and then go and place your order for a copy with your newsagent now to avoid disappointment.

READERS' NOTICES.

Stanley Finigan, 21, Premier Street, Everton, Liverpool, wishes to join a baseball club in his district.

CORRESPONDENCE.

William E. Skelton, 25, High Street, Plumstead, S.E. 18, wishes to hear from readers who are interested in his magazine, the "Boys' Favourite."

Your Editor.

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