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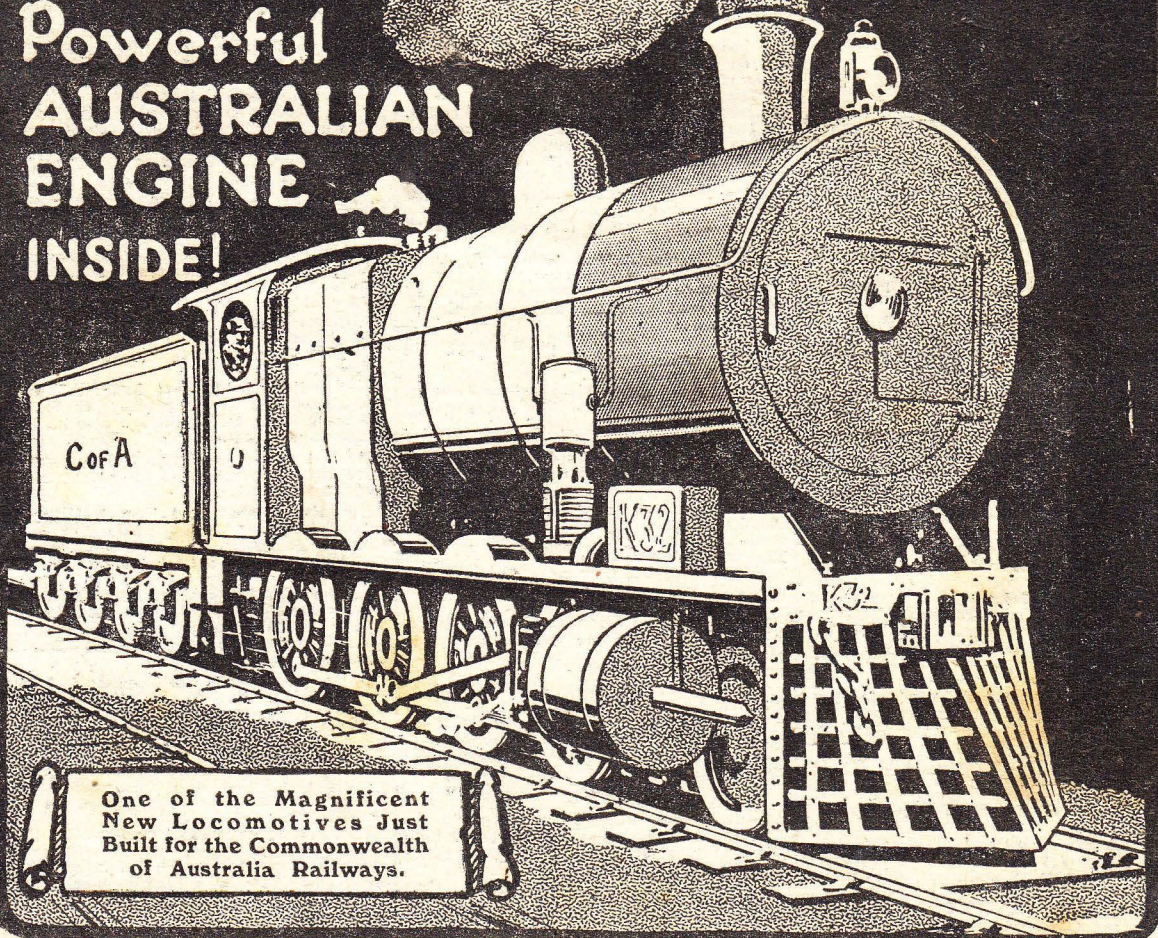
# The POPULAR 2d

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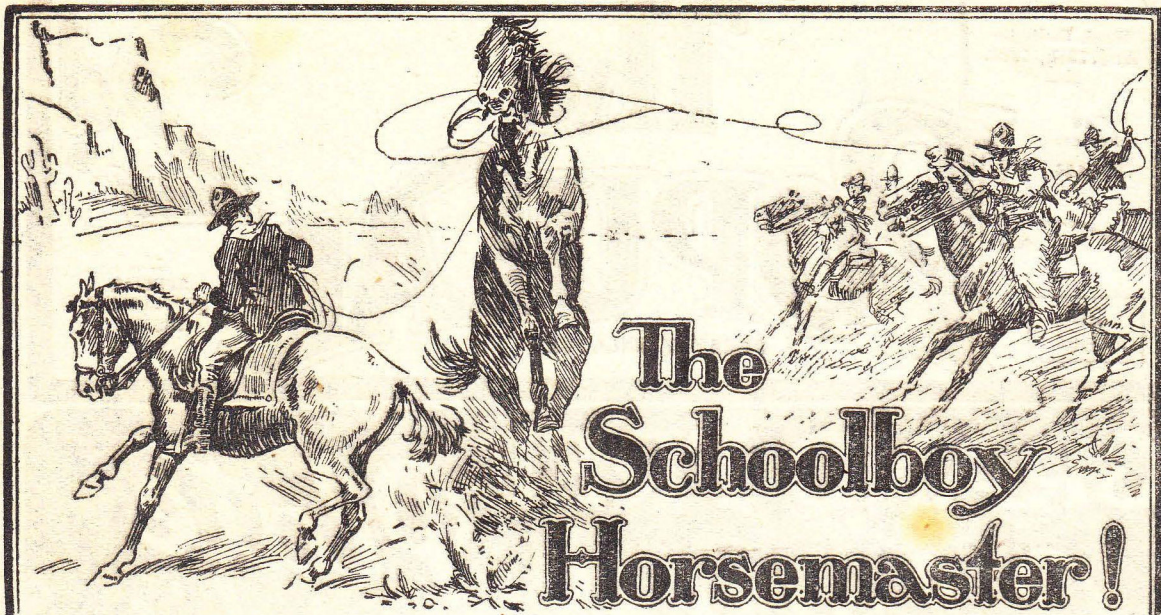
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TELLING HOW THE CEDAR CREEK CHUMS TAKE THE TRAIL AFTER THE RUNAWAY BLACK STALLION, AND HOW VERE BEAUCLERC PROVES HIMSELF A FEARLESS AND WONDERFUL HORSEMAN!



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 Runaway!

**T**HUD, thud, thud!  
Clatter, clatter!  
"Hallo! What's on?" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

The Cedar Creek fellows were chatting about the gateway, after morning lessons, when the galloping hoof-beats came to their ears.

All eyes were turned up the trail at once. There had been a thaw, and the trail was wet and muddy, and clotted with half-melted snow.

Along it the leafless larches dripped with water.

From the timber in the distance a riderless horse suddenly dashed into view.

Down the trail it came, with tossing head and floating mane, and stirrups clattering against the girths.

Frank Richards uttered an exclamation. "It's the black horse, Bob!"

"By gad! So it is!" said Vere Beauclerc. "Stand out of the way, you fellows!"

The Cedar Creek fellows were crowding back into the gateway.

The maddened horse would be passing the gates in a couple of minutes, and it was death to be in the path.

That the animal was pursued was evident, though the pursuers had not yet come into sight.

"That's Poker Pete's horse!" said Gunten. "I've seen him in Thompson!"

"My popper's horse," answered Bob Lawless. "Poker Pete sold him to my popper a few days ago."

Gunten grinned.

"I guess it was a bad bargain for your popper, then. That beast's too savage to ride. I wouldn't have given ten dollars for him!"

"Worth three hundred, if it wasn't for his temper," remarked Chunky Todgers.

"Popper gave three-fifty," said Bob.

"He won't see it again, then," grinned Gunten.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!  
The runaway was crashing past the gates, his nostrils steaming, and his eyeballs rolling and showing the white.

The schoolboys crowded farther back, but

the horse was past in a flash, and thundering on down the trail towards the distant town of Thompson.

"The ranch men are after him, I guess," remarked Bob. "Oh, by thunder!" he added, as the pursuers came in sight from the timber. "Poker Pete and Euchre Dick! They're after popper's gee!"

The two horsemen were riding hard, but their mounts were not equal in speed to the fugitive stallion.

Poker Pete's swarthy face was dark with anger.

His companion held a lasso ready for a cast, if he came near enough.

Poker Pete gave a momentary glance of savage hatred at Frank Richards & Co. as he galloped by.

The two riders vanished down the trail on the track of the runaway.

Bob Lawless whistled.

"Poker Pete wants his gee back," he remarked. "Looks to me like hoss-stealing, after he's sold him to popper."

Frank Richards nodded.

He stood looking in the direction in which the horsemen had disappeared, with a wrinkle in his brow.

"I say, that's jolly queer," remarked Chunky Todgers. "That's the hoss you set loose the other day, Richards, when Poker Pete was beating it, isn't it?"

"That's it," said Frank.

"And it hasn't been caught?"

"Not yet!"

"Did Old Man Lawless buy it while it was still a runaway, then?" asked Chunky, in astonishment.

"You've hit it!"

"By gum! That was chucking dollars away, and no mistake!"

"Not quite," answered Frank quietly. "My uncle bought him from Poker Pete, so that the brute couldn't ill-use it any longer. He took the chance of its not being caught."

"But what's Poker Pete hunting it for if he's sold it?" asked Tom Lawrence. "He don't usually do things for nothing."

"I guess I can answer that," growled Bob.

"If Pete ropes that hoss in, he don't mean to deliver him at the Lawless Ranch. He means to sell him down the valley. You see, he was rather mad at having to sell the horse—popper offered him that, or a horse-whipping, by way of choice, because he was

a brute to the poor critter. He had to sell."

"Then I guess I hope he'll get his hoss back," sneered Gunten. "I reckon a man can beat his horse if he likes!"

"You would!" grunted Bob.

The dinner-bell rang, and the Cedar Creek fellows went to the school-house—such of them as stayed for dinner at the school.

"Last day of school this week, Franky," said Bob, tapping his cousin on the arm. "We're going to join in hunting the gee-gee to-morrow, if he's not caught to-day."

"He won't be seen again in the Thompson valley, if Poker Pete ropes him in," said Frank. "The rotter means to steal the horse if he can!"

"I guess he won't rope him in, though."

The schoolboys went in to dinner.

Frank Richards was thoughtful and troubled.

It was through him that Rancher Lawless had forced the brutal cardsharpener to sell the black horse, taking the law into his own hands to that extent.

He had paid a good sum for the animal; more than it would have fetched at Kamloops in the market.

But the "sport" had been bitterly enraged, and Frank could see now that Poker Pete had determined to hunt for the animal, and recover him if he could, in spite of the forced sale.

As the animal was a runaway, and would be captured, if at all, far afield in the timber of the plains, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to bring the theft home to the cardsharpener.

It was not agreeable to Frank to feel that he might have been the cause of his uncle losing so considerable a sum as three hundred and fifty dollars.

Mr. Lawless was one of the wealthiest ranchers in that section of British Columbia, but the sum was a large one, nevertheless.

Bob Lawless guessed what was in his cousin's mind.

"All serene, Franky!" he said, when they came out after dinner. "That cardsharpener won't catch him in a month of Sundays. And we're going to take a hand to-morrow—and we'll do the trick, you bet!"

And Frank could only hope that his chum would turn out to be a true prophet.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
On the Trail!**

**Y**OU'LL come to-morrow, Cherub?" Bob Lawless asked, as the three chums quitted Cedar Creek School after lessons that day.

Vere Beauclerc hesitated.

"No school to-morrow, Beau," said Frank Richards. "Anything special to do at home?"

"No. But—"

"I'll bring you a pony from the ranch," said Bob, with a laugh. "You won't let my popper make you a present of one, but you'll let me lend you one—eh?"

"Right you are!" said Beauclerc, colouring and laughing. "I'll be ready to-morrow morning, then. What time?"

"Half an hour after sun-up, at the fork of the trail," answered Bob.

"Right-ho!"

The chums parted at the fork, and Beauclerc disappeared in the dusk, on the path through the timber, to the lonely shack by the creek.

Frank and Bob rode on to the ranch in a thoughtful mood.

Soon Billy Cook, the foreman of the ranch, loomed up on the trail, and the chums drew rein.

"Seen anything of the runaway yet, Billy?" called out Bob Lawless.

"Nope. Some of the boys got arter him yesterday," answered Billy Cook. "But he showed 'em a clean pair of heels. I tell you, that black critter is some horse! Never saw his like for speed in Canada!"

"We're going to take a hand in hunting him to-morrow."

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the ranchman.

The schoolboys rode on, with Billy Cook's stentorian merriment ringing after them.

Evidently the ranchman did not think the schoolboys were likely to succeed in running down the escaped horse where the ranch-hands had failed.

Bob Lawless gave a sniff.

"Billy reckons we sha'n't cut any ice to-morrow," he remarked. "I guess we'll show him! We're going to corral the gee-gee, Franky."

"I hope so," said Frank, with a smile.

The chums arrived at the ranch, and at supper Mr. Lawless was told of the happenings at the lumber-school that morning.

The rancher knitted his brows over the story.

"Riding for my horse, was he?" he exclaimed. "I'll see Mister Poker Pete about that! What was he after the horse at all for, the horse-thief! By thunder, I guess I'll put it to him plain!"

"We're thinking of taking the trail after him to-morrow, uncle, as it's a holiday," remarked Frank Richards.

The cloud cleared from the rancher's brow, and he burst into a laugh.

He seemed as much amused at the idea as his foreman had been.

"You're welcome to try, my boy," he answered. "Don't get too near his hoofs or his teeth; not that you're likely to."

And the rancher laughed again.

The next morning Frank and Bob came down early and in a determined mood.

They wanted very much to show both Mr. Lawless and Billy Cook that they were not quite so helpless on the trail as those gentlemen supposed.

Three ponies were saddled, and Bob Lawless packed provisions for the day into the saddle-bags.

The hunt was to last till successful, or until darkness drove them home.

As they rode down the trail, Bob leading the spare horse for Vere Beauclerc, they came upon Billy Cook and a Kootenay cattle-man, riding in the same direction as themselves.

"Hallo!" shouted Bob. "Whither bound, William?"

Billy Cook looked round with a grin as Bob and Frank rode up.

"Arfer the gee-gee," he said. "That your game?"

"You bet."

"Haw, haw, haw!"

"Oh, now so much of your cackle, Billy!" exclaimed Bob testily. "Do you think we can't follow a trail or throw a lasso?"

"I guess I'll eat all the hosses you catch this hyer day, Mister Bob!" answered the foreman. And the Kootenay grinned.

"Where are you looking for him?" asked Frank.

"He's been seen again in the woods near

Cedar Creek," replied Cook. "I guess we can spot his trail somewheres."

"That's our way."

"Then I'll have your kumpy; and mind, I'm goin' to eat all the hosses you catch!" grinned the ranchman.

"Rats!" retorted Frank laughingly.

They trotted on through the timber, and found Vere Beauclerc waiting at the fork of the trail.

The remittance-man's son was in good time.

He vaulted lightly into the saddle of the led horse, and rode on with the party.

"You've brought a rope," remarked Bob, with a glance at the lasso coiled up over Vere's arm.

"Yes! I've practised a good deal with the lariot," said Beauclerc. "If I get a chance at the black horse it may come in useful."

Billy Cook chuckled.

"Hallo! Look out!" shouted Frank suddenly.

There was a sudden thudding of hoofs.

"By gum!" gasped Billy Cook.

"Somebody's after him!" exclaimed Bob.

"Poker Pete, by thunder!"

The sport came thundering down the trail in hot pursuit.

Billy Cook drew up in the middle of the trail, and Poker Pete was forced to draw rein.

There was a grim expression on the cattle-man's bronzed face.

"Stop! the word!" he rapped out.

"Let me pass, you fool!" shouted Poker Pete.

"I guess not!" said the ranchman, coolly.

"You're after Mr. Lawless' hoss, my sportive friend. Let up!"

"Hang you! It's my horse!"

"I reckon I was a witness to the sale, and saw three hundred and fifty of the best paid over," grinned Billy Cook. "You'll turn right round and get back, Mister Poker Pete, or else I'll have you off that horse of yours in a brace of shakes, and I guess I'll dust up the trail with your kerkies!"

The sport ground his teeth.

Frank Richards & Co. had halted, prepared to back up the ranch foreman if necessary.

But it was not necessary.

Poker Pete, with a curse, wheeled his horse and rode back up the trail.

The sport of Thompson did not care to try conclusions with the brawny ranch foreman.

"I guess that lets him out," remarked Billy Cook, with a grin. "Now I'm after that gee. You youngsters had better keep clear."

He dashed away after the vanished stallion, followed by the Kootenay.

Frank Richards & Co. rode after them at once.

"We're on this scene, I guess," remarked Bob Lawless.

"You bet!" said Frank tersely.

"Poker Pete routed the gee-gee out for us!" grinned Bob. "I suppose the brute was feeding in the wood. He looks a bit thin, though. He'd have come near starving but for the thaw. Don't you throttle me with that rope, Cherub, old scout!"

Beauclerc laughed.

He had taken his coiled lariot in his hand ready for use.

The three schoolboys rode hot on the trail, and they were close behind Billy Cook and his companion as the latter dashed out of the timber upon the plain.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.  
Hunting the Wild Horse.**

**T**HERE he is!"

Bob Lawless pointed with his riding-whip.

On the rolling plain, as they rode out of the timber, the black horse came in sight, grubbing in the half-melted snow in search of food.

Billy Cook and the Kootenay had separated, the latter taking a devious course, to head off the escape of the black stallion.

"You youngsters keep back!" said the ranchman. "You don't want'er skeer the critter till Coal Sacks gets the wind of him."

"Right you are!" answered Bob.

But the black horse was not so easily headed off.

He raised his head and glared round, and broke at once into a gallop, heading for the distant hills at a great burst of speed.

"By gad, what a ripper!" exclaimed Vere

Beauclerc, his eyes glistening, as the horse-hunters galloped in hot pursuit.

"Isn't he a beauty!" agreed Frank Richards. "By Jove! I don't fancy we shall run him down on these gees!"

They rode hard in pursuit, but did not gain an inch on the black horse.

Indeed, it was easy to see that if the fugitive had not been content with keeping his distance he could have shown a clean pair of heels to the pursuit.

Thud, thud, thud! the hoofs rang on the squashy plain, wet and squashy in the thaw.

"Thunder!" exclaimed Billy Cook suddenly.

"There's a chance!"

He waived his coiled lasso wildly.

Far ahead, following a scarcely marked track across the plain, was the post-wagon from Thompson, driven by Kern Gunten, that being Gunten's Saturday task.

The Swiss looked round, and drew in his pair of horses, as he heard the thudding and shouting in the distance.

The black horse was heading straight for the post-wagon when it appeared from behind a ridge in the plain.

Kern Gunten jumped up in his seat, and waved his whip and shouted, to drive back the runaway into the hands of the pursuers.

The black horse swerved, and darted off at almost right angles to his previous course.

"Good!" muttered Billy Cook.

He swerved and galloped across to cut off the runaway.

The others rode hard on the track.

A good half-mile had been saved by the turning aside of the runaway, and the hunters made the most of it.

With a desperate spurt, Billy Cook rode within cast of the black horse.

His lariot uncoiled in the air as it flew.

The noose struck the tossing head of the runaway and fell.

The ranchman muttered something between his teeth. The cast had missed.

Whiz!

Vere Beauclerc, still riding at top speed, made his cast as the disappointed ranchman dragged in his rope.

There was a wild squeal from the runaway.

Vere Beauclerc had had better luck than Billy Cook.

The noose settled fairly over the tossing head and fastened.

"Roped!" yelled Bob Lawless, in exuberant delight.

The black stallion stopped for a second, and then sprang away fiercely.

The rope ran to its full length like a flash. But the end was secured to Vere's saddle.

He rode on hard, or his pony would have been dragged over by the furious efforts of the runaway to escape.

"Caught!" shouted Frank.

"By gum!" panted Billy Cook.

The ranchman had his lasso ready again, and he rode on rapidly.

Fiercely as the runaway was struggling to escape, the pull of the rope slackened him, and Billy Cook easily made a second cast.

His rope settled over the head of the black stallion.

"Our hoss, I reckon!" he panted.

"Looks like it!" grinned Bob Lawless.

"Good old Cherub!"

"Give him rope, younker!"

"All right!"

Beauclerc understood what was required.

The black horse, roped in by two lassos, whirled round and charged savagely at his captors.

He came on with foaming jaws and glistening teeth, and it was a sight well calculated to shake any but the strongest nerve.

But the black horse had no chance now.

Beauclerc and the ranchman rode widely separated, and the two taut lassos held the runaway a prisoner at equal distances from each.

There, helpless at the ends of the ropes, the mad fury of the horse was spent in frantic rearing and plunging and savaging.

The hunters watched him grimly from a safe distance.

The Kootenay Coal Sacks threw in a third rope, and the black stallion was more helpless than ever.

The hunters turned homeward.

Three lassos constrained the captured horse to follow, and still the horsemen rode wide and gave him plenty of room.

Frank and Bob rode after them in great spirits.

The capture had been made, and made

effectively, and it was their chum who had roped the black stallion.

Cedar Creek School had come to the fore after all!

There was a long ride before the hunters, for the chase had taken them many a mile field.

The black horse, fatigued, almost exhausted, at last, by its vain resistance, trotted on sullenly amidst its captors.

The animal was still saddled and bridled as when it had escaped from Poker Pete days before, and it must have been considerably irked, which, perhaps, accounted in part for its savageness.

But there was no doubt that the brute had a savage temper, and it was not surprising that the sport of Thompson had failed to subdue it.

Poker Pete was no horseman; his only method of subduing an animal was brute force and cruelty.

Bob Lawless doubted whether the animal would ever be of much use now that he was caught. The vicious gleam in his eyes was unmistakable, and Bob, though a fearless rider, would not have cared to mount him—if it had been possible.

"By gum!" said Billy Cook. "I reckon Poker Pete had a bad bargain in that horse, and he ought to have been glad to get rid of him. I guess I wouldn't sit that critter for a month's pay doubled!"

"Same here!" confessed Frank Richards.

It was yet early in the afternoon when the cavalcade arrived at the Lawless Ranch.

Mr. Lawless came out to meet them, with great satisfaction in his looks at the sight of the captured stallion.

"You've got him, Billy?" he exclaimed. Billy Cook looked rather shamefaced.

"Boss, I never got him," he answered. "It was young Beauclerc that roped him in, and that's the truth!"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the rancher, in astonishment.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Lawless, feeling that it was his turn to laugh now. "Cedar Creek comes out on top, dad!"

"Billy Cook's undertaken to eat the horse if we caught it!" chuckled Frank Richards.

"I own up!" said Cook. "I was shooting off my mouth, and I own up! The youngster did it, and I own up! But I tell you, boss, I guess there ain't a man on this hyer ranch what'll care to ride that hoss, now we've got it."

"He looks a savage brute," agreed Mr. Lawless, eyeing the sullen animal with a critical eye. "I can't say I like his looks. He may have to be shot, but we'll give him a chance."

"Shot?" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc.

"I guess so, my lad, unless he improves in temper—there's the very devil in his eye," said the rancher. "Shove him in the corral now, Billy, and see that he has plenty to eat. Keep the rope on him."

"You bet!"

The three ropes had to be left on the black horse after he was led into the corral, for, at the slightest attempt to approach him, his teeth were bared, and his eyes glittered with fury.

Mr. Lawless shook his head as he regarded him over the fence.

Vere Beauclerc was thoughtful and clouded as he went into the ranch-house with his chums to a late lunch.

"Penny for 'em, Cherub!" exclaimed Bob, clapping him on the shoulder.

Beauclerc coloured.

"I—I was thinking I'd like to try and ride that horse, Bob."

Bob Lawless whistled.

"Off your chump?" he asked. "Billy Cook wouldn't try it now, and he's the best hand with a hoss in Thompson Valley."

"Still, I'd like—"

"Popper wouldn't let you," said Bob, with a shake of the head. "He doesn't want you to be taken home in pieces, Cherub!"

The matter was dropped with that; but before Vere Beauclerc left the ranch he went round to the corral to take a last look at the black stallion.

The animal had an enclosure of the corral to himself, and he was tramping restlessly, the ropes trailing about him.

"It's a splendid brute," Beauclerc said. "I believe I could handle him, Bob."

"Swank!" grinned Bob.

"No—really—"

"You're jolly well not going to try; we can't spare you, Cherub. Here, come on!" Bob marched his guest away.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.**

**Demon's Master.**

**V**ERE BEAUCLERC was waiting at the fork of the trail, as usual, for his chums on their way to school on Monday morning.

He gave them an eager look as they came up.

"How is he?" he asked.

"The popper?" asked Bob. "Same as usual, my tulip."

"I—I was speaking of the black horse!" stammered Beauclerc.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Still thinking you'd like to try your hand at taming him—bey?"

"I'd like to try, certainly."

"Can't be did," answered Bob. "Billy Cook tried him yesterday, and he was glad to get out of the corral with a whole skin."

"He's awfully savage, Beau," said Frank Richards. "I'm afraid there's nothing for it but—but—"

Beauclerc knitted his brows.

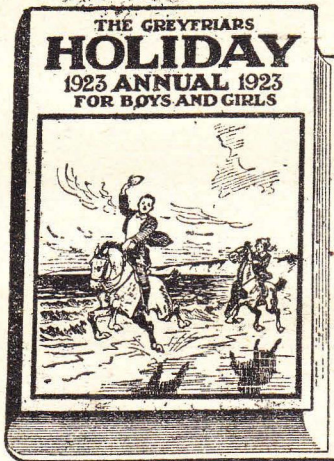
"Is he to be shot?" he asked.

"I'm afraid there's nothing else to be done."

"Oh!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

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"My dear old Cherub!" said Bob Lawless. "It can't be helped. The brute had a vicious temper, to begin with, then Poker Pete was cruel to the poor wretch, and then it's been free nearly a week, and grown quite wild. The popper won't have three hundred and fifty dollars shot, if he can help it—you can bet on that. But the brute can't be trusted an inch."

"He's been savaging another horse that was let into the corral, Beau," added Frank.

"He's a regular demon."

Beauclerc nodded.

"I suppose Mr. Lawless knows best," he remarked, and he sighed.

"You bet!" agreed Bob.

Beauclerc did not speak again on the subject, but he was very thoughtful on the way to school, and he remained in thought all the day.

After school, when he walked home with his chums, he did not say good-bye as usual at the fork in the trail.

"Do you mind if I come home with you this evening, Bob?" he asked, colouring.

"Jolly glad, of course," said Bob, at once. Then he grinned. "You want to see the black gee-gee again before the execution—eh?"

"Ye-es!"

"Well, jump on behind me," said Bob.

"Can't walk all the way, but my pony can carry double."

"Thanks!"

The three schoolboys arrived at the ranch together in the deep dusk.

Vere Beauclerc had a cordial welcome; the remittance-man's son was always welcome at the ranch.

His first question was on the subject of the black stallion.

Mr. Lawless shook his head seriously.

"I'm afraid there's only one way, my boy," he said. "The men have not even been able to get the saddle off him. He is quite vicious. But I shall give him another chance in the morning, before he is shot."

"The Cherub thinks he could ride him, dad!" chuckled Bob Lawless.

The rancher smiled.

"I'm afraid I couldn't permit you to try, Beauclerc," he said. "Your father would scarcely approve it."

"I don't think he'd mind, sir," said Beauclerc eagerly. "He knows how I can handle horses. Oh, Mr. Lawless, if you'd let me try, I feel sure I could—"

He broke off, flushing hotly. "Don't think I'm a conceited ass, sir. It isn't that. But I lived among horses when I was a kid in England; I rode almost as soon as I could walk, and—and—"

"I couldn't let you try, my lad. I'm answerable for your safety while you are here," said the rancher.

"My pater wouldn't object, sir; I'm sure of that."

"I guess he would," smiled Mr. Lawless. "I certainly shouldn't allow Bob to go near him!"

"Well, the Cherub's a better man with a gee than I am, popper," said Bob honestly. "I've seen him with the cattle sometimes; he's got a way with them. Still, I don't think he could ride the Demon."

"But—but it's worth trying if you're thinking of having him killed, sir," urged Beauclerc.

"Will you let me try, Mr. Lawless, if I get my father's permission?"

The rancher looked puzzled.

"Do you know it would very likely be your death?" he exclaimed.

"I am sure not, sir. Besides, I'm not afraid."

"No; but I'm afraid for you!" said Mr. Lawless. "Your father would never agree."

"He knows how I can ride, sir. Will you let me, if I bring you his written permission? He has seen the horse several times."

Mr. Lawless pulled at his beard rather perplexedly.

"Well, I guess I can leave it to your father," he said.

"Good!" exclaimed Beauclerc joyfully. "Lend me your pony, Bob, and I'll get off to the shack at once!"

Beauclerc rode away from the ranch in a few minutes.

An hour or so later he returned, with a note from Mr. Beauclerc.

The rancher read it, and frowned thoughtfully. It was brief and to the point:

"Dear Mr. Lawless.—My son can ride any horse in Canada, and he has my full permission to try any horse on your ranch.—Yours, LASCELLES BEAUCLERC."

"By gad, that's plain enough!" said Mr. Lawless. "Well, your father ought to know what risks you can take. I'll keep my word; you can make the attempt in the morning, my lad."

"Oh, thanks!" exclaimed Beauclerc in delight.

Frank and Bob were not so delighted, however, as they marched Beau off to share their room for the night.

They were filled with dismal apprehensions for the morrow.

They were up early in the winter morning, Beauclerc in merrier spirits than his chums had ever seen him in before.

He was looking forward to the contest with the black stallion with the greatest confidence and satisfaction.

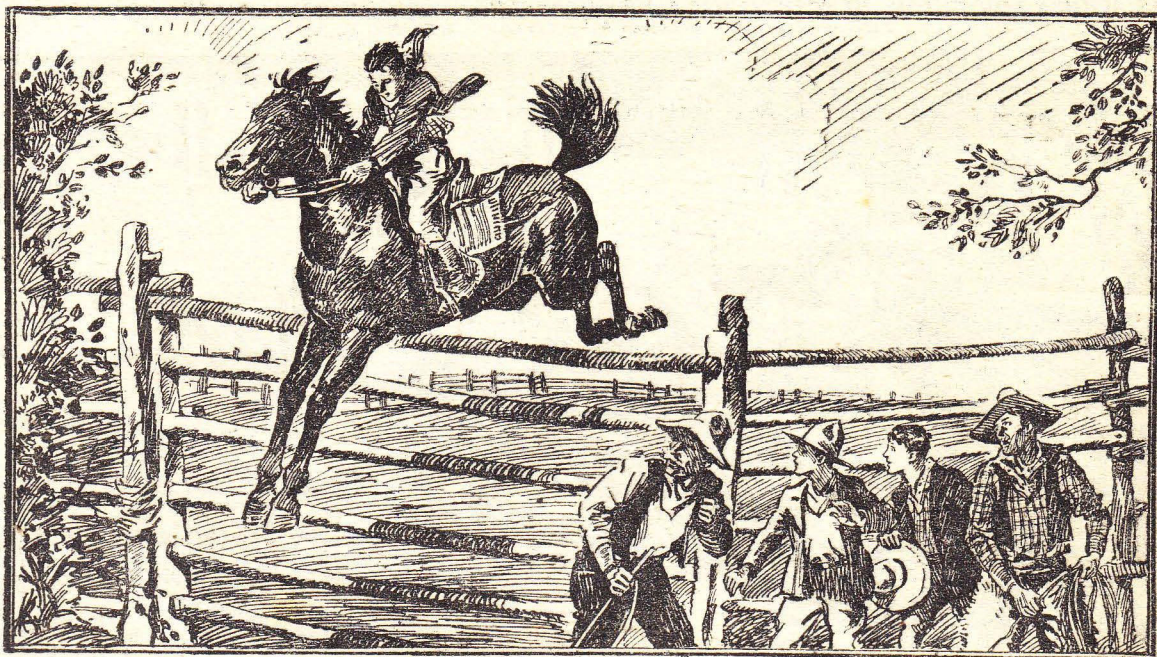
After breakfast the chums left the ranch-house and made for the corral. Mr. Lawless and Billy Cook accompanying them.

The rancher was looking thoughtful and troubled.

He had given his permission, but he was full of forebodings.

The look of the black stallion, viewed over the fence, was not promising, either.

He threw up his head, and his eyes gleamed at them, and the savage mouth opened with a flash of white teeth.



**MASTERING THE BLACK DEMON!**—The black stallion made a furious rush at the gate of the corral. High as it was he rose to the leap, Beauclerc making no effort to check him. Horse and rider soared over the gate and came down on the open plain, and then the black horse broke into a furious gallop. (See Chapter 4.)

"Beau," exclaimed Frank Richards, "you—you can't—you sha'n't!"

"I can, old chap, and I'm going to," smiled Beauclerc.

"You'll be killed, you young idjit!" growled Billy Cook gruffly.

"Cherub, old man—" murmured Bob.

Beauclerc, unheeding, went to the gate of the corral.

Mr. Lawless called to him.

"Beauclerc, you're running a fearful risk!"

"I think not, sir," said the schoolboy confidently. "My father doesn't think so."

"I can't believe you can back that horse, my boy. But I shall keep my word. I shall keep my rifle handy, too!" The rancher had his gun in the hollow of his arm. "You're a brave lad, but reckless. I fear; but if you succeed in riding that horse, Beauclerc, he is yours. You'll be the only one in this section who can do it, and the horse will be yours."

"Oh, sir, gasped Beauclerc, "I—I—"

"You can't refuse," said the rancher, with a smile. "If you cannot ride him, he will be shot to-day. But I fear—"

"Beau, old man—" said Frank.

"Keep clear, you fellows!"

With a firm hand the Cherub threw aside the bar at the gate, and then he strode into the corral, a pocket-knife in his hand.

The rest watched breathlessly, Mr. Lawless keeping his rifle handy.

The black horse started, and turned savagely at the schoolboy's footsteps.

Beauclerc threw the bar into position behind him.

He was shut up, in the corral now, alone with the savage horse.

His chums scarcely breathed as he advanced upon the animal with a firm step and a steady eye.

There was a shrill neigh from the black stallion, and he made a sudden rush right upon the iron-nerved lad.

Beauclerc leaped aside, and caught at a trailing rope as he did so.

The horse was swung round on the lasso, so sharply that he came to his knees in the grass.

Before the animal could even move Vere Beauclerc was in the saddle.

The horse leaped up as if electrified, and

passed a second. In that second Beauclerc cut the rope, and flung away the knife.

"Beau!" panted Frank.

The black stallion, in his surprise and rage, leaped several feet clear of the ground, coming down on his forefeet, his heels behind beating the air.

But the daring rider was not unseated.

He lay back till his head was lashed by the tossing tail, and even at that terrible moment his feet found the dangling stirrups, and his hands caught the reins.

The next moment the horse was rearing on his hind legs, as if about to fall backwards, and Beauclerc's face was buried in the tossing mane.

And then followed such a struggle as the onlookers had seldom, or never, witnessed before.

The black horse raced round the corral, rearing, plunging, turning, careering, in frantic efforts to unseat his rider.

He scraped against the wall of the corral, but Beauclerc's leg was always out of the way; he rolled on his back in the grass, but Beauclerc was always off his back just in time, and in the saddle again the moment the horse righted.

The onlookers stood spellbound.

Truly, the remittance-man's son was one of those born to "wiltch the world with noble horsemanship."

"Stand clear!" shouted Beauclerc suddenly.

The black stallion made a furious rush at the gate of the corral.

High as it was, he rose to the leap, the rider making no effort to check him.

Horse and rider soared over the gate, and came down on the open plain, and then the black horse broke into a furious gallop.

Away over the plain went horse and rider, and in a few minutes they were out of sight.

"Bless my heart!" gasped Mr. Lawless.

"He won't come back alive!" groaned Frank.

"You bet your sweet life!" said Billy Cook.

"I never seed the like! He's got him—he's got him under! You hear me yaup. That gee knows his master now."

Billy Cook proved to be in the right.

Half an hour later, after a wait full of anxiety, there was a thunder of hoofs, and

the black stallion came in sight again, with the schoolboy of Cedar Creek still firmly seated on his back.

Vere Beauclerc's face was flushed, his perspiration was thick on his brow, but his look was joyous.

He rode the horse up at top speed, swerved, and rode round in a circle, the animal obeying the slightest touch of the rein.

It was evident that Demon had been reduced to obedience. And the rider had never used a whip from first to last.

The animal felt his master on his back, and he had exhausted his strength in vain resistance, till the realisation that it was inevitable was forced into the equine brain, and then the horse was conquered.

Beauclerc halted at last and jumped down.

He rubbed the foam-flecked muzzle of his steed, and the cruel teeth were not bared now.

He led the horse towards the amazed group.

"Well, carry me hum to die!" said Billy Cook, and that was all he could say.

"By gad, you've done it, my lad!" said the rancher. "Who'd think that was the same horse? You've saved his life, Beauclerc, and he's yours."

"I don't claim him, sir. I'm only too glad—"

"He's yours, my lad, and that settles it."

"I don't know how to thank you, sir," said Beauclerc softly. "I'll accept him with pleasure, of course, if—if you—"

"Now come in to breakfast," said the rancher. "You'll be late for school."

"No fear! I shall ride to school now," said Beauclerc, with a happy laugh.

And when Frank Richards & Co. started for Cedar Creek, Beauclerc was riding the Demon—not much of a demon now in appearance.

His chums congratulated him heartily, and Beauclerc's face was happier than they had seen it for a long time.

It had been a fortunate day for him when he joined the horse-hunters!

THE END.

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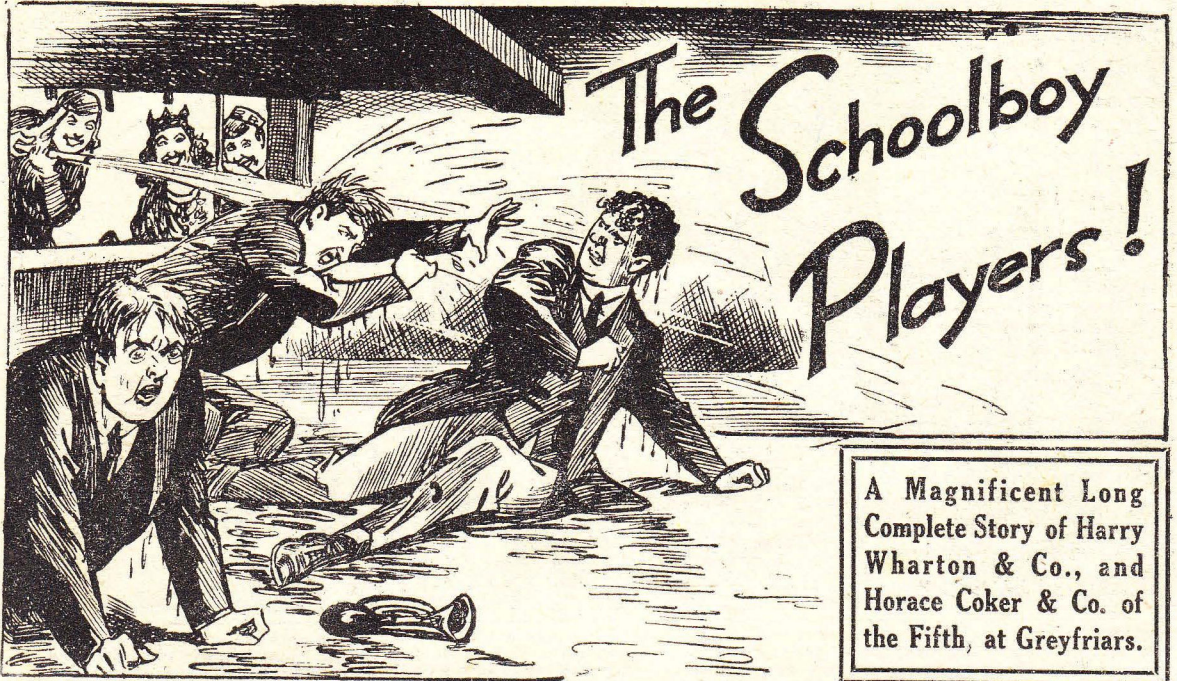
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**IN WHICH THE CHUMS OF THE REMOVE PERFORM THEIR SHAKESPEARIAN PLAY IN AID OF THE PEGG SHIPWRECKED SAILORS' RELIEF FUND!**



**A Magnificent Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., and Horace Coker & Co. of the Fifth, at Greyfriars.**

**By FRANK RICHARDS**

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

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
**Going Strong.**

**H**ORACE COKER of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, had made a muck of it. The Remove were quite certain about that. The seamen who were stranded as a result of the wrecking of their ship at Pegg Bay but a few days before were likely to remain stranded if Horace Coker tried to help them.

Coker had tried a fund. It was a dismal failure. Then the Remove took a hand.

Harry Wharton & Co. got straight to business by suggesting a play—"King John," by the immortal Shakespeare. The idea caught on, and the Remove set about their work methodically and quickly.

A notice was put on the notice-board announcing the performance. That notice annoyed Coker of the Fifth; but Coker's annoyance did not cause any sleeplessness amongst the Removites.

Something had to be done in the deserving cause, and Coker was dropped out of considerations.

The Greyfriars dramatists did not allow the grass to grow under their feet.

Rehearsals were frequent as soon as the parts had been apportioned. Fellows learned their lines in and out of season. They took copies of their parts into the class-rooms, and hid them under their desks and surreptitiously studied them. Attention to lessons was not improved thereby, and lines fell upon some of the more ardent dramatists. They would take their copies with them on to the cricket-field, and pause in the middle of practice to declaim a few lines. Johnny Bull seemed to have least enthusiasm, and he was given the part of Second Murderer, as all that he was fit for. **THE POPULAR.—No. 186.**

more attractive part of Faulconbridge was assigned to Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, who really had a gift for acting, and did the part of the reckless, dashing adventurer very well. Tom Brown entered into the character so thoroughly that he almost became Faulconbridge, and he replied to everyday remarks in the language of that character. When Bolsover minor shoved him in the passage, Tom Brown astonished him by exclaiming, "Get thee hence, knave!" And when Billy Bunter tried to extract a loan from him, on the supposition of a postal-order that was coming, Tom Brown bade him begone for a scurvy varlet.

Mr. Quelch noticed that a good many members of the Remove seemed to have something on their minds which prevented them from taking that interest in lessons which good, industrious boys really ought to have taken.

And a morning or two after Harry Wharton's famous notice had appeared in the hall, Mr. Quelch grew quite cross about it.

"Cherry!" he exclaimed for the second time, Bob not having answered to the first.

Bob Cherry started, and hastily slipped into his pocket a paper he had been studying under cover of the desk.

"Yes, sir?" said Bob.

"I have spoken to you twice!"

"Yes, sir—I mean, sorry, sir!"

"You were reading something, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch severely.

"No—yes—sir," stammered Bob.

"What were you reading? I trust you have not been impertinent enough to bring a book into the Form-room other than your class-books?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Then what is it?"

"I—I was studying Shakespeare, sir."

"H'm! It is very meritorious to

study Shakespeare, Cherry. But it is not a time to study Shakespeare in a geography lesson."

"I—I suppose not, sir."

"You will write out 'I must not read Shakespeare during lessons,' fifty times, Cherry!"

"Very well, sir!"

"You, also, seem very remiss this morning, Brown," said Mr. Quelch, turning to the New Zealander, after having thus disposed of Bob Cherry.

"What sayest thou?"

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"Brown!"

"What dost thou say, sir?"

"Brown!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"What do you mean?"

"I—I beg your pardon, sir!" stammered Tom, coming back to everyday life all of a sudden. "I—I've been studying Shakespeare, sir."

"Indeed! You will kindly not answer me in high-flown language, Brown!"

"Assuredly not, fair sir—I mean, certainly not, sir!"

"Take fifty lines, Brown!"

"As thou sayest, so let it be," said Tom Brown, who was so deeply imbued with his part that he could not remember that he was Tom Brown and not Faulconbridge.

"Take a hundred lines!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

"Bulstrode!"

"Ye-e-es?" stammered Bulstrode.

"What are you reading under your desk?"

"My lines, sir."

"Lines! I have not given you any lines!"

"I mean my lines from 'King John,' sir. I—I'm studying Shakespeare."

Mr. Quelch looked astounded.

"There seems to be an epidemic of Shakespeare study in this Form," he

By FRANK RICHARDS.

**NEXT TUESDAY: "DEALING WITH THE INVADER!" A SPLENDID STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.**

said. "I am glad to see that the literary taste of the Remove appears to be improving. At the same time, even the study of Shakespeare cannot be undertaken in a geography lesson. You will put those lines away, Bulstrode, and write out fifty lines from Virgil after lessons!"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

And there was no more Shakespeare study that morning.

But when the class was dismissed, Harry Wharton lingered behind to speak to the Form-master. He had a little bundle of tickets in his hand, nicely got up, and printed at the local printer's.

"May I ask you to look at these, sir?" said Wharton modestly.

"Certainly, my lad. What are they?"

"Tickets, sir. We're giving a performance of 'King John' on Saturday evening, in aid of the fund for the destitute seamen at Pegg, and I thought you might like to take some, to encourage the others."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"Complimentary tickets are entirely suspended, sir, as it's a charity," explained Wharton. "We hope all the masters will be present, to encourage the genuine drama, and to help on the fund for the destitute seamen. There is a special row of reserved seats for masters, at five shillings each."

Mr. Quelch looked hard at Wharton, and then smiled.

"Very well, Wharton, if it is for a good cause. Who is in charge of the fund, by the way?"

"We hoped you might take charge of the money, sir," said Wharton. "All the receipts are to be devoted to the fund, as we're standing the expenses ourselves."

"Very good. I will do so with pleasure. You may put my name down for a five-shilling seat, and I shall come in if possible, at all events, for a time."

"Thank you so much, sir!"

And Wharton went on his way highly elated.

Five minutes later he had added another line to the notice on the board in the hall:

**"UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF H. QUELCH, ESQ., M.A., MASTER, LOWER FOURTH."**

An addition to the notice which had a very impressive effect.

Hobson having been given the part of the Dauphin of France, he interested the Shell fellows in the scheme, and obtained a subscription from the master of the Shell.

Coker might have done the same in the Fifth; but Coker, like Achilles of old, was sulking in his tent.

Coker persisted that the idea was his idea—or so near that it made no difference—and he announced his intention of taking it out of the hands of the juniors, an announcement which was treated with utter disdain by those lively young gentlemen.

Exactly how Coker was going to do it was not apparent.

The genuine drama was going strong. Fellows in all sorts of weird guises chanted lines in the Remove passage.

Historical garb was carefully studied for the occasion, and between specimens borrowed from the school museum and "props" hired from the costumier's in Courtfield the amateur dramatists seemed likely to do well.

Bulstrode was clad in a buff jerkin and a steel cap when he received an urgent message from Mr. Quelch that evening, urging him to go to the Form-master's study at once. Bulstrode had forgotten all about his lines from Virgil

in his keenness to learn lines from Shakespeare. Mr. Quelch was not a gentleman who could be kept waiting, so Bulstrode went as he was.

Mr. Quelch started up from his chair as a villainous-looking ruffian in steel cap and buff jerkin and black beard came into his study.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the

Remove master. "What—what—"

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Bulstrode!"

"Yes, sir. I—I thought I'd better not keep you waiting, sir," said Bulstrode meekly.

"What does this ridiculous garb mean, Bulstrode?" the Form-master exclaimed sharply.

"I'm a murderer, sir!"

"What!"

"I'm a murderer."

"Bulstrode!"

"Bull's the other murderer, sir; but I'm the first murderer!"

"If this is a joke, Bulstrode—"

"Not at all, sir! I'm First Murderer, and Bull's Second Murderer in 'King John,' sir."

"Oh! In the play, you mean?"

"Of course, sir!" said Bulstrode, in surprise.

**MORE REAL  
PHOTOS OF  
FAMOUS  
FOOTBALLERS  
IN THE  
"MAGNET"  
THIS WEEK!**

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"You have not done your lines, Bulstrode. Upon the whole, as you seem very busy, I will excuse you. But you must not think of these matters any more in class-time."

"Thank you, sir!"

And the First Murderer marched away. Mr. Quelch laughed. But he resumed his usual severe expression as there was another tap at his study door.

"Come in!" said Mr. Quelch.

Bob Cherry came in, with a paper in his hand.

"My line, sir," he said.

"Your what?"

"My line, sir."

"Your lines, I suppose you mean, Cherry?" said Mr. Quelch somewhat tartly.

"No, sir, my line," said Bob Cherry innocently, laying the paper on the desk.

Mr. Quelch looked at the paper, and his eyes opened wider as he read what was written there. For this is what Bob Cherry had written: "I must not study Shakespeare during lessons fifty times."

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir?"

"This is not what I told you to write!"

"Oh, yes, sir,—word for word!"

Mr. Quelch looked long and hard at Bob Cherry, wondering whether it was possible that the junior had misunderstood him to that extent. Bob waited, with an expression of beatific innocence upon his face.

"You may go, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch at last.

"Thank you, sir!"

And Bob Cherry went. Outside the study he winked solemnly at the desert air.

Inside the study Mr. Quelch murmured: "Is that boy a fool, or a young rascal?" And he could not find a conclusive answer to that question.

#### THE SECOND CHAPTER.

##### The Dress Rehearsal.

**H**ORACE COKER was feeling exasperated.

The Remove play was going strong.

And Coker—the great Coker—was not in it.

Coker had come down off his lofty perch, and had offered to take a part in the play and leave the management in Remove hands.

It was a huge concession for the great Coker to make.

To his amazement it was not accepted.

The Remove fellows hadn't a part to assign to Coker. Wharton, in a moment of good nature, offered to make him Extra Murderer, if he liked. Coker didn't like!

Coker was exasperated. He was strolling in the Close with Potter and Greene, confiding to his somewhat bored chums his exasperation and indignation.

From the open window of the Rag came the sound of voices speaking in Shakespearean language.

Coker & Co. halted to listen.

"Hark at the young sweeps!" said Coker. "Offered me the part of Extra Murderer! Me!"

"They seem to be going on all right," Potter remarked. "Wharton is doing the King John bizney well. I hear they've sold all the seats."

Coker sniffed.

"Fellows have taken the seats to help on the charity, of course—subscribing money for the destitute seamen—my destitute seamen! They don't want to see those Remove kids playing the giddy ox."

"And I hear that all the fags are going in at a tanner a time," said Greene. "The takings will be big."

"Under the patronage of Quelch, too!" said Potter. "Wharton's got his head screwed on his shoulders the right way, Coker. With old Quelch present, no chance of a rag."

"That's his game, of course," growled Coker. "He suspected that some of us in the Fifth might come along and kick up a row."

"Wouldn't be good form, as it's for a charity."

"It wouldn't make any difference to the charity, as the audience have paid in advance, fathead! But I don't see how we can rag them with the masters present."

"Too risky."

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter loomed up in the gloom. "Do you hear those silly asses spouting in there? Rotten, ain't it?"

"Rotten isn't the word!" said Coker.

"They've left me out," said Bunter.

"Well that shows that they're not wholly idiots," said Coker.

"Oh, really!"

"Listen to that!" growled Coker.

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"That's Bob Cherry! He's been spouting that stuff all over the school for a week!"

Bob Cherry's deep voice came booming out of the open window of the Rag:

"Heat me those irons hot,  
And look thou standest well within  
the arras.  
When I strike my foot upon the bosom  
of the ground,  
Rush forth and bind the boy whom  
you shall find with me  
Fast to the chair!"

"They offered me the next bit," growled Coker. "Butstrode's doing it. Listen to him!"

"I hope your warrant will bear out the deed," said Bulstrode, in his character of Murderer.

Then came Bob's deep tones: "Uncleanly scruples! Fear not you! Look to it!"

Billy Bunter burst into a sudden chuckle.

"You fellows, come along, and you'll see some fun," he said, starting for the window of the Rag. "I'm going to give 'em some ventriloquism."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three Fifth-Formers followed Bunter. Outside the window, in the darkness of the Close, they could look into the lighted room and see without being seen. Billy Bunter cleared his throat with a little preparatory cough.

Bob Cherry, in the costume of Hubert, was standing before Frank Nugent as Prince Arthur. The Rag was supposed to be a dungeon for the nonce.

"Young lad, come forth! I have to say with you!" said Bob Cherry.

"Good-morrow, Hubert," said Nugent.

"Good-morrow, little Prince!"

"As little Prince, having so great a title to be more prince, as may be!" said Bob gloomily.

"Mercy on me! Methinks nobody should be sad but I."

"I guess that's rotten!"

Nugent broke off his speech, and glared at Fisher T. Fish. Fisher T. Fish was looking on, leaning on his spear, and quite unconscious of the fact that the ventriloquist of the Remove, outside the window, had borrowed his voice.

"What's that?" roared Nugent. "You fathead, Fishy! What do you know about it?"

"Eh?"

"Don't interrupt, Fishy," said Wharton.

"I guess I wasn't interrupting."

"Well, shut up!"

"I guess—"

"Order!" said the stage-manager, rapping on the table. "Any fellow who interrupts the rehearsal, especially with personal remarks, will be bumped!"

"Hear, hear!"

"But I guess I wasn't—I didn't—I—"

"Order!"

"Methinks nobody should be sad but I," went on Nugent, when order had been restored.

"Yet I remember when I was in France,

Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,

Only from wantonness! By my Christendom,

So I were out of prison, and kept sheep—"

"I guess that's piffle!"

"What!"

"I guess you can't do it!"

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"Bump him!" roared Wharton. "Hallo!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, as the angry crowd of soldiers, statesmen, noblemen, attendants, and pages closed upon him. "I guess—what's the row?—I reckon—Yah!"

Bump, bump!

"Now, you shut up!" said Wharton. Fisher T. Fish sat on the floor and gasped, more amazed than hurt.

"Look here!" he roared. "I—"

"Order!"

"But I guess—"

"Silence!"

"I guess you're all potty! I never said—"

"If he says another word, jump on him!" said Wharton.

Fisher T. Fish did not say another word. He scrambled away, and withdrew to the end of the room, bristling with indignation, and greatly astonished. Frank Nugent, somewhat disturbed himself by the interruption, resumed his speech:

"Yet I remember when I was in France,

Young gentlemen would be as sad as night,

Only from wantonness. By my—"

"Faith, and we've had that, Nugent darling!" said the voice of Micky Desmond.

"I'm doing it again," roared Nugent. "because that ass Fishy interrupted me! And if you interrupt me, Desmond, you'll get the same as Fish!"

Micky Desmond looked astounded.

"Sure, I wasn't interruptin' ye!"

"Well, don't do it again!"

"But, sure, I—"

"Silence!"

"By my Christendom," resumed Nugent.

"So I were out of prison and kept sheep,

I would be as happy as the day is long.

And so I would be here, but that I doubt my uncle practises more harm to me.

He is afraid of me—"

"ROT!"

"Who said that?" demanded Wharton, looking round.

"Find out!"

"Who's that? Who is it?"

"Rats!"

Wharton looked very angry.

"Look here! The fellow who's speaking had better come forward and say so! I tell you—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"You said that, Bolsover!" yelled Wharton.

Bolsover major jumped up.

"I? That I never!"

"You did! I heard you!"

"I didn't!"

"It was your silly voice, you silly ass!"

"Silly ass yourself!" retorted Bolsover major. "I didn't speak!"

"You did!"

"Liar!"

There was nothing more said. King John rushed at the King of France, and clasped him round the neck, and began to pommel him. Bolsover major replied in kind, and the rest of the dramatic company gathered round, all speaking at once, in great excitement.

There was a yell of laughter outside the window. The Fifth-Formers and the Remove ventriloquist were enjoying the scene.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's that?" roared Bob Cherry. He rushed to the window. "Bunter! You—you—you fat villain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chuck it, you silly asses!" shouted Bob, addressing King John and Bolsover major. "It was Bunter's ventriloquism—"

"Oh!"

The two kings separated, both looking considerably the worse for their combat.

"I said I didn't speak!" growled Bolsover.

Wharton dabbed his nose with his handkerchief.

"Well, it was your voice," he said. "Oh, you're an ass! You ought to have known—"

"Look here—"

"Let's find Bunter, and slaughter him," said Johnny Bull.

There was a rush to the window. But Wharton called back the angry dramatists.

"Hold on; you can slaughter Bunter afterwards. Shut the window, and let's get on with the giddy rehearsal!"

The window was slammed down. Outside, in the Close, Coker & Co. chuckled gleefully. Inside, the voice of Prince Arthur again took up the tale:

"He is afraid of me, and I of him!"

"Is it my fault that I was Geoffrey's son?"

Etcetera! And the dress rehearsal finished without any further interruptions.

—

ETCETERA!

And the dress rehearsal finished without any further interruptions.

ETCETERA!

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ETCETERA!

And the dress rehearsal finished without any further interruptions.



Coker had consequently given the matter a great deal of thought, and hence his triumphant announcement to Potter and Greene, on Saturday afternoon, that he had "got it."

Potter and Greene looked politely interested.

"Got what?" asked Potter.  
 "Remittance from Aunt Judy?" asked Greene, with growing interest. "If it's a postal-order, Coker, you can cash it with Mrs. Mimble. She won't mind changing it. I'll come with you, if you like."

Coker snorted.  
 "I've got the idea!" he explained.  
 "What idea?"

"It's up to us to stop those Remove kids from collaring our scheme, and making the giddy play a success," said Coker.

"Well, the cheeky young beggars ought to be put in their place," said Potter. "But I don't see how—"

"That's because you haven't got my brains, my son," said Coker loftily.

"Thank goodness!" murmured Potter.

"Eh! What's that?"

"Jolly few chaps have got brains like you, Coker, old man," said Potter blandly. "What's the idea? I'm as keen as anything about it. So's Greene. Aren't you, Greene?"

"Frightfully keen!" yawned Greene.  
 "Get it off your chest, Coker. We'll help you!"

"They're going to give the play in the lecture-hall," said Coker. "There's a raised dais at the end of the hall, as you know, and they're going to use that as a stage. They've got a curtain rigged up in front of it, and scenes arranged for the wings."

"Yes, I've seen it."  
 "Do you know what is under the stage?" asked Coker.

Potter stared.  
 "Nothing, I suppose. It's raised about three feet above the lecture-room level," he said. "There's nothing underneath, excepting cobwebs and things, I suppose?"

"Exactly!" said Coker. "That's what I've been thinking about. Now, there's a ventilator under the stage, of course."

"I know that. But what on earth—"  
 "The ventilator is a large one, and there are bars across it. It looks out on the passage behind the house, between the School House and the gym," said Coker. "If the bars were got away, a fellow could get through, and crawl right under the stage."

"Rather a dusty job," said Greene.  
 "I suppose a chap needn't mind a little dust, when it's for the honour of his Form, and to put those cheeky kids in their place?"

"Ahem! No! But how are you going to do any good by sneaking into a ventilator and getting under the stage?"

"Three chaps under the stage could muck up the play. We're going to sneak in there, and take a megaphone with us."

"A—a what?"

"A megaphone—thing that makes a frightful row, you know. They use it in Wagner's operas to make a giant's voice, you know. Fafnir is the chap's name. Well, if Fafnir started bellowing under the stage when they're doing their giddy play, I fancy it would turn the whole thing into a giddy joke. What?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "I can hire a megaphone in Court-field," went on Coker, grinning with glee over his great idea. "I'll cut over there on my bike, and bring it back this afternoon. You fellows can file through



**BEARDING THE LION!**—Mr. Quelch started up from his chair as a villainous-looking ruffian in steel cap and buff jerkin came into his study. "Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Form-master. "What does this mean, Bulstrode?" "I'm a murderer, sir!" (See Chapter 1.)

the bars on the ventilator, and get them away. There are only two bars, and they're old and rusty, and won't take you ten minutes. When the performance begins we'll be under the stage, all ready. I'll have the megaphone, and you two chaps can have bike horns."

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Ripping!" said Greene.  
 "Gorgeous!" said Potter heartily.  
 Coker chuckled.  
 "I fancy it will take the edge off the giddy tragedy, my infants. They'll be sorry they bagged our idea, and left us out of it."

"What-ho!"  
 While the Remove fellows were busy making their final preparations in the lecture-hall, the chums of the Fifth were equally busy outside it.

Potter and Greene had no difficulty in filing away the bars of the ventilator unobserved. A little later, Coker came in on his bicycle, with a large parcel.

The performance was booked for seven.

At a quarter to seven, Coker, Potter, and Green strolled round the School House with an air of exaggerated carelessness, which would certainly have put the Remove fellows upon their guard if they had observed Coker & Co.

But they were all busy indoors.  
 Coker peered into the ventilator, from which the bars had been removed. Inside was a dark hollow, with a very musty smell.

"Doesn't look nice, does it?" murmured Potter.

"That's all right—we can stand it!" said Coker.

"I'll tell you what, Coker," said Potter, as if struck by a sudden brilliant idea. "You can go in and make a row

with the megaphone, and we'll keep watch outside, in—in case anybody should come, you know."

"That's a jolly good idea," said Greene heartily. "Coker will manage it all right, and we—we really ought to look after Coker, by—by keeping watch."

Coker frowned.  
 "You get in first, Potter!" he said.  
 "But I—I'm going to keep watch!"  
 "You're not; you're going in!"

Potter submitted to the inevitable, and crawled in, with some difficulty, through the opening. He snorted and sneezed when he was inside. There was a sound of a bump as he knocked his head on the under side of the stage.

"Ow! Gr-o-oh!"  
 "What's the matter?" growled Coker.  
 "Ow! I've knocked my napper! Oh!"  
 "Don't be a careless ass, then! You get in next, Greeney!"

"Hadn't I b-b-better keep watch outside, Coker?" stammered Greene.  
 "Get in!" roared Coker.

"But, I—I say—"  
 "Are you going to get in, fathead?"

Greene gave a groan, and crawled in after Potter. Then Coker handed in the megaphone, and followed his chums into the dark aperture.

"Grooh!" muttered Potter. "There's a spider on my neck! Grooh!"  
 "Blow the spider!"

"Look here—"  
 "Shut up! Don't want them to hear us till we're ready—ow!"

"What's the matter with you, Coker?"

"Ow! I've bumped my beastly head Yow!"

Potter chuckled.

"Don't be a careless ass, then," he said.

"Oh, shut up!"

Overhead there was a sound of many feet. The Remove players were getting ready. The lecture-hall was already filling with the audience.

"Jolly near time!" said Coker, rubbing his head. "It's worth while. I know it ain't comfy here, you fellows!"

"Ow! It jolly well isn't!"

"But we'll make them sit up!"

"Oh, don't grumble! Think of what they'll look like when the megaphone and the bike horns start!" chuckled Coker.

And Potter and Green chuckled, too! Their chuckle was echoed without, but they did not hear it. And Billy Bunter, who had watched them from a distance with great interest, rolled away, chuckling.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Very Wet.

"CURTAIN goes up in five minutes," said Bob Cherry in the green-room, partitioned off at the back of the stage.

"We're all ready!"

"The readyfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton looked round him with considerable satisfaction.

He had worked hard as coach and stage-manager, and he was satisfied with the result of his labours.

A peep from behind the curtain showed that the hall was already filling. The Greyfriars tragedians were pleased with themselves.

Marjorie Hazeldene, who was to play the part of Queen Eleanor, had arrived with Miss Clara, and she was in costume now, quite ready, and Miss Clara was her maid of honour, and looked very pretty in the part.

"It's going to be a regular success," said Bob Cherry. "I had an idea that Coker would try to muck up the show in some rotten way. But he's taking it lying down."

"The honourable Coker is not up to our esteemed weight," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"No fear!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get out, Bunter, old man!" said Wharton. "Only members of the company are allowed here."

Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles.

"I say, Wharton—"

"Buzz off!"

"Roll out!"

"On second thoughts, I'm willing to take a small part," said Bunter. "I'll go on as a councillor or a statesman, if you like. I've got the things."

"You'll go off as a silly ass!" said Bob Cherry. "Clear!"

"Then you'll jolly well have the performance mucked up!" said Bunter.

Bob Cherry took the fat junior by the ear.

"If there is any ventriloquism, Bunty, old man, you will be squashed on the spot. Young Penfold has undertaken to keep a special eye on you, and at the first sign of any of your tricks you're going to be hammered hard. See?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Now clear off!"

"All right; I won't say a word, then, and you can let Coker bust up the show," said Bunter.

And he rolled away with a grunt.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's that about Coker?" demanded Bob quickly. "Is Coker up to any tricks?"

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NEXT  
TUESDAY!

**"DEALING WITH THE INVADER!"**

A SPLENDID STORY OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS  
By FRANK RICHARDS.

"I'm not going to say anything."

"Collar him!" shouted Bob.

King John and the King of France and Prince Arthur seized Bunter at once. The fat junior was promptly rolled back again.

"Now, then, what's that about Coker?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really—"

"Is Coker playing any game on us?" asked Nugent.

The Owl of the Remove chuckled.

"Yes, he is. I happened to hear him speaking to Potter, and I happened to see him."

"Yes, we know how you happen to hear and see things!" growled Bob Cherry, with a curl of the lip. "Tell us what it is."

"Not unless I'm given a bit in the play!" said Bunter firmly.

"He's spoofing," said Bulstrode. "He wants to spoof us into putting him on. Kick him out!"

"Hold on!" said Wharton. "I fancy there's something in it. Look here, Billy, you know you can't act. But if you've spotted Coker in any game, and you help us to stop him, we'll let you come to the feed after the play."

Billy Bunter considered.

"Good spread!" he asked.

"Oh, ripping!"

"Well, it's a go. Of course, you ought to put me in the cast. You need at least one really good actor to make the thing go."

"What is it about Coker?"

"Honour bright about the feed?" said Bunter suspiciously.

"Yes, yes! Get on; it's close on time for the kick-off now."

"Well, I know where Coker is!" grinned Bunter.

"Where is he?"

Bunter pointed downward. The juniors followed the direction of his finger, and stared at him in surprise.

"On the floor?" said Tom Brown.

"Ha, ha! No. Under it!"

"Under the floor!" yelled the Removites.

"Yes."

"My, hat! What on earth—"

"They've filed the bars off the ventilator and crawled in under the stage," Bunter explained. "Coker's got a megaphone, and Potter and Green have taken bike horns. They're going to start making an awful row in there when the

play begins. You fellows won't be able to hear one another speak; and the audience— He, he, he!"

"Oh, stop your he-he-he-heing, you fat chump!" growled Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!"

"And they're under the stage now?" said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath.

"He, he! Yes."

"And the play's timed to start in three more minutes," said Nugent.

"It's rotten!"

Wharton's jaw set grimly.

"We'll have 'em out!" he said. "Suppose you go on and tell the audience we start in ten minutes, Marjorie. They'll take it nicely from a nice girl."

Marjorie smiled.

"With pleasure," she said.

"Ten minutes will be enough," said Harry. "Keep the audience in a good temper. You fellows come with me."

"But we can't crawl under the stage and tackle 'em," said Bulstrode. "It will muck up our costumes."

"It must be horribly musty and dirty under there; and if they fight—" began Johnny Bull.

Wharton shook his head.

"We're not going under the stage," he said.

"But they won't come out if we call 'em."

"I know they won't!"

"They'd be only too glad to get us underneath there, and muck up our costumes, and spoil our form for the parts!" growled Nugent.

"What are you going to do, Wharton?"

"More ways than one of killing a cat and catching Coker," said Harry Wharton. "They'll be jolly glad to come out before we've finished with them."

"But what?"

"I know what to do. Come on!"

Wharton led the way, and a crowd of fellows followed him in puzzled dismay. It looked as if Coker & Co. would have the matter all their own way. Without ruining the costumes they had prepared for the play, the juniors could not tackle them in their dusty retreat. And if they stopped to change first, and changed again afterwards, the play would be delayed long past the patience of the audience. Besides, the three Fifth-Formers could easily hold the fort if they chose, and keep their assailants from getting in at the narrow entrance. How Coker & Co. were to be dislodged was a mystery.

But Wharton explained as he hurried out at the head of his queer-looking followers. Soldiers and princes and kings looked very odd in the open Close.

"The garden-hose!" Wharton said briefly. "Gosling left it in the Head's garden, and we can get it here, and connect it up in the Close. When we turn the water on them—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

King John & Co. roared. There was no doubt that the garden-hose was an argument that the Fifth Form japers were not prepared to deal with.

Coker & Co. were just preparing for business. Seven o'clock had sounded from the old tower of Greyfriars.

"Here goes for a start!" said Potter. And he emitted an ear-splitting note from the bicycle-horn.

"Tooo-oot!"

"Hallo!" exclaimed Coker. "Look out!"

A face was looking in at the open ventilator.

It was not an easily recognisable face, as it was made up to imitate his Majesty

(Continued on page 28.)



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### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### A Catch and a Miss.

**P**LAY up, St. Jim's!" The faces of the juniors who lined the boundaries of Little Side showed the anxiety they felt. Frank Monk and his fellow-Grammarians were anxious, too, but their anxiety savoured more of excitement.

The St. Jim's juniors, captained by Tom Merry, had been dismissed for 126 runs, and the Grammarians at the fall of the ninth wicket were only 8 short of their opponents' total.

"Well hit, sir!"

The ball was sent speeding to the boundary again, and Frank Monk almost danced in anticipation. His side now only needed 5 to beat their powerful rivals, and Gordon Gay, who had batted splendidly half through the innings, was still at the wickets.

Mont Blanc was his partner, and he had just come in—last man—to see Gay score a boundary from the last ball of the over.

Frank Monk knew that if the French junior could only keep his end up, Gordon Gay could be trusted to get the necessary runs.

Tom Merry's face was set as he tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn, the champion New House bowler.

"Get him out, Fatty!" he muttered.

Wynn grinned confidently. He did not expect Mont Blanc to stand up to his famous deliveries for long.

Taking his characteristic short run, he sent down one of his fastest balls. Mont Blanc cautiously placed his bat in the way and sent the ball three yards down the pitch.

"Come along!" yelled Gordon Gay.

The French youth ran as if for his life, and was only just in when the ball was thrown to his end.

"Whew!" he whistled. "Zat was what you call ze close shave, n'est ce pas?"

The St. Jim's team forbore to grin. The position was much too tense for that. Gordon Gay had the bowling

again, and he seemed set enough to pull off the match.

The Welsh junior put all he knew into his next delivery.

Click!

The St. Jim's juniors round the ropes groaned involuntarily as Gay cut the ball through the slips. Then they yelled with delight as a curly-headed figure leaped high to touch the ball down with his fingers and catch it as it dropped.

St. Jim's had won!

"Hurrah! Well caught, Tommy!"

The team rushed at Tom Merry in a body, and he was carried shoulder-high from the playing-pitch. The spectators surged upon the field, and it was a sort of triumphal procession which bore the junior captain back to the pavilion.

"Not such a bad catch," admitted the great George Alfred Grundy to his faithful henchmen, Wilkins and Gunn. "Not that I wouldn't have held it if I'd been in the slips."

Wilkins stared at his leader in amazement.

"Why," he said, "you'd never hold a catch like that in a hundred years!"

"Look here, Wilkins," began Grundy warmly, "I'm the best cricketer in the Lower School, in all St. Jim's in fact, and I'm only kept out of the school team because sheer blinking favouritism—"

"We don't think!" murmured Gunn.

"It's a blessed pity you don't, Gunn," said the great George Alfred witheringly. "You'd know what I'm saying is the truth, if you did!"

Gunn grinned rather sarcastically.

"Look here, Gunn," roared Grundy, "if you think I'm going to put up with your blessed cheek, you're mistaken! I tell you I'm left out of the junior eleven because they're afraid I'd show 'em up. If I'd been playing to-day, d'you think we'd have been nearly beaten by the Grammar School?"

"No," replied Gunn, with decision. "We'd have lost hands down!"

"Why—why, I'll—I'll slaughter you!" spluttered the cricket genius angrily.

"Hallo, hallo!" broke in Jack Blake.

# A FALSE ALARM!



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



:: By ::

## MARTIN CLIFFORD.

"Quarrelling again. I'm surprised at you!"

Grundy glared at his interrupter ferociously.

"Grundy's just trying to convince us he'd have held that catch of Tom Merry's," explained Wilkins.

Blake grinned. The thought of Grundy making such a catch, unless it was by accident, tickled him.

Just then the dulcet tones of the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy of the Fourth were heard above the general excitable din.

"Come along, deah, boys. Let's celebrate our victory."

"Good idea!" said Jack Blake heartily.

"Lead on, Macduff!"

"Pway come along, deah boys; it's my treat."

The "deah boys" needed little further persuasion. The swell of St. Jim's was generous to a fault, and the juniors knew that Gussy's noble relations kept him supplied with "fivers."

"I suppose we'd better help him spend his money," said Monty Lowther philosophically. "He'll only waste it if we don't."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A surging crowd of cricketers and spectators followed the jubilant Gussy to the tuckshop. The good dame's eyes almost started out of her head as she caught sight of the host of customers.

"Gingah-beah foah ewevybody, please, Mrs. Taggles."

"Yes, Master D'Arcy," said the old lady with alacrity.

"Pway walk up and take yoah dwinks, deah boys," directed Gussy hospitably.

"What-ho!"

Soon the assembled juniors had each a drink, and Arthur Augustus rose to the occasion with a speech.

"Gentlemen," he began, fixing his monocle firmly in his eye, "it is hardly necessary foah me to say how pwoud we are of our victory. Of course, we deserved to win, bai Jove!"

"Rats!" exclaimed the Grammarians, who had come along with the others.

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

NEXT TUESDAY!

"FAITHFUL TO THE END!"

"Weally—"  
 "Shush, Gussy!" said Jack Blake, in an undertone.

Arthur Augustus smiled indulgently at the defeated Grammarians, and went on: "I pwapose, deah boys, to dwink to the health of Tom Mewwy, our skippah, who bwrought off the catch which won the game. Gentlemen, Tom Mewwy!" Tom Merry's health was drunk with enthusiasm by the fellows.

"Shut up, you asses!" said the junior captain, as the fellows gave him enormous thumps upon the back. Then someone struck up "For he's a jolly good fellow," and Tom Merry was glad to rush out of the little tuckshop to hide his blushing face.

"Bai Jove! I suppose I'd bettah settle up. How much, Mrs. Taggles, please?"

"One pound, four shillings, Master D'Arcy," said the good dame primly. Gussy plunged his hand into the inner pocket of his blazer. His chums stood by, expecting to see him bring out his handsome Russian-leather note-case.

"Bai Jove!"  
 "What's up, Gussy?"  
 "It's gone!"  
 "What's gone, you ass?" demanded Jack Blake.

"My note-case, deah boy."  
 "Your note-case!" echoed Blake incredulously.

"Yaas!"  
 Gussy commenced to search all his pockets feverishly, but the result was a blank.

"It's gone!" said the swell of St. Jim's hopelessly.

"Rot!" whispered Jack Blake. "You've dropped it in the pavy. We'll settle the bill. Don't say any more here."

The combined resources of Herries, Digby, and Blake were pooled, which just enabled them to meet the rightful demands of the tuckshop-keeper.

"Now let's see what that ass has done with his money," said Blake grimly.

All together, they made their way back to the pavilion and searched it through, but no wallet could they find.

Meanwhile, Gordon Gay had been given a rousing send-off by the rest of the cricketers, who at present knew nothing of D'Arcy's loss.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**

**Baggy, the News-Spreader.**

"H E A R D the news?"

Baggy Trimble's podgy face appeared round the door of the end study.

"Buzz off, we're busy!"

"Eh? What's that?" demanded Baggy.

"I asked if you fellows had heard the news?"

"Sorry, I'm stony! Try another mug!" said Monty Lowther.

Baggy Trimble looked startled.

"What do you mean?" he demanded warmly.

"Aren't you trying to borrow some money?" asked Lowther, in a tone of polite inquiry.

"Eh? No, of course I wasn't!"

"Help!" gasped the humorist faintly.

"He says he isn't trying to borrow any money, Tommy."

Tom Merry glanced from the indignant face of the Peeping Tom of the Fourth to the grinning face of his chum. "What does he want, then?" he asked.

"I asked if you rotters had heard the news?" howled Trimble.

Manners shook his head.

"No," he said solemnly, "our boot-laces haven't been coming undone lately!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't hear this through my boot-lace coming undone!" howled Baggy.

"I—er—happened to be musing near the pavilion."

"It's another of his eavesdropping games," said Tom Merry disgustedly.

"We don't want to hear secrets learnt like that, Trimble."

"Isn't a secret!" roared Baggy.

"It's something you ought to know. D'Arcy will come along presently to see if you've got it."

"Got what?" demanded Tom Merry.

"His pocket-book, of course!" replied Baggy wildly.

"It was stolen from his blazer pocket during the match."

"Lost his pocket-book!" ejaculated Manners in surprise.

"About fifty pounds in it, too," stated Trimble, rather inaccurately, it must be admitted; but Baggy loved creating a sensation.

"Whew!"

The Terrible Three looked at one another in amazement, and then Tom Merry let his gaze fall upon the triumphant Paul Pry of the school.

"Were you suggesting that Gussy would come along to the end study to find his property?" he asked in a level voice.

Baggy smelt trouble.

"Eh—er—no! Of course I shouldn't dream of suggesting you'd taken it, Merry."

"You'd better not!" advised Tom warmly.

"It would be more likely to be Talbot or somebody like that. You can never trust these reformed characters, you know."

In his efforts to look virtuous, Baggy Trimble failed to notice the expressions upon the faces of the Terrible Three, which boded ill for the eavesdropper.

"Why, you fat toad," said Tom Merry disgustedly, "you're not fit to be mentioned in the same sentence as Talbot!"

"Hallo, hallo!" exclaimed a cheerful voice. "Who's taking my name in vain?"

Baggy Trimble jumped as the tall, athletic figure of Talbot walked in.

"Of course, Talbot," he said with what he fondly imagined to be a winning smile, "we shouldn't dream of accusing you of taking Gussy's money, as I was saying, although you used to be a cracksman."

Talbot reached over and grasped the fat junior's prominent ear between his finger and thumb in a grip which reminded Baggy of a vice.

"Ow—yow—leggo!"

"What shall I do with him, Tommy?" asked Talbot.

"Oh, kick him out!"

With a deft twist of the ear he was grasping, Talbot swung Trimble round and neatly kicked him through the open doorway.

"Yah! Rotters!" howled Baggy, from the safety of the passage.

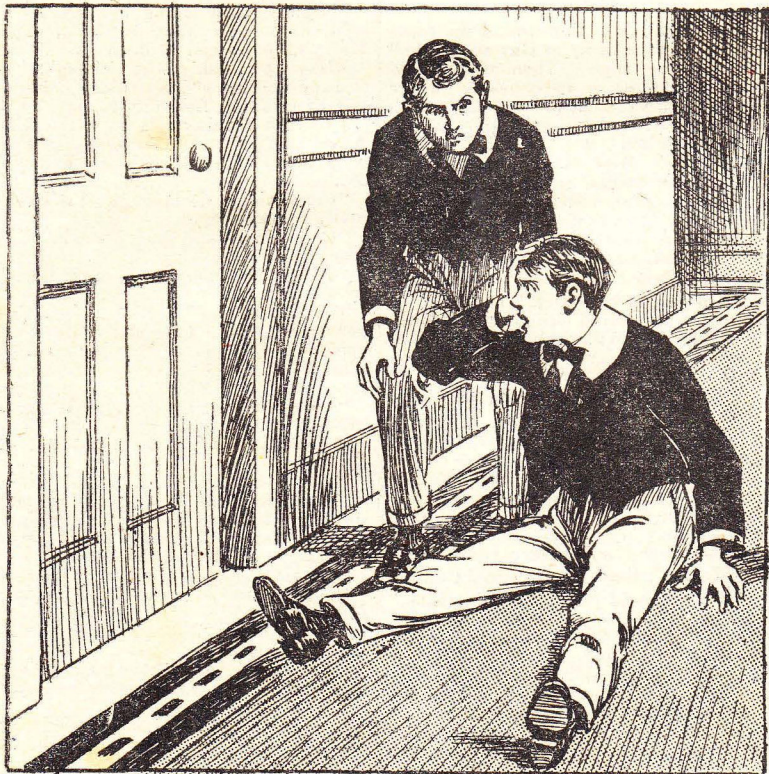
Talbot made a threatening movement with his foot and Baggy scuttled away as fast as his fat legs would take him.

Talbot laughed as he entered the end study once more and shut the door.

(Continued on page 17.)

A NEW LONG TALE OF ST. JIM'S.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



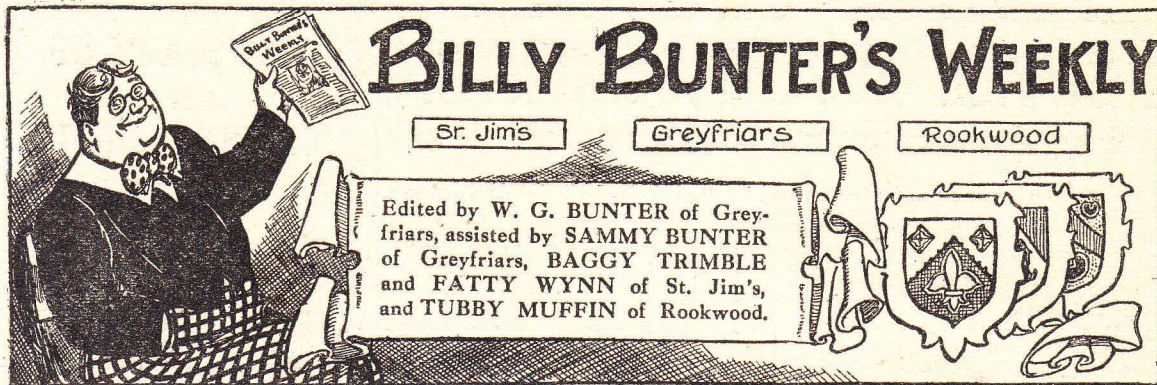
**NOTHING DOING!**—Suddenly the door of Kildare's study was opened and Grundy came flying out. Bump! The door slammed, and the would-be detective sat up, staring dazedly at the closed door. "What have you been annoying Kildare for?" demanded Wilkins. (See Chapter 3.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 186.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"FAITHFUL TO THE END!"

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



## IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By Billy Bunter.

My Dear Readers,—I suppose you are all familiar with the story of King Alfred and the cakes?

It appears that this silly chump of a monarch went into a country cottage one day, and the housewife was baking some cakes. She said to him: "I'm just going out into the back yard, Alf, to feed the ducks. Keep your eye on the cakes while I'm gone, and see that they don't get burnt."

"All serene, ma'am," said King Alfred. But he had so many other things to think about that he forgot the cakes, and they were burnt to sinders.

Don't you think, dear readers, that King Alfred was an awful ass? Not because he burnt the cakes, but because he missed a glorious opportunity of eating them while the housewife's back was turned. If I had been in King Alfred's shooze I'd have polished off every crumb!

Some of you may wonder why I have dragged up this historickie anecdote in my Editorial. The fact is, I have just had a rather simmilar eggspérience to King Alfred; but whereas he let his opportunity slide, I grasped mine with both hands!

Gwynne of the Sixth was having some pancakes fried, and he asked me to keep an eye on them while he popped into Wingate's studdy to rekwest the loan of a lemon.

The moment Gwynne disappeared those pancakes began to disappear, too! I didn't wait any time. I am not only a long-distance gorgor, as you might say, but a sprinter. It doesn't take me very long to shift a few pancakes.

When Gwynne returned to the studdy he found an empty frying-pan and a very full Bunter.

"Where have my pancakes gone?" he hooded.

I tapped my stummack significantly. "Inquire within!" I said, with a chuckle.

And then Gwynne gave me a round dozen with a cricket-stump, and a hundred lines into the bargain. But never mind. Those pancakes were truly delishus!

Yours sinseerly,

YOUR EDITOR.

## SONG TO SALLY SAWYER!

(A Waitress in the Courtfield Bunshop.)

Written by DICK PENFOLD.

Sung by LORD MAULEVERER.

Over in Courtfield Town strays a fair flapper,

Wearin' a bow of brown tied to her napper.

Dearer and brighter than jewel or pearl,  
Dwells she on duty there, Sawyer, my girl—

Dwells she on duty there, Sawyer, my girl!

'Twas on a summer eve that I first met her;

Many an eve shall pass ere I forget her,  
Sure as I'm Mauly, a love-stricken earl,  
I will be faithful to Sawyer, my girl—  
Charmed an' delighted with Sawyer, my girl!

Off to the picture-house Sally I've taken,  
Fed her with bon-bons an' biscuits an' bacon.

If I forsake her I'd be a harsh churl!  
I will be faithful to Sawyer, my girl—  
Friendly an' faithful to Sawyer, my girl!

When at the bunshop I linger an' dally,  
Oh, it's a treat to be pally with Sally!  
Gazin' with jyy at each dimple an' curl,  
Laughin' an' chaffin' with Sawyer, my girl—

Walkin' an' talkin' with Sawyer, my girl!

She is too kind an' fond ever to grieve me.

Never will Sally distress or deceive me.  
Let all the nations their banners unfurl,  
Payin' due homage to Sawyer, my girl—  
The Belle of the Bunshop—Sawyer, my girl!

### IMPORTANT NOTICE!

THERE WILL BE ANOTHER SPECIAL NUMBER OF MY MAGNIFICENT "WEEKLY" NEXT WEEK, YOU FELLOWS. GO TO YOUR NEWSAGENTS TO-DAY AND ORDER A COPY.

W. G. B.

## POPULAR PERSONALITIES!

Baggy Trimble.

My name is Baggy Trimble,  
I am lively, gay, and nimble,  
And quite the fattest fellow in the school.  
I feed my inner man  
Every blessed chance I can,  
Yet never have the feeling that I'm full.  
I work both well and meekly  
On the staff of "Bunter's Weekly."  
And I'm quite a decent fellow, as a rule!

That's me to a "T," dear readers! You will notice that the spelling is rather different from usual; but Fatty Wynn, my fellow sub, would insist on correcting my manuscript. Billy Bunter has asked me to tell you something about myself. But I think you ought to be as familiar with me by this time as if were your brother.

Now let me give you a list of my accomplishments. I can swim like a hare and run like a fish (dear me, I seem to have got a bit mixed!). I can sing like a Dempsey, and box like a lark—I mean, box like a Dempsey and sing like a lark.

Play cricket? I should jolly well say so! I'm a fine, forceful, fearless batsman, and a deadly, dashing, destructive bowler. One of these days I expect I shall play for my native county of Plumshire.

My pater keeps a big place called Trimble Hall, you know. It stands in ten thousand acres of ground.

Strictly speaking, I am a titled person, but I dropped the title when I came to St. Jim's. "The Viscount Bagley Trimble" is too much of a mouthful, you know. Besides, it's swank!

We have a coat of arms in our family, but I never wear it. I prefer an ordinary Eton jacket. I'm a modest sort of fellow, you see—quiet and unassuming.

Of course, I am a born journalist. Look at my wonderful imagination!

Directly Billy Bunter launched his weekly, he said, "The first thing I must do is to get Baggy Trimble on my staff. Baggy knows what's what and who's who!"

I have put in a lot of bard work on the "Weekly," and I am the special representative for St. Jim's. (Fatty Wynn doesn't count.)

I know I am immensely popular with all my reader-chums, and I should like to send each of them a signed photograph of myself. But, alas, it can't be done!

Let us burst into song once more!

My name is Baggy Trimble,  
And my brains would fill a thimble,  
I'm the fattest, funniest fellow in the laud.  
I'm a mighty man at cricket,  
And the way I guard my wicket  
Is voted to be absolutely grand!  
I am not an ignoramous,  
I am fat and fit and famous,  
And the hero of St. Jim's, you understand!  
THE POPULAR.—No. 186.

# SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS.

NOTE.—Our small advertisements are inserted at the rate of one penny per line (minimum two lines). Greyfriars fellows should send their advertisements to W. G. Bunter, Study No. 7; St. Jim's fellows to D. L. Wynn, New House; and Rookwood fellows to Reginald Muffin, Fourth Form, Classical Side. Remittances should accompany advertisements in each case. Battered or foreign coins refused, also trouser buttons.

## BIRTHS.

ON Saturday, the 22nd inst., at Greyfriars, four tabby kittens. All doing well in their basket in the school kitchen.

## MARRIAGES.

HUGGINS—MUGGINS. On Wednesday last, at the Courtfield Register Office, Harry Huggins, bricklayer, of Courtfield, to Martha Muggins, formerly an assistant cook at Greyfriars School. A party of Removites formed a Guard of Honour.

## DEBTS.

IN THE GREYFRIARS COURTS OF JUSTICE. Know all men by these presents, that there will be a Special Creditors' Meeting in the Junior Common-room at Greyfriars, on Friday evening next, for the purpose of investigating the financial affairs of the following debtors: Bunter (W. G.), Bunter (S. T.), and Fish (F. T.). Each creditor is requested to bring a cricket stump!

## PERSONAL.

BERTHA: C u same time place Sat. Trust u r well.—MAULY.

BOLSOVER MAJOR: I won't be called a funk, by a meen-soled skunk. You'll tremble in every lim when you meet me in the Jim!—W. G. B.

HARRY WHARTON: Your cricket challenge accepted. St. Jim's eleven will travel to Greyfriars on Wednesday afternoon next, and we hope to make shavings of you!—TOM MERRY.

LOST, somewhere between John o'Groats and Land's End, a pair of silk spats. Anyone returning same to A. A. D'ARCY, St. Jim's, will be handsomely rewarded.

PATRONISE THE ROOKWOOD TUCKSHOP! Proprietor, Sergeant Kettle. Master Muffin, one of my regular customers, declares: "Day by day, in every way, I get fatter and fatter and fatter! And it's all through Sergeant Kettle's tasty, tempting, toothsome tuck!"

WILL someone adopt a baby monkey? Owner finds it too big a handful.—HARRY NOBLE, School House, St. Jim's.

HAIR permanently removed from face by painless process. Don't go about with an unsightly moustache, that makes you the laughing-stock of the school! Send stamp for particulars of my treatment, to FISHER T. FISH, Greyfriars School.

THE POPULAR.—No. 186.

HORACE C. (Greyfriars): May you take me to the cinema? Certainly not, Horace.—PHYLLIS.

## SITUATIONS VACANT.

FAG WANTED. Must be clean, sober, and properly dressed. No ink-stained ragamuffins need apply. Good wages for capable and industrious youth. 1s. per week, paid yearly by cheque. Everything found. Comfortable home, and no bullying. Apply, with references from previous employer, to C. Knowles, Rookwood School.

SMALL BOY wanted to take bulldog for a walk daily, while owner is at cornet practice.—Apply GEORGE HERRIES, School House, St. Jim's.

STUDY CARETAKER wanted, whilst owner is away on holiday. Must be thoroughly trustworthy. The last caretaker I had walked off with my silver in his pocket.—Apply to LORD MAULEVERER, "Slackersville," Remove Passage, Greyfriars School.

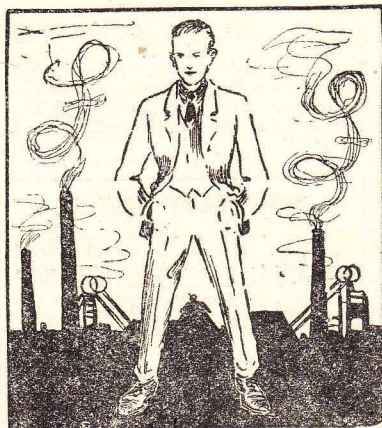
GRUBBY URCHIN required, to clean master's golf clubs and make himself generally useful. No wages offered, but the work will keep the successful applicant out of mischief.—Apply Mr. SELBY, St. James' College.

SHORTHAND REPORTERS wanted, for BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY. Must be capable of reporting anything, from a tea-fight to a tram collision. Topping pay for smart, energetic men. Twopence per column for snappy, descriptive articles.—Apply to D. L. WYNN, Sub-Editor and St. Jim's Representative, New House, St. Jim's.

TRAVELLERS WANTED, to sell my home-maid toffy. Good commission for those who push the sail of my wonderful sweetmeat. My toffy is packed in airtite tins, and is acknowledged to be the finest toffy on the market.—Apply TUBBY MUFFIN, Classical Side, Rookwood School.

## PEEPS INTO THE FUTURE.

By George Kerr.



MARK LINLEY.  
(A wealthy factory owner.)

# THE DIARY OF A CRICKET BALL!

## MONDAY.

I was exhibited in the window of a sports outfitter's in Courtfield. Quite a number of Greyfriars fellows came along and admired my wonderful round figure. Presently one of them—a podgy youth named Bunter—stepped into the shop. "How much is that cricket-ball?" he inquired, pointing to me.

"Fifteen shillings, sir."  
"What! Fifteen bob for a compo. ball!"

"It isn't a composition ball, sir; it's a leather one. And a jolly nice ball at that!"

"Oh, all right!" growled Bunter. "I suppose I shall have to pay the price you ask. Tell you what. I'll give you a bob cash down, and the remainder in fourteen weekly instalments."

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" said the shopkeeper indignantly. "Get out!" And he booted the fat junior off the premises with a lusty kick.

I was eventually purchased by Bob Cherry, of the Remove. And I reposed in Bob's pocket all the way to Greyfriars.

## TUESDAY.

I hoped to start work to-day on the cricket-field; but it was a beastly wet day, and I spent it on the mantelpiece in Study No. 13. My coat is still a bright red, and I have not yet been soiled. But wait! I heard my owner say it was a half-holiday to-morrow, and that there's going to be a cricket-match. I guess my services will be in demand.

## WEDNESDAY.

I started work in real earnest to-day. Had a terribly gruelling time! The Remove batsmen flogged me all over the place. I don't mind rolling gracefully to the boundary, but I strongly object to being despatched through the window of the gym. I also dislodged some of the tiles from the roof of the pavilion, thanks to a lusty smite on the part of my owner. By the time match was over I was bruised and sore in several places.

## THURSDAY.

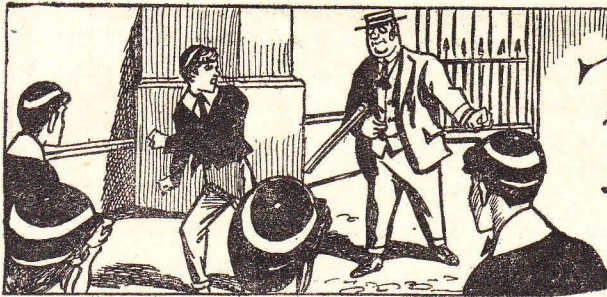
Bob Cherry took me into the Form-room, and I was confiscated by Mr. Quelch, and placed in his desk with a miscellaneous collection of penknives, slabs of toffee, marbles, tops, pea-shooters, etc. I remained in captivity all day.

## FRIDAY.

I was released, and taken on to the cricket-field. Johnny Bull slogged me over into Major Thresher's garden, and I went crashing through the glass roof of the summer-house. The peppery old major had several sorts of a fit. He caught hold of me, and took me into his coal-cellar, so that the juniors wouldn't be able to get hold of me. But Bob Cherry found me again when it was dark. Trust old Bob not to be beaten.

## SATURDAY.

I am settling down to the life here, and with careful treatment I shall live as long as the cricket season lasts. Will batsmen please endeavour to hit me gently? Good hard clumps are rather dangerous, as I've got a weak heart!



# The Amazing Miracle!

By DICK RUSSELL.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the latest?" Bob Cherry pointed to a public notice, which had been pasted on one of the hoardings in Friardale Lane. "Let's see what it's all about," said Harry Wharton. And the Famous Five approached the hoarding to investigate.

**"WARNING!"**

"A tiger has made its escape from Mugsion's Menagerie on Courtfield Common. It is feared that the beast may do considerable damage in the neighbourhood, and that it may endanger human life. "The tiger in question has given a lot of trouble recently, and will have to be destroyed. A reward of TEN POUNDS will be paid to any person who is successful in shooting the beast."

"Good!" said Johnny Bull. "Where's my pea-shooter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It's no laughing matter, really," said Harry Wharton. "It's a jolly serious thing for a tiger to be at large. When the brute gets hungry, it won't be particularly careful in choosing its victims."

"Wish we could be excused lessons this afternoon, and go big-game shooting," said Nugent.

"Some hopes!" chuckled Bob Cherry. The Famous Five strolled back to Greyfriars, excitedly discussing the situation.

On their way to the school they encountered a very scared-looking rustic. The man was coming along at a jog-trot, and every now and then he glanced back fearfully over his shoulder.

"Look out, young gents!" he said, when he caught sight of the Greyfriars juniors. "There's a tiger broke loose."

"We know all about that," said Harry Wharton. "Any idea where the beast is?" "It's prowlin' in Friardale Wood," said the rustic. "Listen! You can hear it barkin'."

"I thought it was a tiger that had escaped—not a Manchester terrier!" said Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton laughed in the scared face of the country yokel.

"Tigers don't bark, you chump!" he said. "You'll be saying it brays like a donkey next—"

"Or says 'Cuckoo!'" said Johnny Bull. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, anyway, it's in that there wood," said the rustic, jerking his thumb in the direction of the expanse of trees. "An' it's makin' a howlin', roarin', snortin', bellowin' noise!"

"Then I must be deaf," said Nugent, "for I can hear nothing."

"You mind it don't spring out on yer, that's all!" said the rustic.

And he set off again at a jog-trot. The Famous Five went on their way. As they passed in at the school gates, Mr. Prout passed out.

The master of the Fifth was looking very grim and businesslike. A fearsome-looking weapon was slung over his arm. This was his celebrated Winchester repeater, which—if Mr. Prout's veracity could be relied upon—had already despatched some scores of tigers—with a few odd lions and hippopotamuses thrown in.

Bob Cherry promptly sprang to one side. Mr. Prout frowned.

"Why do you leap aside in that manner, Cherry?" he demanded.

"I was afraid your ancient blunderbuss might go off, sir!"

"It is not an ancient blunderbuss!" said Mr. Prout, with considerable heat. "And it does not go off unless I press the trigger, which I shall not do until I come face to face with the tiger!"

"My hat!" "Are you really going after the escaped tiger, sir?" inquired Harry Wharton.

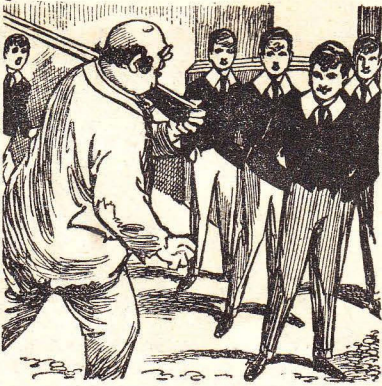
Mr. Prout nodded.

"I understand the beast is lurking in Friardale Wood," he said. "I will locate it, and destroy it forthwith."

"Always provided you don't miss your aim, sir," murmured Nugent.

"I never miss my aim, Nugent. A man who can hit the neck of a ginger-beer bottle at a range of five hundred yards is not likely to miss so conspicuous a target as a tiger."

"I didn't see you hit the ginger-beer bottle, sir—"



Mr. P. out came staggering in the school gateway, his clothes torn to shreds and his face and hands covered with long scratches.

"No. Nobody saw me do it. But I did it."

That was always the way with Mr. Prout. He performed wonderful feats of marksmanship—he could hit objects at all sorts of impossible distances and angles—when nobody was looking! He had slain many ferocious beasts—he had performed prodigies of valour—when nobody was looking!

Whenever Mr. Prout happened to have an audience, however, his marksmanship was atrocious.

"I hope you'll manage to kill the tiger, sir, and bag the ten pounds reward," said Harry Wharton.

"I hope so, Wharton."

And Mr. Prout went on his way. The juniors watched him striding along the road, and saw him plunge into the wood.

"That's the last we shall see of Prout!" said Johnny Bull. "He'll miss the tiger, for a cert. But the tiger's not likely to miss him!"

"That's so," said Bob Cherry. "It reminds me of that touching rhyme:

"There was an old lady of Riga,  
Who went for a ride on a tiger.  
They returned from the ride  
With the lady inside,  
And a smile on the face of the tiger!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout failed to put in an appearance that afternoon, and Mr. Lascelles took the Fifth Form in his stead.

When afternoon lessons were over, Harry Wharton & Co. hurried down to the school gates, to ask Gosling, the porter, if he had heard any news concerning the tiger, and the result of Mr. Prout's expedition.

Before the juniors could approach Gosling, however, Mr. Prout himself turned up.

The master of the Fifth presented a very unkempt appearance, as if he had passed through a mangle. His garments were tattered and torn; he was hatless, and there were scratches on his face and hands. He had evidently had to tear his way through a jungle of undergrowth.

On Mr. Prout's face, however, was a smile of triumph.

"What luck, sir?" asked the Famous Five in chorus.

Mr. Prout's smile expanded. "I have slain the tiger!" he announced dramatically.

"W-w-what!"

"The monster now lies dead in its tracks!" continued Mr. Prout. "It could not withstand my deadly fire."

"You—you shot it, sir?" panted Wharton incredulously.

"Of course I shot it, Wharton! You do not suppose I wrung its neck, or gave it a dose of 'poison'?"

"But you must have been awfully close to it, sir, not to have missed!" muttered Nugent.

"Nonsense, Nugent! I was quite two hundred yards away. I shot the brute through the head. Then, to make assurance doubly sure, I pumped lead into its body. The carcass will shortly be conveyed to Courtfield."

The Famous Five stood as if stupefied. It seemed incredible that Mr. Prout had at last done something to justify his claim of being a skilled hunter of big game. As Bob Cherry remarked, under his breath, it took a good deal of swallowing.

But confirmation came later. It was a fact, and not a fiction, that Mr. Prout had shot the tiger, and earned the ten pounds reward offered by the proprietor of Mugsion's Menagerie.

All Greyfriars congratulated the master of the Fifth upon his brilliant achievement. And although a lot of fellows declared that it had been a fluke, Mr. Prout's marksmanship will not be derided quite so much in future.

"Prout's actually shot something at last!" said Bob Cherry. "Chalk it up! This will go down to history!" It certainly will!

Every Day, in Every Way, the "Popular" is getting better and better!

HAVE YOU ORDERED NEXT WEEK'S BUMPER ISSUE?

Supplement III.

THE POPULAR.—No. 186.



# A Cricket Comedy!

By PETER TODD.  
(Of Greyfriars.)

“ONE moment, Lascelles!” said Mr. Prout, beckoning to the young mathematics master. “I desire to have converse with you.”

It would have been simpler to have said, “I want a word with you.” But it was a habit of Mr. Prout’s to speak ponderously.

Mr. Lascelles stopped short. “What is it, Mr. Prout?” he inquired. “I have received a challenge—a cricket challenge—from a team of Old Boys,” said the master of the Fifth. “They wish me to raise a team of masters and to give them a match on Wednesday afternoon. Will you play for my eleven?”

Mr. Lascelles hesitated. He was a very fine cricketer, but he didn’t relish the idea of playing under the captaincy of Mr. Prout. The latter was no cricketer. He would only cover himself—and possibly his colleagues—with ridicule.

“Do play, Lascelles!” urged Mr. Prout. “My team will not be complete without you. You are a vigorous and forceful batsman, and I shall be glad to have you in my ranks.”

“Oh, very well,” was the reply. Mr. Prout smiled and entered Mr. Lascelles’ name in his notebook. Then he went in search of fresh recruits.

Mr. Twigg consented to play, likewise Mr. Capper. Mr. Hacker complained that he was getting on in years, and had lost the athletic vigour of youth. But Mr. Prout overruled his scruples.

“You really must play, Hacker,” he said. “But I shall not be able to run between the wickets—”

“Then crawl. The Old Boys’ fielding is bound to be very bad, so you need not fear that you will be run out.”

Comforted by this assurance, Mr. Hacker agreed to play.

Mr. Wally Bunter agreed to turn out also. He was an excellent cricketer, and he was very interested to hear that the Old Boys were bringing down a team on Wednesday.

The only master who flatly refused to play was Mr. Quelch.

“Cricket,” said Mr. Quelch, “is a puerile pastime. All right for juveniles, I dare say, but we older people should be satisfied with golf.”

Mr. Prout snorted. “Then you decline to play, Quelch?”

“Absolutely!”

“Very well,” said Mr. Prout, with crushing sarcasm. “We will make a big effort to bear up in your absence.”

The master of the Fifth had some difficulty in getting his eleven complete. He had to solicit the aid of some of the lower order of beings, such as Trotter the page. He even approached Gosling, but the aged and venerable porter excused himself on the grounds that he had the rheumatics “crool bad.”

Having formed his team, Mr. Prout issued instructions that they were to turn out every afternoon for practice.

The majority of them shaped very badly. Mr. Lascelles and Mr. Bunter were the only two who knew how to handle a cricket bat. And they were so brilliant that they atoned for the general weakness of the side. Indeed, it was prophesied that Mr. Bunter and Mr. Lascelles would beat the Old Boys off their own bats.

Wednesday came at length—and with it the Old Boys’ eleven.

It was an extraordinary team that turned up at Greyfriars—quite the most extraordinary eleven that had ever appeared there.

The captain of the team—Sir Frederick Funguss, O.B.E.—was a gentleman who seemed to have passed the regulation span of three score years and ten. He had a hump on his back; he wore enormous spectacles; and he had a flowing beard, which trailed down as

far as his lowest waistcoat button. Sir Frederick was truly one of the ancients.

“He must have been a boy at Greyfriars in the year 1000 B.C.,” observed Bob Cherry, who, with his chums, watched the team arrive.

“They’re all cast in the same mould, too,” said Johnny Bull. “Look at ‘em! Absolutely green with age!”

Never had such a doddering, decrepit gathering of men been seen at Greyfriars.

“It’s a wonder they didn’t turn up in bath-chairs or on crutches,” said Nugent.

The Old Boys were escorted to the cricket pavilion. They hobbled along with great difficulty.

“Gouty on their pins,” observed Tom Brown.

Sir Frederick Funguss shook hands with Mr. Prout on the pavilion steps.

“Pleased to meet you,” he said in a croaking voice. “We shall have much pleasure in showing you how the boys of the old brigade can play cricket.”

Mr. Prout gasped.

“I hardly expected to see such veterans!”



Sir Frederick Funguss spun a coin into the air, and Mr. Prout called “heads!” Heads it was.

he said. “Are you sure you will be able to survive a strenuous game of cricket?”

There was a twinkle in Sir Frederick’s eye. “Wait and see!” he said.

Then he hobbled into the pavilion, and the Old Boys changed into their flannels.

Thus attired they looked even more ludicrous. With their flowing beards and straggling white locks, they looked like a party of Methuselahs in boys’ attire.

Sir Frederick spun a coin into the air and Mr. Prout called “heads.” Heads it was.

“We will bat,” said the master of the Fifth. “Dear me! I am really sorry for you, Sir Frederick. We shall give you a lot of running about.”

Sir Frederick smiled.

“That remains to be seen,” he wheezed.

Mr. Prout and Mr. Hacker opened the innings. And Sir Frederick went on to bowl. He ambled up to the bowling crease as if he were going to deliver a very slow ball. Instead of which the ball shot from his hand like a stone from a catapult. It came whizzing down the pitch, curved round Mr. Prout’s bat, and made a sorry mess of his wicket.

“Oh!” gasped the master of the Fifth.

And he walked back to the pavilion like a man in a dream.

Sir Frederick continued to bowl with deadly effect. He captured wicket after wicket, and there were only two masters who could make anything of his bowling. Those two were Mr. Bunter and Mr. Lascelles. They hit merrily for a time. It was the only good partnership of the innings.

But the most surprising thing of all was the Old Boys’ fielding. They were as active as squirrels. They raced after the ball, as Bob Cherry described it, “like two-year-olds.”

“I should think they’ve all had thyroid glands infused into ‘em!” remarked Vernon-Smith.

At length Sir Frederick knocked Mr. Bunter’s middle stump out of the ground. And the masters were dismissed for a total of 56. Of this number Mr. Bunter and Mr. Lascelles had made 40.

The Old Boys had certainly succeeded in astonishing the natives. And when it came to their turn to bat they astonished them still more.

Mr. Prout insisted on going on to bowl. And Sir Frederick Funguss flogged his bowling to all parts of the field.

The match degenerated into a farce. The Old Boys fairly collared the bowling. They certainly treated Mr. Lascelles’ leg-breaks with respect; otherwise they did pretty much as they liked.

To cut a long story short, the Old Boys won in go-as-you-please fashion by an innings and 23 runs. Mr. Prout, it should be noted, got a “duck” in each innings.

Crimson with shame, the master of the Fifth hurried away to hide his diminished head.

The Old Boys then left, presumably to catch their train. And Harry Wharton and Co. accompanied them to the station.

Sir Frederick Funguss beckoned the juniors into the waiting-room.

“I suppose you’re wondering how we managed to gain such a handsome victory?” he said.

“Yes, sir,” said Harry Wharton. “It’s a bit of a poser.”

Sir Frederick smiled and signalled to his followers.

“Unmask!” he commanded.

Then, to the amazement of the onlookers, wigs and false beards were removed, and eleven Fifth-Formers stood revealed! “Sir Frederick Funguss” was none other than George Blundell, the captain of the Fifth.

“Well, I’m dashed!” gasped Harry Wharton. “What the thump—”

“Just a little joke,” explained Blundell.

“On the part of the Fifth Form Amateur Dramatic Society. We don’t mind taking you kids into our confidence. But for goodness’ sake don’t let this get to the ears of the masters. Prout would have a purple fit!”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Mum’s the word, you kids,” said Hilton. “It’s been a ripping jape, and we don’t want it to end in disaster.”

Harry Wharton & Co. kept their own counsel. And Mr. Prout is still in blissful ignorance of the real identity of the veteran cricketers!

Have You Fellows Seen the  
**IMPORTANT**  
**ANNOUNCEMENT**  
On Page 24?  
All about the  
**“HOLIDAY ANNUAL.”**  
W. G. B.



## A FALSE ALARM!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Of course," he said, "that fat little rotter has been telling you the news?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"About Gussy losing his money, you mean?"

"Yes! It's about that I came to see you. Gore says Mellish was hanging round the pavilion while the match was on, and he's certainly in possession of a lot of money now."

The Terrible Three looked serious.

"You don't think Mellish would pick Gussy's pocket?" asked Monty Lowther in an awed voice.

Talbot shrugged his shoulders.

"I shouldn't like to suggest anything," he said, "but it does look very fishy. First of all him being in the pavilion when everybody else was watching the match; and now he seems to have money to burn."

"Whew!" whistled Tom Merry. "How much did Gussy lose?"

"About five pounds, I believe," replied Talbot. "They've searched everywhere for the wallet, but have had no luck so far."

"Gussy ought to know about Mellish," declared Manners.

"Yes, he certainly ought," agreed Talbot. "I thought perhaps you fellows—"

Tom Merry nodded his head quickly. He understood Talbot's desire to remain silent.

"We'll all trot along and offer our merry services," he said.

Suddenly Manners, who was standing nearest to the door, held up his hand for silence. The others stopped, puzzled, as he reached out and turned the handle of the door with a jerk. There was a wild yell, and a fat form pitched headlong into the study.

"Trimble!"

The juniors gasped in amazement at Baggy's really astounding nerve.

"Listening at keyholes, as usual!" remarked Tom Merry disgustedly.

"I wasn't! I never! I haven't really!" howled Baggy desperately.

"Bootlace came undone, I suppose?" said Talbot, his lip curling.

"Er—that's it exactly. You see—" stammered the Peeping Tom of the Fourth eagerly.

"You awful little fibber!" gasped Tom Merry. "You've been listening the whole time!"

"I haven't, I assure you. I don't know anything about what you were saying. I don't even know that Talbot told you Mellish—"

"Oh, shut up, do!" said the disgusted Manners. "You've just convicted yourself out of your own mouth. When are you going to learn that listening at keyholes is not done at a school like St. Jim's?"

Baggy Trimble sat up on the floor, and his plump features screwed themselves into a ludicrous attempt at dignity.

"Oh, really, I'd scorn to do such a thing, Manners!"

"Chuck him out!" cried Manners.

Heavy hands seized the eavesdropper, and, in spite of his wild struggles and cries for help, he was bumped hard, and finally flung outside into the passage, where he sat up, dazed.

"Bai Jove!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, just then coming along. "Twimble!"

Baggy scrambled to his feet, and got a safe distance from the occupants of the end study.

"Yah! Beasts!" he yelled. "Gussy's come to make you give him back his money!"

Gussy looked at the Terrible Three in amazement.

"We've just caught Trimble eavesdropping," said Tom Merry, and told Gussy the subject of their discussion.

"Bai Jove!"

"If Trimble knows," groaned Tom Merry, "the whole of St. Jim's will know in a few minutes."

"And Mellish?" queried Manners.

"Goodness only knows!" said his leader, shrugging his shoulders.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Grundy takes a Hand.

**G**EORGE ALFRED GRUNDY looked thoughtfully into space.

"It's quite clear I'm the only one who can manage it," he remarked cryptically.

Wilkins and Gunn stared at their leader.

"I'd better find it for him," continued Grundy.

"What are you spouting about now, fathead?" demanded Wilkins.

"Look here, Wilkins," said Grundy warmly, "I don't want any of your blessed cheek! You know jolly well I was referring to D'Arcy's missing cash. I was remarking I'd better find it for him."

"How?" asked Gunn innocently. Grundy looked at him in a contemptuous fashion.

"By using my intellect," he said.

Wilkins and Gunn were too astounded to reply.

"When a chap has reasoning powers such as I possess," went on Grundy, "a simple matter like this should present no difficulties whatever."

"Your reasoning powers?" gasped Wilkins.

"Yes, my reasoning powers! cried Grundy challengingly. "If either of you doubting Thomases have got any funny remarks to make, let's hear them now."

And George Alfred proceeded to push back his cuffs in a warlike manner.

Both Wilkins and Gunn had, however, on several occasions discovered how futile it was to argue with their hefty leader, and they certainly were no match for him when it came to fistcuffs.

"Of course, old man," stuttered Wilkins feebly. "No doubt you'll be able to trace it."

"No doubt at all, old chap," agreed Gunn hastily.

Grundy was mollified, and readjusted his coatsleeves.

"That's all right, then," he said, in a tone of satisfaction, while his two loyal followers grinned sheepishly at one another. "The first thing to be done is to look for clues."

"Where are you going to look, old man?" asked Gunn.

"In the pavilion, of course," said Grundy. "Where do you think?"

Gunn shrugged his shoulders, and followed his leader as he set off in the direction of the pavilion. Wilkins, with a resigned expression on his face, followed, too.

Grundy led the way with a firm step. Upon his face was that do-or-die expression already so well known to his followers, who expected great happenings, but not of the sort that George Alfred anticipated.

"Perhaps," remarked Grundy, "it

would be as well to make a few judicious inquiries first of all."

"B-but it's hardly your affair—" began Wilkins doubtfully.

Grundy bestowed upon his interrupter a ferocious glare, but disdained to answer.

"I'll question Blake," decided Grundy suddenly. "You fellows coming?"

Without waiting for a reply, he retraced his steps to the School House.

Wilkins looked at Gunn a few seconds.

"Suppose we'd better go with the ass!" he remarked, in a sad voice.

"See he doesn't get slaughtered," agreed Gunn, and they slowly followed.

Grundy was fortunate enough to meet Jack Blake & Co. as they were leaving their study. He quite failed to notice the worried expressions upon their faces, and drew Blake mysteriously aside.

"I'm taking up this case," declared Grundy importantly.

"Which case?" ejaculated the startled Blake.

"Gussy's case," responded the amateur detective.

"Oh!" said Blake, relieved. "You mean you've found the giddy quids?"

"Not yet," said Grundy. "But I'm going to. I want to know if you have any suspicions as to who took it."

Blake stared open-mouthed from Grundy to his waiting chums, and then it dawned upon him.

Grundy was setting up as a detective.

"You want to know whom we suspect?" asked Blake solemnly, winking at his chums.

"That's it."

"Well," said Blake, dropping his voice to a whisper, "Herries saw Kildare coming out of the pavilion, didn't you, Herries?"

Herries sighed profoundly, and shook his head in silent agreement.

"Eh? What?" ejaculated Grundy. "Kildare?"

"I'm afraid so," said Blake, nodding his head sadly.

The chums of Study No. 6 walked on, leaving George Alfred rooted to the spot in amazement. He would have been enlightened had he heard the roar of laughter to which Blake & Co. gave vent as soon as they were out of ear-shot.

"Oh dear!" sobbed Blake. "Grundy will be the death of me one day."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You didn't say when you saw Kildare coming out of the pavilion, did you?" said Blake.

"No fear," chuckled Herries. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Grundy, however, was not feeling particularly elated. The startling information he had just received was giving him food for thought—deep thought.

"Kildare!" he said, hardly able to believe his ears. "Oh, my hat!"

Wilkins and Gunn, who had come up too late to hear Blake's statement, looked perplexed.

"What's wrong now?" demanded Wilkins.

Grundy's jaw became set, and, without answering the query, he strode off.

"What does the ass want on the Sixth Form landing, I wonder?" asked Wilkins, as George Alfred made his way upstairs.

Gunn shrugged his shoulders, and merely whistled as Grundy first tapped on the door, and then entered Kildare's—the school captain's—sanctum.

"What on earth can he want Kildare for?" asked Wilkins thoughtfully.

"Couldn't say," replied Gunn, who

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was always past wondering at anything his erratic leader did. "We'd better hang around, though."

The loyal followers waited outside for further developments, and theirs was a very short wait, too.

Suddenly the door was opened, and Grundy left Kildare's study with rather more haste than grace.

Bump!

The door slammed, and the would-be detective sat up, staring dazedly at the closed door.

"What have you been annoying Kildare for, idiot?" demanded Wilkins, as he hastened to assist his fallen leader to his feet.

Grundy shook off the proffered assistance, and sprang up.

"You saw that?" he spluttered. "Chucked me out of the study! I asked him decently to own up, too."

"Eh?"

"I said if he gave me the money back I'd explain it was an accident—"

"What are you burbling about?" asked Gunn.

"Gussy's money, of course, you ass!" "What! You accused Kildare of taking it?" said Gunn incredulously.

"Course I did! Didn't Blake say—"

"Blake said so!" yelled Wilkins. "You—you crass idiot! He was pulling your leg!"

"What!"

"Pulling your silly leg!"

Grundy stopped short as the true state of affairs dawned upon him.

"Why," he gasped "I'll slaughter, I'll pulverise Blake when I see him!"

His two followers doubled up with merriment as the great George Alfred departed, breathing dire threats against the humorous leader of Study No. 6.

Grundy's efforts in the detective line had not been a great success.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Gussy Again!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY'S aristocratic features wore a worried look. He was thinking of Talbot's suspicion of Mellish.

Hence the frown. Gussy, the soul of honour and honesty himself, hated to think badly of anybody; but Talbot usually talked sense, and Mellish's sudden access to wealth looked very suspicious. He strolled thoughtfully out into the quad.

"Hallo, hallo!" called a cheerful voice from behind him. "Found the missing cash yet, Gustavus?"

The swell of St. Jim's turned round.

"I can see you haven't now," remarked Blake humorously, as he caught sight of the highly unusual frown upon Gussy's face.

"Pway don't wot, deah boy!" said Arthur Augustus seriously. "Somethin' wotten's happened!"

Blake became graver in an instant; and in a few words Gussy told him what he had heard in the Terrible Three's study.

Blake whistled as his chum finished.

"We'll have to get Mellish apart and talk to him seriously," remarked the leader of Study No. 6. "It's a good job it's not all over the school, though."

"Twimble knows," said Arthur Augustus dejectedly.

"Oh crumbs! That's done it, then!" groaned Blake.

"I'd fah wathah let the whole mattah west, deah boy."

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NEXT  
TUESDAY!

"FAITHFUL TO THE END!"

"Oh, rot!" said Blake decidedly. "We can't let a blessed thief get away with it!"

"But weally, deah boy, he may not be the thief at all!"

"Look here, Gussy, you leave this matter to your uncle. Dig and Herries and I will see Mellish. You needn't come."

Arthur Augustus flushed.

"I'll come, too," he said.

"Good egg! We must have Tom Merry & Co. in this. They're quite unbiassed."

Gussy nodded sagely.

"Yaas, wathah!" he said. "P'w'aps it would be bettah to see Mellish ourselves, foah the honoah of St. Jim's."

"Come along, then."

The two chums found their study-mates, Herries and Digby, and soon acquainted them with the position.

"He's in Mrs. Taggles' now," said Herries, as Blake finished, "standing treat to Leggett and Clampe."

"Not much like Mellish," remarked Blake.

"No fear!"

## A GRAND TREAT COMING!

—\*—

## THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL"

WILL BE ON SALE ON  
FIRST OF SEPTEMBER.

"You trot along to Study No. 10 and tell those Shell fish what's afoot. I'll rake in Mellish and bring him along."

Mellish seemed somewhat surprised when Blake hinted he had something to say to him.

"Wants to borrow something, Percy," sneered Leggett, as Mellish rose to go. Clampe sniggered openly at this exhibition of wit on the part of the New House Paul Pry.

Blake clenched his fists, but made no reply.

"Come along," he said curtly to Mellish.

"Where to?" asked that worthy in a surprised voice.

"The end study," replied Blake shortly. "Tom Merry has something to say to you."

Mellish looked apprehensive. Tom Merry, the junior captain, had very little to do with Mellish—as little, in fact, as he possibly could. And Mellish knew from past experience that when he did have anything to do with him there was always trouble for Mellish. The sneak, however, passed no remark, but followed Blake along the Shell passage.

Blake threw open the door of Study No. 10 and motioned for Mellish to enter. As he glanced round at the stern faces

of the juniors present Mellish looked startled.

"Wh-what's the matter?" he asked.

Tom Merry looked grim but did not answer.

"Where's Gussy?" demanded Blake, carefully closing the door.

"Gone to look for Talbot," replied Herries. "Thought perhaps—"

"Good!" said Blake. "We might want Talbot. You start the ball rolling, Tommy."

Tom Merry flushed uncomfortably. It is not at all nice to have to accuse a schoolfellow, however bad that schoolfellow was known to be, and he hardly relished the task before him.

"Ahem! You see, it's like this, Mellish. D'Arcy has lost a notecase containing some currency-notes. Do you happen to have seen it about—er—er anything like that?"

A look of alarm crept into Mellish's eyes.

"I haven't touched it!" he cried wildly. "I swear I haven't—"

"You've been spending a lot of money to-day," broke in Jack Blake accusingly. Mellish's face fell.

"Where did you get it from?" went on Blake.

Mellish looked wildly from one face to another.

"I got it. I—I won it!" he said desperately.

"How?"

"Betting."

Blake's lip curled.

"Talbot says he saw you—"

Suddenly the study door was thrown open, and Blake turned round in surprise.

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus, as he rushed into the study. "I've found it!"

In his hand he flourished the missing wallet.

"Where was it?" demanded the juniors.

"In my othah coat, deah boys. I must have put it there when I changed my clobber."

Blake flushed and looked decidedly uncomfortable. Their suspicions of Mellish had proved to be unjust.

Tom Merry stepped forward.

"Mellish," he said, "I owe you an apology for suspecting you!" And he held out his hand.

Mellish looked at it and deliberately turned away.

"You'd have liked to thrust the theft on to me if you could!" he said, with a sneer.

"Weally, Mellish—"

Mellish pushed his way to the door and walked out, slamming the door as he went.

Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders, but his face was burning as he turned to his chums.

Blake sniffed disgustedly.

"Serves him right for betting!" he said. "Anyhow, Gussy's the cause of all the trouble, and he sha'n't get off scot-free! Let's bump him!"

"Good idea!" said Manners heartily.

"Weally, you wottahs!" shrieked Gussy. "Keep off!"

Willing hands, however, seized him, and he went down.

Bump!

"Yawooogh!"

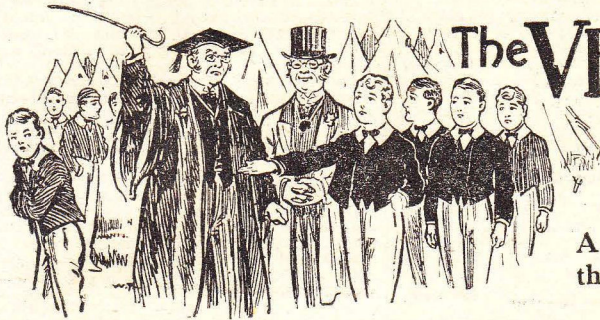
By the time they had finished with him they were quite certain that Gussy would never "lose" his money again.

THE END.

(Another grand St. Jim's story complete in our next issue, entitled "Faithful to the End!" by Martin Clifford.)

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

BACK AT ROOKWOOD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW TERM—TO THE NEW ROOKWOOD SCHOOL UNDER CANVAS—THE CHUMS OF THE FOURTH FIND PLENTY OF EXCITEMENT.



# The VENTRILOQUIST'S REVENGE!

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

By OWEN CONQUEST

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

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Off to School.

"RATHER a cram!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell.

It was. A very considerable portion of Rookwood School had gathered at Latcham Junction on their way to Rookwood for the new term.

They arrived from all quarters at Latcham. From the junction a local train was to bear them onward to Coombe, the station for Rookwood.

And the local train, when it put in a belated appearance, was evidently not equal to carrying half the fellows who thronged the platform.

Jimmy Silver & Co., the Fistical Four of the Fourth, were keeping together, with a free use of elbows round about them.

They felt it was up to them to get places in the train, if only to keep up the prestige of the end study.

So Jimmy and Lovell and Raby and Newcome linked arms, and the crowding and eddying of the throng failed to separate them.

"Rather a cram!" gasped Newcome. "Well, rather! Half the fellows will be left behind!"

"Well, it's nice weather for walking," said Jimmy Silver philosophically. "So long as we're not left behind, all right!"

"Hallo, here you are!" yelled Mornington of the Fourth, shoving along to the Fistical Four, and dragging Kit Erroll with him. "What do you think of this for a scum?"

"Topping, old nut!" "Yah! Gerroff! Stop shoving!" came the agonised tones of Tubby Muffin. "I say, gerroff! Yoooop!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked round, with a grin.

Tubby Muffin, the fattest junior at Rookwood, was in difficulties. There really wasn't room for Tubby's circumference on the platform.

Three merry youths of the Modern side—Dodd and Cook and Doyle—were driving a way towards the train, amid yells of protest, and they had collided with Tubby, and Tubby had sat down.

"All serene! It's only a Classical!" said Tommy Dodd.

"Back up!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "Kick out those Moderns!"

"Hurray!"

The Fistical Four rushed at the Moderns, with Erroll and Mornington backing them up, and Van Ryn, Pons, and Conroy, the three Colonials, jumped to help them.

There was a scrimmage at once. Hats and caps, rugs and bags, went right and left, unheeded.

In the midst of the excitement there was a shrill whistle from the engine.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "She's starting!"

"This way!" shouted Van Ryn. The Classical chums made a rush for the train.

The combat ceased abruptly. Tubby Muffin had already scrambled into a carriage, and he held the door open for Jimmy Silver & Co.

There was only one other passenger in

that carriage so far—a fat, important-looking gentleman with gold-rimmed glasses, who was staring out on the throng in great disgust.

"Close that door, boy!" he snapped. Tubby did not heed him—did not, in fact, even hear him.

"This way, Jimmy!" Jimmy Silver jumped in, with Lovell and Raby and Newcome after him.

The three Colonials jumped in after them. Mornington and Erroll were following, when the fat gentleman, sitting in the corner next the open door, interposed.

"You cannot enter here!" he snapped.

Mornington looked at him.

"Bosh!" he answered.

"Keep out!"

The fat gentleman extended a large hand, pushing Mornington back.

The eyes of the dandy of the Fourth gleamed.

"Take your paw away!" he said sharply.

"What?"

"Paw!"

"You impertinent young rascal!"

"Are you goin' to move your paw?"

The important gentleman did not answer. His breath seemed to be taken away by this mode of address.

Apparently he was so important a person that it was requisite to treat him with great respect on all occasions.

The dandy of Rookwood did not seem to recognise the fact.

As the "paw" did not move, Morny raised the light cane he carried and gave it a sharp rap.

The fat gentleman moved it then with remarkable quickness, at the same time uttering a howl.

Mornington jumped in, and Erroll stepped in after him.

It was a first-class carriage, and designed to seat six, and there were now ten boys and a man in it, so it was pretty full.

But more were coming.

Oswald and Flynn of the Classical Fourth wedged in.

Others would have followed them, but there simply was not room.

"Stand clear!" roared a guard.

Jimmy Silver closed the door and grinned from the window.

The platform was still crowded with fellows bound for Rookwood School, though the train was crammed.

Still, there really was no need to get excited, if fellows chose to wait for the second train.

It was probably owing to schoolboy exuberance of spirits that nobody seemed to care about waiting for the second train.

It was a case of the race to the swift, and the battle to the strong.

The train moved out of the station, every window crammed with fellows yelling at the crowd left on the platform, who yelled back.

"Off!" said Jimmy Silver. "What a life! Now, then, where am I going to sit?"

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Trouble on the Train.

JIMMY SILVER looked round the swarming carriage.

Every seat, and every arm between the seats, was occupied, and still there were fellows standing.

The fat gentleman was purple as he sat in his corner.

The rap on his "paw" had astounded him, and he had not yet recovered from his astonishment.

But his wrath was evidently terrific.

Van Ryn, the South African, was on the arm of the seat next to him, and he kindly and considerably gave the fat gentleman all the room he could.

But, naturally, there was not much room.

Jimmy Silver smiled as he caught the expression of gathering ferocity in the purple face.

The fat gentleman seemed on the point of a volcanic eruption.

"Who's giving me a seat?" inquired Jimmy Silver politely.

"Nobody, old bean!" chuckled Arthur Edward Lovell.

"There's the luggage rack," suggested Raby.

"Stick out your feet, and make room for him under the seat," said Newcome. "It's a bit dusty, but if you lie lengthwise, Jimmy, very carefully—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps Mr. Gargoyle would let you sit on his knees," suggested Mornington.

"Dry up, Morny!" whispered Erroll.

Mornington laughed.

The importance of the fat gentleman, and his cool cheek in expecting to keep passengers from crowding a carriage, had roused Morny's ire.

"Mr. Who?" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

"Mr. Gargoyle, the respected gentleman in the corner."

"Oh!"

"Boy," thundered the respected gentleman, "my name is not Gargoyle!"

"No?" said Morny, in surprise. "My mistake! I was simply judgin' by appearances, sir."

The fat gentleman seemed about to choke. "Chuck it, Morny, old scout!" said Jimmy Silver. "Tubby, if you sat on the floor I could sit on your head."

"Catch me!" grinned Tubby.

"We'll change about," said Van Ryn, laughing. "You can have my seat presently, old scout. I hope I'm not in your way, sir," he added politely, as the fat gentleman glared at him.

"You are very much in my way! Do you think, boy, that you can sit on the arm of my seat without being in my way?"

The South African junior smiled.

"Well, no," he admitted. "To tell the truth, sir, I was simply making a polite remark. I can't help being in your way a bit."

"You can get off the arm of my seat."

"Sorry!"

"Get off!"

"Still sorry!" smiled Van Ryn; and the Rookwooders chuckled. The Africaner did not move.

"Do you hear me, boy? Remove yourself

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

ANSWERS  
EVERY MONDAY PRICE 2

NEXT TUESDAY "MAKING CARTHEW PAY!"

at once! You are incommoding me very considerably."

"Sorry still, and as much as you like! I'm sitting here, though!"

The Rookwooders were all grinning, quite entertained by the fat gentleman.

He was plainly in a towering wrath at being incommoded.

He gave Van Ryn a sudden and violent shove with his elbow, and the Africaner left the arm of the seat in a hurry, pitching on the floor among many legs.

"Here, look out!" howled Raby, as one of Van Ryn's elbows caught him on the waistcoat. "That's me!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Don't knock a chap over intirely!" bawled Flynn, whose legs were nearly knocked from under him by the sprawling junior.

Jimmy Silver bent and dragged the South African up.

Dick Van Ryn scrambled up, dusty and crimson with wrath.

"You cheeky old chump!" he roared.

The fat gentleman had settled down comfortably in his corner seat, apparently regarding the matter as being at an end.

Van Ryn shook his fist under his fat nose, and the gentleman started back, his head clumping on the partition behind him.

"If you weren't old enough to be my father, I'd dot you in the eye, you cheeky frump!" exclaimed Van Ryn wrathfully.

"By gad!" gasped the fat man.

Conroy whispered in the South African's ear.

"Give him some of your giddy ventriloquism, Dutchy."

Van Ryn grinned, and nodded.

His ventriloquial gift was pretty well known among the Rookwood juniors, and so among them his tricks were discounted in advance, as it were; but the pompous, fat gentleman was a stranger, and, naturally, quite unaware of his peculiar gift.

"Where's my dog, you chaps?" asked Van Ryn suddenly.

"Your dog?" repeated Jimmy Silver in surprise. "You haven't brought a dog with you to school, surely."

"Must be under the seat," said Conroy.

"My hat! I hope he's in a good temper, then," said Van Ryn, with an anxious look.

"He bites! Stick your foot under the seat, and see if he's there, Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver understood by that time, and he smilingly shoved his boot under the seat.

He jumped, as from below there came a sudden, savage growl.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Exit One!

**G**R-R-R-R-R-R!  
Jimmy Silver snatched his foot away hurriedly.

So realistic was that ferocious growl that he supposed, for the moment, that he had disturbed a real dog hidden under the seat.

The fat gentleman snatched his feet up still more suddenly.

"Here, don't kick me!" shouted Van Ryn. "My trousers ain't a doormat!"

"How dare you bring a dog into the carriage!" exclaimed the fat gentleman.

"How dare you! Take him out from under the seat at once!"

"Towser! Towser!" called out Van Ryn.

Gurrrrr!

"He seems ratty," said Van Ryn. "He won't come out for me." "Put your feet down, sir; they're in my way!"

"I refuse to put them down! I will not be bitten by your dog, boy!"

Gurrrrr!

"I say, he sounds jolly savage!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Get on the seats before he snaps at your legs, you chaps!"

The Rookwooders, entering at once into the joke, scrambled up on the seats, holding on by the racks and by one another.

The fat gentleman followed their example. He dared not put his feet down within reach of the savagely-growing dog, and it was too great an exertion to keep them suspended, like Mohamet's coffin, between heaven and earth.

Gurrrr! came from under the seat.

"Boy, take that dog out! Do you hear me? Take him out and control him at once!"

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"He won't come out for me, sir," said Van Ryn. "Take him out yourself."

The fat gentleman spluttered.

As the train rushed on, the juniors continued to stand on the seats, in great good humour, and the fat gentleman did the same, evidently not daring, for his life, to get within reach of the savage brute growling underneath.

But as the train slowed down in a station the juniors dropped back into their seats, and those who had to stand stood on the floor.

But the fat gentleman remained on his seat.

As the train stopped, he stooped over and hurled open the door, and made a spring to the platform.

"Guard!" he roared. "Guard! Where are you, guard? Come here, guard!"

The Rookwooders grinned at one another.

The guard came up somewhat surlily.

"Wot's this 'ere?" he demanded.

"There is a dog in the carriage! I have nearly been bitten. I have had to stand on the seat! That boy brought the dog into the carriage!"

He pointed to Van Ryn.

"Taint allowed, sir," said the guard civilly to the Rookwood junior. "You must take the dog out."

"But I haven't a dog here, guard," answered Van Ryn.

"Oh! One of you other young gents—"

"Nobody has a dog here, guard," answered Jimmy Silver; and there was a general shaking of heads.

"Ho!" said the guard, with a stare at the fat gentleman, who certainly did look very red and excited. "Ho! The young gentlemen say there ain't a dog there, sir!"

"It is false! He belongs to that boy! He was growling savagely under the seat! Take it out, guard, or I will report you!"

The guard snorted.

He seemed inclined, for the moment, to tell the fat gentleman what he thought of him, and his language would probably have been startling; but he restrained himself, and stepped into the carriage.

The juniors made room for him to look under the seats, and it did not take him many seconds to ascertain that there was no dog there.

He came out of the carriage with an angry grunt.

"You have not removed the dog, guard?"

"There ain't any dog!"

"Man! I tell you he is under the seat!"

"And I tell you he ain't!" roared the guard, exasperated. "And I ain't no more time to waste on a man what has been drinking, and which you ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir, at your time of life."

And the guard stalked away.

"By gad!" gasped the fat gentleman.

"Insolence! Impertinence!"

He fixed his eyes on the grinning juniors.

"Will you turn that dog out?" he gasped.

"Bow-wow!"

"I order you to do so!"

"Go it!"

"Stand clear there!"

The fat gentleman made a step towards the carriage.

Gurrrrrrrrr!

It was a growl of terrific ferocity, and it was too much for the fat man. He jumped back hastily.

The next moment the guard slammed the door.

The train moved out of the station, leaving the fat gentleman standing on the platform, red and spluttering, and Jimmy Silver & Co. crowded the window and kissed their hands to him; which, for some reason, did not seem to have the slightest pacifying effect upon him.

At all events, he was shaking a fat fist as he disappeared from sight.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### A Pleasant Prospect!

**J**IMMY SILVER & Co. sat down, quite pleased to have got rid of their irascible fellow-passenger.

They were in cheery spirits as the train rushed on towards Coombe.

The first day of term was not always a joyous occasion, and as a rule there was regret for holidays that had come to an end. But, as it happened, there was a good deal of anticipation now among the Rookwood fellows who were returning to the old school.

Extensive repairs to the old school had

been commenced, which should have been completed during the vac. But labour troubles had risen to hamper the contractors.

Hence it came about that the rebuilding was far from finished, and that the school was by no means ready to receive the Rookwooders.

Probably most of the fellows would have welcomed an extension of the vacation—indefinitely.

Paternal and maternal, however, did not see eye to eye with their hopeful sons on that subject.

A way had been found out of the difficulty. Fortunately the weather was splendid, and when it was announced that Rookwood would gather under canvas till the rebuilding was completed, there were few who grumbled.

Rookwood under canvas was a novelty, and most of the fellows, especially the juniors, looked forward to it with keen anticipation.

Lovell remarked that it was worth while going back to school for the sake of a new experience like that.

"It will be ripping!" Jimmy Silver observed, as the train rattled on. "Think of the larks we can play on the Moderns! Old Manders, too! Suppose we fix it up to bring his tent down on his napper some windy night—what?"

"Hear, hear!" chorused the Classicals.

"Think of our chances of raiding the Moderns!" continued Jimmy. "We can rag them no end. I think this is really very thoughtful of the Head!"

"Ha, ha! I don't think the Head arranged it so that we could rag the Moderns!" grinned Lovell.

"Well, no," admitted Jimmy. "But we'll give Tommy Dodd & Co. the time of their lives!"

"We will, rather!" agreed the Classicals.

"I hear that we're going to have lessons in the open air," said Mornington, "and dine under the cheery old sky, too! Kippin' when it rains!"

"There's a big marquee for dining in when it rains," said Jimmy. "I've heard all about it. Lessons will be alfresco, and if it rains we may chuck lessons till it's dry. That won't be a disadvantage."

"Ha, ha! No!"

"I say, that's ripping!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin. "I hope we shall have a lot of rain, you fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a buzz of discussion in the crowded carriage till the train ran into the little station of Coombe.

There Jimmy Silver & Co. swarmed out.

In great spirits the heroes of the Fourth secured seats in a brake, and eventually arrived at Rookwood.

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

#### Under Canvas!

**L**OOK!

"Topping!"

"Hurrah!"

It was a strange sight that burst upon Jimmy Silver & Co. as they arrived.

Rookwood School was still under repair. There was scaffolding galore, and piles of bricks, and seas of mortar—workmen were at work, with a grinding of tackle and creaking of pulleys.

But it was not at the school buildings that the juniors looked.

Their eyes turned at once on the rows of white tents, all ready, prepared for their reception.

The playing-fields were covered, and the school meadow was marked out in one huge camp.

"It's a corker!" pronounced Jimmy Silver. "We're going to enjoy this! Let's hope the johnnies over yonder will go on strike again, and keep us under canvas."

"Hear, hear!"

There was great enthusiasm on the part of the Rookwood juniors, which was shared by the rest as they arrived.

Smythe & Co. were somewhat annoyed and disdainful, but nobody minded Adolphus and his nutty friends.

Peele and Gower of the Fourth grumbled, too, for, as Peele remarked to Gower, how the merry dickens was a fellow to get a quiet game of nap or banker under these conditions?

Evidently the Head was unaware that the tastes of some of his boys ran in the direction of nap and banker.

But the great majority were greatly pleased.

Even if they had to rough it a little, the Rookwooders were prepared to take that good-humouredly.

Roughing it, indeed, rather appeals to the average healthy boy, and the Rookwooders were no exception to the rule.

Jimmy Silver & Co. enjoyed a ramble round the school camp, finding out the lie of the land, so to speak.

The cricket-ground was occupied with the tents belonging to the Modern side, a smaller encampment than that in the school meadow, which appertained to the Classics, the more numerous body.

Masters and prefects were very busy explaining, pointing out, and perhaps snapping a little.

"Six of us in here, it seems," said Jimmy Silver, when he learned from Bulkeley which was his tent. "That's us four, and—who? My hat! Here's the names written up! Somebody's been very thoughtful. Fancy a headmaster thinking of that!"

"Ha, ha!"  
"Silver, Lovell, Raby, Newcome, Van Ryn, Muffin!" said Jimmy Silver, reading out the names. "Too bad! Dutchy's as welcome as the flowers in May; but that fat boulder, Muffin!"

"Look here, Jimmy—"  
"If you snore in this tent, Tubby, you'll get slaughtered! Keep it till we get back to the dormitory!" said Jimmy Silver warningly. "You nearly burst the caravan with your snoring in the vac."  
"Pons and Conroy, and Erroll and Morny are in the next tent," said Lovell. "The Fourth Form's all together. Hallo! What does Neville want?"

Neville of the Sixth was rounding up the juniors. The Head was about to speak, and all Rookwood was wanted.

The Forms gathered in order in the meadow, where the reverend figure of Dr. Chisholm was seen standing under a big oak.

Big Hall was a mass of scaffolding, so far, and uninhabitable, like most of the rest of Rookwood.

The Head's own house was intact, and Dr. Chisholm was not under the necessity of camping out, which the fags though it was rather hard cheese for the old sport, as Lovell put it.

Probably, however, the reverend Head was not so keen on life under canvas as the fags were.

Respectful attention was given to the Head as he addressed the school.

His address was brief.

He mentioned that Rookwood was meeting for the new term under unprecedented conditions, and he hoped that his boys would make the best of it, and endure any possible hardships or discomforts in a right British spirit.

The cheer that followed assured him that they would.

The Head added that Mr. Pumpkin, the celebrated lecturer, was giving an address to the school the next day, and expressed the hope that all Rookwood would attend on that occasion, his "hope" being tantamount to a command.

"Oh, we'll turn up!" remarked Mornington, as the assembly dispersed. "Blest if I know what he's goin' to lecture us about, but we'll give the man a hearin'! Anybody know who he is?"

"Never heard of him before," said Jimmy Silver. "One of those johnnies who go about gassing at public meetings, I suppose. We can stand it if the Head wants us to. It's no worse than grinding Latin, anyway."

**THE SIXTH CHAPTER.  
Hard Cheese!**

**R**OOKWOOD turned in that night under canvas.

It was a new experience for the school, but the fellows found that they slept soundly enough.

In the sunny morning the rising-bell awakened them from balmy slumber. They walked down to the river for "tubber."

Breakfast was taken in the open air, which, by general agreement, was an improvement on the dining-hall.

Classes were to begin at the usual hour, under the blue sky, and Tubby Muffin's eyes sought the firmament anxiously for signs of rain; but to Tubby's disappointment there was not a hint of rain.

under somewhat novel circumstances, Mr. Pumpkin—what, what?"

"Mr. Pumpkin!" murmured Jimmy Silver. The heroes of the Fourth exchanged dismayed glances.

The fat gentleman, whom Morny had named Mr. Gargoyle, was in reality Mr. Pumpkin, the important lecturer, who was coming there to address Rookwood School!

He had travelled in that train, though Jimmy Silver & Co. had not known it.

That was how he came to be there, and Jimmy Silver & Co. made themselves as small as possible, trusting to escape recognition.

But that was a very slight hope.

After greeting Mr. Bootles, the great man glanced over the Form, and his eyes glittered behind his gold-rimmed glasses as he saw the dismayed Co.



**VAN RYN ON THE WARPATH!**—The Rookwooders scrambled upon their seats, holding on by the racks, and the bad-tempered old gentleman followed their example. "Boy, take that dog out! Do you hear me?" thundered the gentleman. "He won't come out for me," said Van Ryn. "Take him out yourself!" (See Chapter 3.)

"My only hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver suddenly, as the Fourth Form were gathering for lessons.

He stared towards a figure that was approaching.

"Mr. Gargoyle!" exclaimed Mornington. "Phew! What's that merchant doing here?"

It was the fat gentleman of the train the day before.

He looked as important and lofty as ever as he came towards the spot, and the juniors wondered what he wanted there.

Jimmy Silver & Co. felt a little uneasy.

If the fat gentleman had tracked them to Rookwood to lay a complaint before their headmaster, there might be painful consequences.

Certainly, they had not been to blame, but there never was any telling what view a headmaster or a Form-master might take.

Mr. Bootles glanced at the newcomer, and walked to meet him, and shook hands with him.

"Good-morning—good-morning!" said the Fourth Form master. "You visit our school

"Hah!" he exclaimed. "My Form, Mr. Pumpkin," said Mr. Bootles. "We are about—ah—to begin the labours of the new—ah—term, under somewhat novel—"

He broke off in surprise as Mr. Pumpkin raised a podgy forefinger, and pointed at Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Those are the boys!" he exclaimed.

"I—I beg your pardon!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles.

"Yesterday, sir," said Mr. Pumpkin, in a booming voice, "I travelled to Coombe by the same train as those boys. I recognise them—some of them, at all events. I was treated, sir, with unexampled insolence and effrontery."

"Bless my soul!"

"I was incommoded by ruffianly crowding in my carriage, sir, and upon my remonstrating in the mildest possible manner, I was subjected, sir, to a stream of insults and abuse!" boomed Mr. Pumpkin.

"You—you astonish me, sir!"

"Had I known that the—the young rascals belonged to this school, I should certainly have been better prepared."

have called on the Head last evening to lay a complaint. I am surprised, Mr. Bootles, that Rookwood boys should be guilty of such outrageous hooliganism in public, I must remark, sir, that it reflects no credit on this school."

Mr. Bootles coloured.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked furious.

"Please point out the boys who insulted you, Mr. Pumpkin," said the Form-master a little tartly. "They shall certainly be adequately punished."

Mr. Pumpkin, with manifest satisfaction, pointed out the boys, all whose faces he could remember of the carriage-full.

The Fistical Four, and the Colonial Co., and Mornington, were pointed out in turn.

Mr. Bootles sharply told them to stand out.

The eight juniors stood out, with flushed cheeks and resentful looks.

"There were others, but I cannot undertake to identify them," said Mr. Pumpkin. "The others, however, were only spectators of the outrage. The worst of all was this boy!"

"Van Ryn!" said Mr. Bootles.

"And this, and this—"

"Mornington! Silver!"

"The others were almost as bad," said Mr. Pumpkin. "But these three acted in a way worthy only of the lowest hooligans."

"That isn't true, Mr. Bootles," said Jimmy quietly.

"What? What?"

"In fact, it's a dashed lie!" said Valentine Mornington, with reckless coolness.

"Wha-a-at?"

Mr. Pumpkin turned purple.

"You hear him, Mr. Bootles!" he gasped.

"You hear him! That is a sample of the unheard-of insolence to which I was subjected."

Mr. Bootles was frowning thunderously.

Mornington's remark was well-founded, in point of fact.

The fat gentleman was exaggerating, if not actually lying; but, naturally, such a remark from a junior did not please his Form-master.

Mr. Pumpkin was a great gun, and he could not be allowed to be insulted, and, in fact, his word had to be taken.

Mr. Bootles took up his cane.

"I am sorry, extremely sorry, that this has occurred, Mr. Pumpkin," he said. "The boys shall certainly be punished severely. Hold out your hand, Mornington."

Morny's brow darkened.

"If you please, sir, mayn't we defend ourselves?" he said, with mock meekness. "Mr. Gargoyle—I mean, Mr. Pumpkin—hasn't told you the truth."

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Bootles, in great wrath. "How dare you say anything of the kind, Mornington! Another word, and I will report you for a public flogging. Hold out your hand!"

"But, sir—" began Dick Van Ryn.

"Silence!"

The South African junior shrugged his shoulders, and was silent.

Swish, swish, swish!

Mr. Pumpkin looked on with unconcealed satisfaction while Jimmy Silver & Co. went through their punishment.

It was severe enough, and, worse than that, it was unjust, though Mr. Bootles was not responsible for the injustice.

After Mr. Pumpkin's statement, he had hardly any choice in the matter.

The victims understood that, but their feelings towards the pompous lecturer were perfectly Hunnish.

Perhaps the juniors had been a little reckless in the train; but it was the fat gentleman who had been to blame for the trouble, and it was upon the juniors that the punishment fell.

They went back to their places with smarting hands and knitted brows, all the more exasperated because the fat man was beyond the reach of reprisals of any kind.

Even Jimmy Silver did not think of "bumping" Mr. Pumpkin after lessons.

"The utter cad!" muttered Mornington, as the fat gentleman walked away. "Did you ever see such a crawling worm?—Ow, ow! I'm goin' for him somehow, if I get a floggin' for it!"

"Rats!" grunted Lovell. "Can't be done!" "Leave it to me!" muttered Dick Van Ryn. Lovell snorted.

"What can you do, fathead? Punch his nose?"

"No, ass! Wait till he gives his giddy lecture to the school!" murmured the Rookwood ventriloquist. "I'll put a spoke in his wheel then."

Jimmy Silver brightened up.

"Good man!" he murmured.

"Silence in class!" snapped Mr. Bootles.

And the Fourth Form settled down to work.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Punishing Pumpkin.

**J**IMMY SILVER & CO. looked forward to the lecturer's address, which was to take place after lessons in the school meadow.

They had been prepared to listen to Mr. Pumpkin's "jaw" politely, and cheer him, with the much-enduring fortitude that

schoolboys show on such occasions, but the caning had quite changed their polite intentions.

What they were looking forward to now was the "ragging" of the lecturer by the Rookwood ventriloquist, and they anticipated fun.

It was the only possible way in which they could "get their own back" on the pompous gentleman, and Van Ryn's ventriloquism was, as Lovell remarked, a windfall, under the circumstances.

After lessons the prefects shepherded the juniors to the place of assembly, the Head having intimated that the great man was to have a good audience.

The lecture had been arranged by the governors of the school, who perhaps thought that Rookwood required enlightening upon post-war problems, and that Mr. Pumpkin was the man to enlighten the school.

The Head probably had his own opinion of the pompous, fat man, but he kept it to himself.

Nearly all Rookwood ranked in order on the selected spot, where a rostrum had been placed for Mr. Pumpkin under the big oak.

Most of the fellows were idly curious or frankly bored; only Jimmy Silver & Co. were at all keen. But they were very keen.

Dr. Chisholm, in a few brief words, presented Mr. Pumpkin to the school, and begged the general attention for the "very instructive address" which Mr. Pumpkin had so kindly consented to give.

Then Mr. Pumpkin's innings started.

He cleared his throat with a fat gurgle, and began to boom.

From the fat gentleman's remarks it appeared that he was, upon the whole, satisfied with the spirit the country had shown in the difficult post-war period, which was doubtless very gratifying to the country.

But that spirit required guiding into the right channels by superior persons like Mr. Pumpkin. The fat gentleman did not exactly say that, but that was easily read into his remarks.

In fact, it seemed that the British Empire would have been in rather a bad case but for its fortunate possession of Mr. Pumpkin and some other important gentlemen like Mr. Pumpkin.

The Rookwooders politely suppressed their yawns, and listened.

Mr. Pumpkin, after an oratorical flourish, paused, and took up the glass of water placed in readiness for him.

As he took it up, his voice went on, however; or if it was not his voice, it was so exactly like his voice that nobody had any suspicion.

"Water! Why is there not gin in this glass? Do you think I can give a lecture on cold water, Dr. Chisholm? Pah!"

The assembly was electrified.

There was a general gasp.

Dr. Chisholm sat petrified.

Mr. Bootles' eyes opened so wide that his spectacles almost fell off.

"My only hat!" stuttered Bulkeley. "Is—is the man mad?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar.

That remark of the lecturer, after his inspired oratory, came as an anti-climax, and it struck Rookwood as funny.

Mr. Pumpkin, glass in hand, looked about him, puzzled.

He had heard the voice, but did not recognise it as his own; few men recognise their own voices when reproduced, whether by a talking-machine or an imitator.

Dr. Chisholm rose, his face flushed and shocked.

"Mr. Pumpkin!" he stuttered.

"Sir!"

"I—I—I—" The Head really did not know what to say. "Really, sir—surely—ahem—"

"Please, sir, shall I fetch Mr. Pumpkin some gin?" came a voice from somewhere—whose, could not be told. "Mack has a bottle of gin in his lodge."

"Silence!" exclaimed the head.

"I—I really fail to understand—" stuttered Mr. Pumpkin. "You surely, sir, are not under the impression that I asked for gin! I heard a voice—"

"A—a moment's aberration, I—I suppose," stammered the Head. "Pray—pray proceed

By OWEN CONQUEST.

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**N O W O N S A L E.**

THE POPULAR.—No. 186.

NEXT TUESDAY!

**"MAKING CARTHEW PAY!"**

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

with your address, sir. Silence! The next boy who laughs will be caned."

Mr. Pumpkin drank his water, and set down the glass.

"Pah! Beastly stuff! Dr. Chisholm, let's get out of this!"

"Sir!" spluttered the Head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole assembly yelled.

"What—what!" ejaculated Mr. Pumpkin. "I did not speak. Do you imagine, sir, that I made such a remark? Some boy—"

"Calm yourself, Mr. Pumpkin. I am surprised, shocked. Pray retire for a few moments. It would be better for you to lie down for a short time," whispered the Head, in great agitation, fully convinced by this time that Mr. Pumpkin was in a state of intoxication. How else were his astounding words to be accounted for? "My dear sir, pray take my arm—"

"Sir!"

"The lecture will be postponed," stammered the Head. "Mr. Pumpkin, I beg you—"

"Sir! I fail to understand! I—I—"

"Squiffy, by Jove!" came a voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

"Dr. Chisholm! I refuse to take your arm! I do not understand you!" roared Mr. Pumpkin. "Do you dare to imply—"

"Calm yourself, I beg!"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"I—I did not—" stammered Mr. Pumpkin, astonished to hear a voice tell the Head to shut up, and still more astonished to see that the Head supposed that it was he who had spoken. "I said nothing! I—I—"

"Pray be calm! I beg of you to be calm! Think of the impression you are making, sir. I beg you, calm yourself!" babbled the Head, almost at his wits' end. "Mr. Bootles, dismiss the boys—dismiss them at once! Bless my soul!"

"I repeat, sir—"

"For mercy's sake, sir, be calm! Calm yourself!"

"I am calm!" shrieked Mr. Pumpkin, who really was not very calm just then. "I am perfectly calm! I repeat, sir—"

"Pray come this way! Take my arm!"

"I will do nothing of the sort! Dare you imply, sir, that I am under the influence of liquor?" raved Mr. Pumpkin. "By gad! The governors shall hear of this! I hurl back the insinuation in your teeth!"

## "Can you Head' Em?"



See the grand new Competition  
in this week's issue of  
**"THE GEM" LIBRARY.**  
Big Money Prizes Offered.

"Dismiss! Dismiss!" wailed Mr. Bootles. "Boys, disperse at once! Bulkeley—Neville—Knowles, disperse the boys immediately! Bless my soul!"

That order, given earlier, would have been willingly obeyed, but just now the juniors were enjoying themselves too much to want to depart.

The prefects rushed them away, however, yelling with laughter. Even the prefects were grinning as they drove the yelling juniors out of the field.

The masters gathered round Mr. Pumpkin to see him back to the Head's house, only desirous of getting him out of sight as quickly as possible.

But the fat gentleman was indignant and wrathful, and his voice could be heard protesting, and almost raving, at a great distance.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!"

Rookwood was ringing with laughter.

In the quadrangle Jimmy Silver & Co. thumped Van Ryn on the back, in ecstatic delight.

The Africander's "wheeze" had succeeded beyond their wildest expectations.

The pompous Pumpkin had paid for all his sins.

"Good old Dutchy! Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors executed a wardance of triumph round the grinning Van Ryn. Half an hour later Mr. Pumpkin left, in the Head's carriage, and in great wrath.

Later that day the Head held an inquiry into the strange happenings at the lecture, and a sound caning was doled out to Van Ryn. But the South African junior turned into bed that night with a cheery face, amply consoled by the success of his wheeze.

THE END.

(There will be another fine long, complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. next Tuesday, entitled: "Making Carthew Pay" by Owen Conquest. In the meantime, do not forget that there is a complete story of Rookwood in the "Boys' Friend," every Monday.)

# By Rail Across the Australian Desert!

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

By A RAILWAY EXPERT,

THE island continent of Australia had its railway systems constructed by the various colonies independently of one another. Not only so, but each colony chose a gauge for its lines without reference to that chosen by its neighbours. New South Wales (in which the first Australian railway was built) after toying with the 5 ft. 3 ins. gauge, adopted the 4 ft. 8½ ins. gauge; Queensland the 3 ft. 6 ins. gauge; South Australia, partly the 5 ft. 3 ins., and partly the 3 ft. 6 ins. gauge; Victoria, 5 ft. 3 ins.; and Australia, 3 ft. 6 ins.

As the various systems developed, they met the neighbouring lines of different gauge, but through travel became impossible.

For the past forty years there have been projects to convert all the lines to one gauge, but as each colony desires the chosen gauge to be that of its own railways nothing has resulted from the agitation.

Right across Australia until recently there was no railway line, but the discovery of gold in the Kalgoorlie district made rail communications with Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney a necessity.

When the Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901 it decided to build a trans-Australia railway, and adopted the 4 ft. 8½ ins. gauge for it, although it joins railways of 3 ft. 6 ins. gauge at either end, and to reach Adelaide the 5 ft. 3 ins. gauge also has to be travelled over.

The first sod of the Trans-Australia Rail-

way was cut on September 14th, 1912. The railway runs from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie, a distance of 1,051 miles, practically through a desert—no permanent stream is crossed, and there is a length of 330 miles "as straight as a die." This is across the dreadful Nullabor Plain. Readers of the "Popular" who have not forgotten the Latin of their junior forms, will recognise an allusion to Nullus Arbor—no tree.

For 800 miles the railway runs through country without a house or hut, but occasionally a few wandering aborigines are met. The line was constructed in record time—as much as two and a half miles being built in one day, and in one year 442½ miles. The line was completed on October 17th, 1917. The water and food for the men building the line had to be conveyed to them along the railway, as it progressed from either end. They lived in tents or in railway carriages specially built for their accommodation.

At first, for working the railway, the Commonwealth Government ordered to be constructed in Scotland eight of the specially designed locomotives like the one illustrated by the colour plate presented with this issue of the "Popular." Twenty-six more of this type have since been delivered.

These engines are known as the K.32 class, and are of the 2—8—0 type, with outside cylinders 22 ins. diameter by 26 ins. stroke. As they work both goods and passenger trains over the line, the coupled wheels are

only 4 ft. 3 ins. diameter. The line follows the surface of the country, and gradients are sometimes stiff, the ruling one being 1 in 80. The heating surface of these engines is 1,831 sq. ft. and working pressure 150 lbs. per square inch. These locomotives weigh 68½ tons, and their 8-wheel tenders 47½ tons.

The line is, of course, single, the trains run three days a week in both directions, the journey occupying about thirty-six hours. Special water stations are provided for supplying the engines, the tenders of which hold 4,500 gallons. For conveying the water to these stations in the desert the Commonwealth Railway has 133 water-tank wagons, many of which hold 9,000 gallons (over forty tons) each.

First and second class passengers are conveyed, sleeping berths are provided, and although water is so scarce, first-class passengers can have shower baths in the train.

In addition to the fares, passengers have to take food tickets, and very good meals are provided on the trains. The food tickets were made compulsory because at first passengers jibbed at paying the prices charged for meals on the train and took their own food, so that the dining-car service was carried on at a big loss. The railway itself is also worked at a loss, of about £60,000 a year, without allowing for interest on capital. No "tips" are to be offered the trainmen, by order of the Commonwealth Government.

THE POPULAR.—No. 166.

NEXT  
TUESDAY:

"MAKING CARTHEW PAY!"

A GRAND

STORY OF THE ROCKWOOD CHUMS.  
By OWEN CONQUEST.

## A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Address: The Editor, The "Popular," The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

### MORE PHOTOS AND PLATES.

This week the Companion Papers will be continuing their FREE GIFTS of Real Photos and coloured plates to all readers. These Free Photos and plates have met with a wonderful reception on all sides, and I would like here to thank all those of my many chums for the loyal support they have given me in introducing our famous batch of periodicals to their non-reader chums.

The "Magnet" Library, now on sale, contains TWO REAL PHOTOS of George Harrison, of Everton, and Frank Reilly, of Blackburn Rovers. If you wish to keep your collection complete you must not miss these two grand photos of famous footballers.

In our other Monday-Companion Paper, the "Boys' Friend," you will find a splendid REAL PHOTO of Bermondsey Billy Wells, one of the finest little boxers the world has ever seen. Don't miss this photo on any account.

You will have received a grand COLOURED ENGINE PLATE of a monster locomotive of the famous Commonwealth of Australia Railway in this issue, which will make a ripping addition to your collection. Don't forget to read all about the Great Australian Desert Railway in the article to be found in this issue.

To-morrow, in the "Gem" Library, there will be a splendid REAL PHOTO of MAX WOODNAM, the famous footballer of Manchester City F.C., and champion all-round sportsman. This grand photo depicts the great sportsman in action on the field of play. Add it to your collection.

That is the nature of this week's splendid

photos and the plate the Companion Papers are presenting to every reader, and I advise all those who wish to participate in these magnificent FREE GIFTS to go to their newsagent and order or buy copies of all the above-mentioned periodicals now.

### A FINE PROGRAMME!

There is another batch of stories in preparation for next week, which will appear on sale at all newsagents next Tuesday.

The title of the splendid long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, is "DEALING WITH THE INVADER!"

By Frank Richards.

Owing to the constant "rags" in the Remove quarters, Mr. Quelch deems it necessary to appoint a prefect to keep a watchful eye on the Remove passage. Harry Wharton & Co., however, think quite the contrary, and they resent the "unjust" treatment of their Form-master.

The title of the splendid long complete story of Rookwood School is:

"MAKING CARTHEW PAY!"

By Owen Conquest.

We read in this story how Jimmy Silver & Co. come up against their old enemy, Mark Carthew, the bully of the Sixth, and how they deal with this particularly unpopular prefect.

The third long complete school story is of Tom Merry & Co., the chums of St. Jim's, and is entitled:

"FAITHFUL TO THE END!"

By Martin Clifford.

Perhaps this story is one of the finest yarns our talented author, Mr. Clifford, has given us for a long time. The two most prominent figures in the story are Dick Redfern, of the New House, and "Terry." Terry is a dog. Reddy rescues his new chum from the clutches of a bully in the village, and Terry takes up his temporary quarters at St. Jim's. He is not without other enemies at the school, Mr. Ratcliff, the master of the New House, taking a great objection to him. How he "makes good"

in the end, in his own doggy way, forms the climax of a wonderful story.

Our fourth long complete story is of the schooldays in the backwoods of Canada of the famous Frank Richards, written by his friend, Martin Clifford, and is entitled:

"THE CHINEE ON THE WAR-PATH!"

We have already had one story concerning the quaint Celestial of the Cedar Creek School. This story is about the same character, and we read how Yen Chin goes on the war-path after— But that is for you to find out when you read next week's splendid tale of Frank Richards & Co.

To complete this splendid number, there will be another thrilling instalment of our wonderful serial of adventure, entitled:

"THE PEARL POACHERS!"

By Sidney Drew,

and another grand issue of our supplement, "Billy Bunter's Weekly," which will be found in the centre of the paper as usual, and a fine chance for you to win a big money prize in a simple holiday competition. Order your copy of the POPULAR before it is too late.

"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL."

The great day on which the "Holiday Annual" will make its appearance is drawing nearer, and I am quite sure that this year's "Annual" is better than its preceding volumes. The compiling of this great book of stories has been a stupendous task, and entailed months of hard work. With the combined help of our three favourite authors, Messrs. Richards, Clifford, and Conquest, the "Holiday Annual" has grown from a pile of manuscripts to a wonderful volume of stories and coloured plates, and many other features.

There is bound to be a great demand for the "Holiday Annual," so I advise you to go straight to your newsagents to-day and put in an order for the greatest story-book, which will make its appearance on the first of September.

Your Editor.

# WHERE ARE THESE BAGS BOUND FOR? NEW AND NOVEL COMPETITION.

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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.

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.

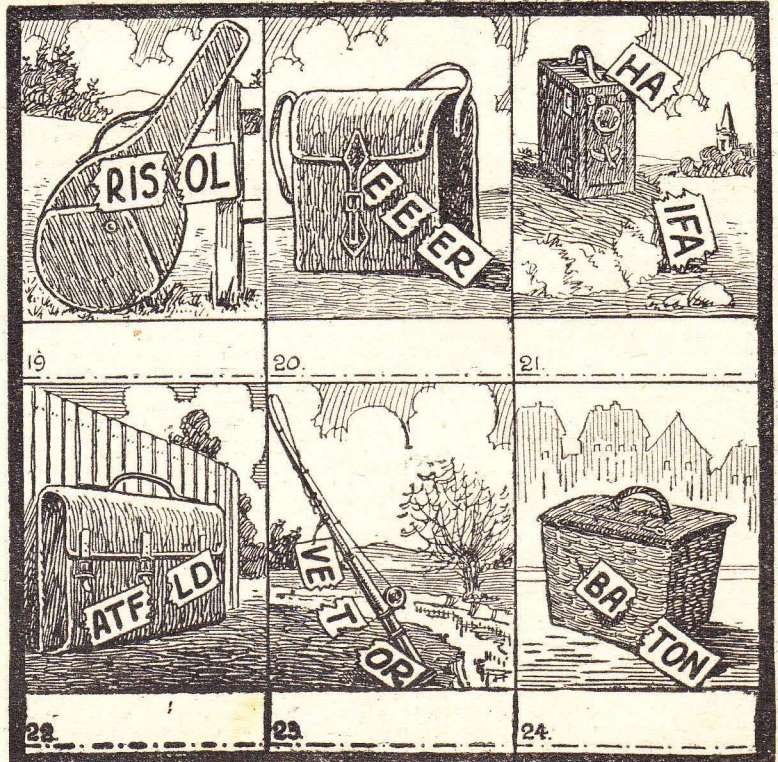
The FIRST PRIZE of £10 will be awarded to the reader who succeeds in sending a set of solutions exactly the same, or nearest to, the set now in the Editor's possession. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit.

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.

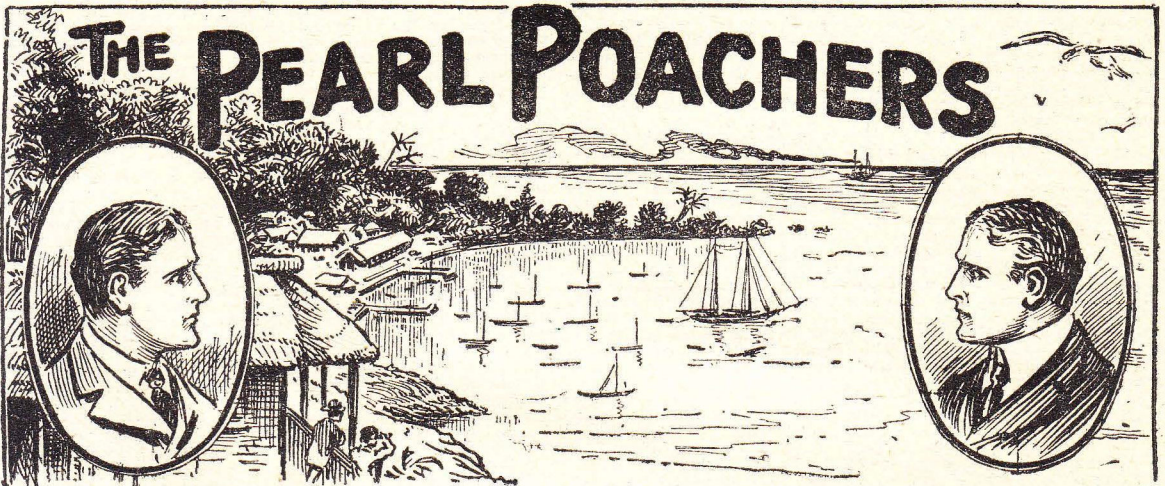
THE POPULAR.—No. 136.

Fourth Set.





THE MOST AMAZING SERIAL OF ADVENTURE IN THE SOUTH SEAS EVER WRITTEN!  
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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, and take him a prisoner. After a skirmish with the mysterious raider, in which they are torpedoed, they discover Ferrers Lord marooned on an island. Owing to the condition of the yacht, Ching Ling & Co. cannot leave the lagoon in which they have been trapped.

Meanwhile, the sham Ferrers Lord nears Gan Waga's Island on board the Lord of the Deep.

(Now read on.)

said to himself. "In selecting his wines, he is almost a genius. I wonder how he is enjoying himself on his own, with only a few parrots and a stray furtle for company? A dreary sort of life, and generally a short one." The sun and the loneliness should soon have the hoped-for effect. With the sun burning him down to the bone, he will stare at the sea until he is nearly blind and think how cool and restful it must be in there. The sight of a shark may scare him off for a time, but the old thought will come back, the thought that he must get away from the sun and from himself, for he will grow to hate himself even more than the sun. And one day he will wade into the sea—here, my esteemed double, is to that happy day, and to speed it."

Blaise drained his glass, selected a cigar, squeezing several between his finger and thumb close to his ear, before he found the one that gave the correct crackle, telling that it was perfectly matured. As the perfumed smoke wisped round him, he felt supremely at his ease. So far everything had gone without a hitch. He had still some little doubt about Rupert Thurston. Thurston might object strongly to be put ashore and left behind. In that event he would have to take one of the doctors from the island back with him. The operator, of course, being only an employee, would have no say in the matter.

"All the worse for the doctor," he muttered. "We shall be on the homeward track, so it will not matter. And the type of doctor who would be employed looking after gold-diggers on a frost-bitten Antarctic island must be a second-rater, too dense and ignorant to suspect that the fellow was drugged. And why should he suspect, and what should I suspect? Am I not Ferrers Lord, the magnificent, and does not his very bread and butter fall into his mouth from my lordly hand? Am I not the master of millions? Perhaps, after all, I'd better not suggest to Thurston that I wish him to go ashore and be nursed. It would look odd, for the climate of the place must be beastly. And even if the doctor should happen to be fairly intimate with my marooned double, the great bluff will carry on. By Jove, it is worth living for! Even if it could possibly fail, it would have been worth living for. Master of actors, and king of bluffers, your health."

Harper Blaise toasted himself in another glass of burgundy in front of the tall mirror. The steward knocked.

"Mr. Thurston would like to speak to you, sir, when you are perfectly at liberty," said THE POPULAR.—No. 186.

**AT THE GOLDEN GATES!**

**P**ROUT'S hand went to the peak of his yachting cap as the false Ferrers Lord appeared on the deck below and looked up at him.

"When do you expect to raise the island, Prout?" asked Harper Blaise, swinging the millionaire's little gold-topped cane.

"About dawn, sir," said Prout. "We're lucky that there ain't a lot of ice about. There must have been a lot of wind from the north since we left that has pushed the stuff south. If the fog keeps off I reckon we ought to raise the island about daylight."

"Good!" said Harper Blaise, and turned on his heel.

"By honey," said Prout, with a low, dismal whistle. "By honey, you may be right, Ben, though it's worse than murder to think it. He must be losing his memory."

The old Ferrers Lord could not have asked such a question as this. He would have known, almost to a fathom, the position of the yacht, the speed at which she was travelling, and almost the exact moment when she would be likely to drop anchor in the little harbour of Gan Waga's island. But Harper Blaise did not mind asking questions now, even such questions as his shrewd mind told him, that the real millionaire would not have asked. He felt completely secure, and his opinion of the mental abilities of Prout and Maddock would not have flattered those mariners. He considered them so dull-witted that nothing he said or did could have aroused any suspicion in their stupid minds. Such men were not in the habit of using their intelligence, but only their eyes and ears and muscles. While he

looked like the real Ferrers Lord, and spoke like the real Ferrers Lord, he would always be the real Ferrers Lord to Prout and the bo'sun. With Rupert Thurston it was different, and that was why he had got Thurston out of the way. The wireless operator was also a danger, for Blaise could never tell what message would reach the yacht. He had managed to drug the operator, and now every message the assistant could decipher was brought to him first hand, and the others in code for him to translate himself. And at dawn they would see the gates of the golden island.

After having triumphed so far, Harper Blaise could not imagine failure now. He had no intention of landing. The note to John Whitman, the manager, demanding the gold, had been carefully forged, and was ready. He would take the gold aboard, fill up the yacht's bunkers with coal, send Thurston and the operator ashore to be medically attended, and then sail back to the reef.

Harper Blaise was very well satisfied with himself when he sat down to dine in lonely state. His appetite had surprised the cook and the steward who waited on him, for though Ferrers Lord loaded his table with the daintiest dishes and the rarest wines, he did it more for the pleasure of his friends than for himself, for it had been a long habit of his only to take plain food, and that sparingly. The false Ferrers Lord, however, was an epicure.

Harper Blaise raised a glass of fine old burgundy up to the light to admire its rich colour and clear, blood-red glow, and then sipped it with great satisfaction.

"My double is certainly a connoisseur," he

**NEXT TUESDAY!**

**"MAKING CARTHEW PAY!"**

**A GRAND STORY OF THE ROOKWOOD CHUMS.**  
By OWEN CONQUEST.

the steward. "Is there an answer, if you please?"

"I'll take the answer in person," said the impersonator. "You may clear away. I shall not need anything more to-night, so you need not disturb me again."

Thurston, though he still looked very ill, was feeling better and becoming restless. He was heartily tired of his confinement and wished to get up.

"Not to-night," said Blaise, his well-trained voice sympathetic and kind. "You had better ask me again in the morning. We should be at anchor about noon, but it is so miserably cold and damp, that I could not allow you on deck. The doctor will see you then, and give me a report. You have both frightened me and puzzled me, and though it is undignified to admit it, I don't really know what has been the matter with you. Have patience, then, till to-morrow, my dear fellow."

"Oh, very well," said Thurston. "I'm fed up with it, but I can last out. But about Ching Lung, Chief. Hasn't he got a message through to us yet?"

"No; and we can't get a message through to him," said Blaise, who hated the very name of Ching Lung. "Evidently his wireless has had a complete breakdown."

"What, with Hal Honour aboard her? That's impossible, Chief," said the invalid incredulously. "He'd put any smash right in an hour. He did fall once, I remember, when we were adrift on that ice-pack south of Gan Waga's island, but that was not Honour's fault, but was due to some big magnetic storm, that put everything electrical upside down. It's not that, I'm certain. Something worse than a smashed wireless must have happened to Ching Lung."

"Try to sleep," said Blaise kindly. "To lie awake imagining things will not make you any fitter to get up to-morrow. I am not at all worried about Ching Lung, and can only suggest again that his wireless is out of order. It's very dreary for you, I know, but you will soon be yourself again. Good-night, Thurston."

Harper Blaise nodded cheerfully and went out, and Thurston lay quietly in his bed, staring at the painted ceiling of his cabin.

"Wireless broken down and Harold Honour on the spot," he thought. "It's preposterous. I can't imagine what the Chief can be thinking of. Broken down—rats!"

The yacht had eased down, for it was snowing, and in the glow of the binnacle, Prout's tarpaulin was white with it. But the squall passed over, and as the grey dawn broke, the steersman put up his binoculars. Ahead lay the lonely island, a darker blur rising out of the grey, melancholy sea. Harper Blaise had emerged from his bath, and dressed. He whitened the hair of his temples, for the real Ferrers Lord had turned a little grizzled there, and

slipped the millionaire's signet ring on his finger. As he entered the saloon, the steward was bringing in his cup of coffee. In the doorway stood Maddock, his hand at the salute, and in Maddock's honest eyes was a troubled, questioning look, hitherto strange to them, that Harper Blaise failed to see.

"We've raised the island, sir," said Maddock. "She's semaphored we can't go in yet, souse me. There's a snag of ice drifting across the harbour, and they're going to blow it up and dredge out the bits of it. They reckon it will take a couple of hours, so we're standing by."

"Thank you," said the sham Ferrers Lord curtly.

Harper Blaise's first sight of Gan Waga's island did not impress him favourably, with its black, treeless crags and the white powdering of snow above them. It looked a desolate, forbidding place, but to the greedy adventurer any spot where gold was to be found was as beautiful as a well-kept English garden in June. As he watched he heard a roar, and saw a cloud of smoke roll seawards. And at last the old, out-of-date semaphore on the highest point of the cliff, and the tall, slim mast of the modern radio behind it, sent the same message to the Lord of the Deep:

"Go ahead—all's clear!"

Harper Blaise laughed softly as he opened Ferrers Lord's cigarette-case, with the millionaire's monogram set in diamonds on it. He was at the gates of the island of treasure, and the golden gates had been unbarred to let him in. Glorious day, days worth the living! The great bluff had won.

#### Sharkfin Billy's Pills for Chinamen.

**G**AN WAGA dropped prone on the deck, for the Eskimo's plump, sturdy legs had suddenly collapsed beneath him with terror, and Barry O'Rooney made a curious rattling noise in his throat as he stared at the motionless prince with fixed and glassy gaze. Then came the thudding impact of the falling shell, the deafening crash, the flame, the billowing smoke, and the fog of dust. In the smother of dust and smoke the prince had vanished. When the smoke slowly lifted in the hot quivering air and the dust settled down, the Chinamen crawled out of their holes again. Ching Lung was standing exactly where he had stood before the shell had fallen.

"Bedad, ut's loike a miracle," said Barry O'Rooney, running his tongue over his dry lips. "He's there, Gan Choy, and he's safe. D'ye ever see the loike."

Ching Lung had felt the wind of the shell like a heavy push from behind, and he was smothered in dust from head to foot, but that was all. The yellow faces popped out of sight as he turned. Then he felt the uselessness of it all. Just as his arguments

and threats and promises were beginning to tell, Sharkfin Billy had sent over a threat and an argument much more powerful and persuasive than any the prince could use—the argument of gunfire and the threat of destruction.

Gan Waga was over the side and ashore, his wet arms hugging Ching Lung before the prince had reached the water's edge, for the use of his limbs had come back to him. But Gan Waga was shaking and voiceless. He had never been so terrified before, and he could only hug Ching Lung and gurgled incoherently.

"There's nothing wrong, Gan, old chap," said the prince. "I'm as safe and sound as a box of tin soldiers in the window of a toy-shop, only the back of my neck tingles a bit where some of the sand hit it. Don't take on, blubberbiter, but get into the boat. I'm so wild and savage that I'm not very good company for anybody just now, so unhook yourself, old chum, if you don't mind, and I'll have a brush down. Pouf! What rotten stuff those brutes put in their shells. Smells just like drains, doesn't it? If you don't unhook quick, Gan, I shall have to give you one across the starboard ear."

Gan Waga dropped his arms, but he was so unsteady after his tremendous fright that Ching Lung had to help him down to the boat. Barry O'Rooney held out his hand to the prince, and at the moment it was not the strong, firm hand it usually was. Barry too, had been shaken.

"Och! I was thinking you'd be blowed elane off the map, and so far away that there wasn't much chance of bumping up agin you in a lofttoime," said Barry.

"I didn't care if it snowed ink, just then," said the prince, with a laugh. "Besides, after slanging those chaps for a pack of cowards I couldn't very well show myself a coward by streaking into a dug-out. It was one of those unfortunate times when a man has to stand tight and face the music, Barry."

"Sure, sor," said Barry, nodding, "but Oid'd sooner have the music of four thousand jazz-bands played backward than that kind of melody. Ather all, onless there's a fole handy, ut's not much use running away from a shell. But having a great respect for shells meself, sor, Oid'd have grovelled."

"It would have been more sensible," said the prince, "and nobody of that crowd would have noticed if I had, but I never thought of it. Sharkfin Billy might have guessed what I was doing and fired that over at the exact moment to suit himself. I was getting the curs to listen to me. Twenty or thirty of them were coming aboard to work, and the rest would have followed like a lot of sheep if he hadn't dumped that firework at us. That smashed up the whole bag of tricks."

The explosion of the shell had been ignored by Hal Honour, whose hammer was still at work; but the millionaire, who had been looking out of a porthole, had seen everything. He came on deck and went forward to look at the launch and then went below, and the grimy engineer gave his hammer a brief rest as he saw the millionaire approaching in the gloom of the boiler-room.

"You may as well give it up, Honour," said Ferrers Lord. "Even if you can get the pumps working, we shall be little the better off, for we can obtain no labour."

The engineer gave an angry grunt and threw the hammer away. His arched eyebrows asked a dozen questions at least, so high were they raised.

"Better repair the launch," said Ferrers Lord. "Then there will be Ching Lung to deal with. How are we to persuade him to leave these wretched Chinks of his?"

Hal Honour worked his greasy hands in dumb show. The engineer's idea was to take drastic measure—tie the prince up and carry him off whether he liked it or not.

"Quite effective, but he would be furious," said Ferrers Lord with a smile. "If persuasion fails, we may have to come to it. But patch up the launch, Honour."

Honour clenched his fist and scowled at the boiler. In another hour he would have have made it leak-proof. It was quite on the cards that the engineer in time would have refloated the launch successfully, even with only a couple of dozen Chinamen to help him. Even if Sharkfin Billy sank it again the work would have been done, and to Honour the joy was more in the task than in its completion. However, Ferrers

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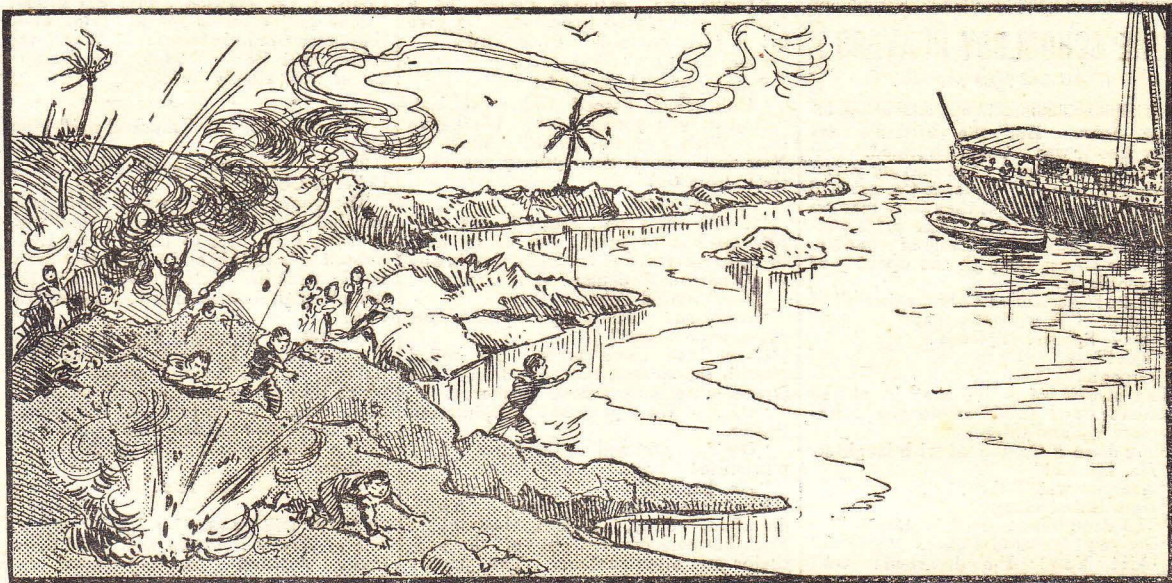
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THE POPULAR.—No. 186.

NEXT  
TUESDAY!

**"FAITHFUL TO THE END!"**



**THE NEW PERIL!**—Suddenly the haze turned crimson from the quick flash of a gun. There was a whistling like the whistling of many wings, and thumping and pattering. Deadly things that seemed endowed with life had alighted on the island in a scattering shower. The red flashes and reports of many explosions followed, and wails and shrieks of terror came from the swarm of running Chinks. (See this page.)

Lord had altered the plan, so Honour picked up the hammer, put it in his pocket, and proceeded to tackle the launch. The Chinamen were out of their dug-out, with men on the watch for shells, and they squatted about in the sunshine playing cards and other games with pebbles and bits of bone.

"Now, Ching," said Ferrers Lord, "we must not let Honour do everything. We're not experts, perhaps, but I fancy we are capable of hanging out a few live wires."

"Then you still hold to your opinion that those mutineers will make a raid on the boats, chief?"

"It seems obvious to me the only thing that can happen if the shelling goes on," said the millionaire.

"Then let us fix those wires at once and be ready for them," said Ching Lung. "If they do that, then I've finished, and I don't care what happens to the dogs."

Gan Waga and the two natives were pressed in, and work to Gan Waga was a novelty, for the Eskimo usually walked round watching others do it and making unflattering comments as to how it was being done. But though Gan Waga loathed the heat, he was very willing, and he proved a good deal less clumsy than Jimmy of the yellow eyes and the native pilot. The pilot was quite useless, so Ferrers Lord sent him ashore to see if he could locate the raider.

Sharkfin Billy gave them a rest until moon-rise, and then the red flash of his gun gleamed for an instant through the trunks of the palm-trees. A clanging of bells, the blare of horns, and a babel of yells from the other island announced that the steel messenger of death and destruction was on its way.

Ching Lung, Ferrers Lord, and Hal Honour were taking a light supper on deck. An instant before the shell struck and exploded the millionaire turned to the prince.

"Perhaps it would be as well to switch the current on, Ching," he said, in his deep, quick voice. "Shell-fire seems more alarming at night than by daylight."

Sharkfin Billy evidently had the range to a nicety, for he made big shooting. The shell dropped direct on one of the dug-outs, and palm-logs leapt into the air. Ten minutes later half a dozen men came down the beach. One of them had a megaphone, and he bawled through it to Ching Lung, addressing him by all his titles, and as the prince possessed a tremendously long string of titles, this in itself took a considerable time.

"Gang of mutineers, pack of treason-ridden curs, what is it you want of me?" cried the prince, megaphone to mouth.

"Son of the Stars, Prince of the Red Dragon, we need sand-bags," answered the

spokesman. "Five of us have been slain by the last shell, and we are at the mercy of the murderers, for though the dug-out was deep the roof was not strong, and so they were slain! You have many empty rice-sacks, and these we ask for."

Ferrers Lord understood the language, and nodded as Ching Lung glanced at him inquiringly.

"By all means give the rascals the empty rice-bags," he said. "If they can make themselves fairly secure they will keep quiet all the longer."

Through the megaphone Ching Lung told the men that he was sending the boat for them, but that he would only let four of them come aboard.

"You may take the sacks, but touch nothing else," he said. "Oh, you brave ones! Come, then, and take all the rice-bags you require. There will be many hangings and a great cutting-off of heads when I have whipped you yellow curs back to Kwai-hai!"

The boat went back loaded. Barry O'Rooney went with them to the beach, carrying an automatic pistol prominently in his hand, and came back safely.

Then there was great liveliness on the island as the mutineers filled the bags with sand and soil to strengthen their shelters.

"I've been thinking a few things, sir," said O'Rooney, after a pause. "Phwat av that same Billy takes ut into his head to have a cut-in?"

"You've got me guessing, Barry," said the prince. "Do you think the three of us could keep him off with rifles?"

"Bedad, Oi wouldn't loike to bet on it!" said Barry. "We moight howld him off av ut was only fair doing and a matter of rifles on each side; but av Billy showed up at the end of the channel there, and got that big shooter of his banging at us, nothing would please me more than to wake up and feind myself safe in bed a few thousand miles away from this. You can't catch those old shells in butterfly-nets, bad luck to ut!"

Barry took the first watch. The night was so clear, and the water so bright and phosphorescent, that they did not use the searchlights. The Chinks had finished their labours, and retired to their dugouts, now strongly fortified by sand-bags. In the moonlight they looked quite bombproof, except against high-angle fire with a steeply-descending shell from long range, and Sharkfin Billy and his buccaners were not likely to try any elaborate artillery practice of that kind.

Barry refilled his pipe and watched the water ripple into silver as a shark slip past the yacht. Then he seized a rifle, and ran up to the bridge, as he heard a sound that he might have taken for thunder if he had not

known better. Sharkfin Billy and his pirates were awake and astir, and the raider was in motion. At the head of the channel the water boiled white as the flying petrol-launch sped past, hidden by her smoke-screen.

"Phwat's the mischief afoot now?" Barry wondered, as he listened to the diminishing roar of the engines. "Oi'd bether tell them to show a leg."

On the mutineers' island startled heads were looking out of the holes. Barry sounded the bell of the engine-room, and it was a very noisy bell. Presently, Ferrers Lord, Ching Lung, Hal Honour, and Gan Waga were on the bridge beside him. The two blacks who slept on the deck were already awake.

"She's eased up now," said Barry. "She just slipped across the top of the channel, and Oi couldn't glimpse of her for the smoke she was spitting out, but she showed a wake as white as a snowstorm. She's over on the other side, behind the Chinks, and up to no good at all, the dirty noise-tank!"

Though only a few stumps of palm-trees remained to impede the view, and the sea was visible, their glasses failed to pick out the raider. There was a patch of haze there, and they could only guess that it was a haze she had manufactured for herself, and that she was lurking behind it.

Suddenly the haze turned crimson from the quick flash of a gun. There was a whistling like the whistling of many wings and a thumping and pattering. Deadly things that seemed endowed with life had alighted on the island in a scattering shower. The red flashes and reports of many explosions followed, and wails and shrieks of terror rose muffled from the dug-outs. Barry O'Rooney gave quite a pleased laugh, as if he enjoyed it.

"Hoppers, by Jove!" said Ching Lung. "Blaise must have invested in some German stuff."

Sharkfin Billy had dosed the island with a shower of hopping shells, spiteful little things that bounced and bounded in all directions before exploding, and were just as liable to pop into the narrowest entrance of a dugout and cause havoc as anywhere else. Evidently Sharkfin Billy knew how to deal with Chinamen and how to scare them, for ten minutes after the last shell had exploded the Chinks came swarming out of their holes, and came racing down the beach, a wild-eyed, howling, panic-stricken mob.

"Live'n up your wires, Honour!" cried the millionaire. "Switch on the electric current, for this means mischief!"

*(There will be another thrilling instalment of our amazing serial of adventure in the South Seas in next week's splendid issue.)*

**THE SCHOOLBOY PLAYERS**

(Continued from page 10.)

King John. But the Fifth-Formers knew who it was. Coker chuckled.

"Hallo, Wharton! Not playing yet?" Wharton smiled. Coker & Co. grinned cheerfully, feeling that they were masters of the situation. But their grins suddenly died away as the nozzle of a garden-hose was thrust through the opening of the ventilator.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Coker, sober all of a sudden. "W-w-what's that?"

Whiz! Splash! Sploosh!

"Yah!"

"Groogh!"

The stream of water shot in at the ventilator, and fairly smote the Fifth-Formers hip and thigh.

King John & Co. roared with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you wet, Coker?"

"Does it feel damp?"

"The dampfulness must be terrific!"

"Ow—ow!" roared Coker. "Stoppit! Chuckit! Yow! I'm drenched! Ow! Stop it! Groogh!"

"Leave off!" shrieked Potter, as a fresh stream played upon him. "I give in! I give you best! Ow! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Splash, splash! Sploosh!

"Hold on!" gasped Coker at last.

"Stop it, you young fiend! We'll give in! We'll stop the game! We'll—"

Yow-ow! We'll do anything you like!

Ow! Chuckit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'll come out, make it pax, and promise honour bright not to do anything to interrupt or spoil the play in any way whatever?" demanded Wharton.

"No!" roared Coker.

"Right-ho! There's plenty of water. Have some more!"

Coker had some more. He rolled over in the stream, roaring. Potter and Greene were fairly yelling for mercy.

"Ow! We promise!" spluttered Potter.

"Ow!" groaned Coker. "I—I p-promise! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The water was turned off. Three drenched, dirty, furious, bedraggled Fifth-Formers crawled out of the ventilator one after another. The juniors greeted them with roars of laughter.

Coker & Co. crawled away, too utterly "done in" even to speak. But when they recovered their voices, later, the things that Potter and Greene said to Coker were simply lurid.

The play was not "mucked up" after all.

There were no interruptions from Coker & Co.

The commencement was a little late, but that was all. And the play went with a swing from first to last. The Head himself applauded, and when the curtain finally went down after the last act, the schoolboy dramatists had to take several calls.

It was a triumph for the Junior Dramatic Club, and there was a substantial sum realised for the destitute seamen, which they received with much thankfulness. Coker & Co., for once, had to hide their diminished heads, and to admit that all the honours were with the Schoolboy Players.

THE END.

(There will be another long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, entitled "Dealing With the Invader!" in next week's issue.)

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