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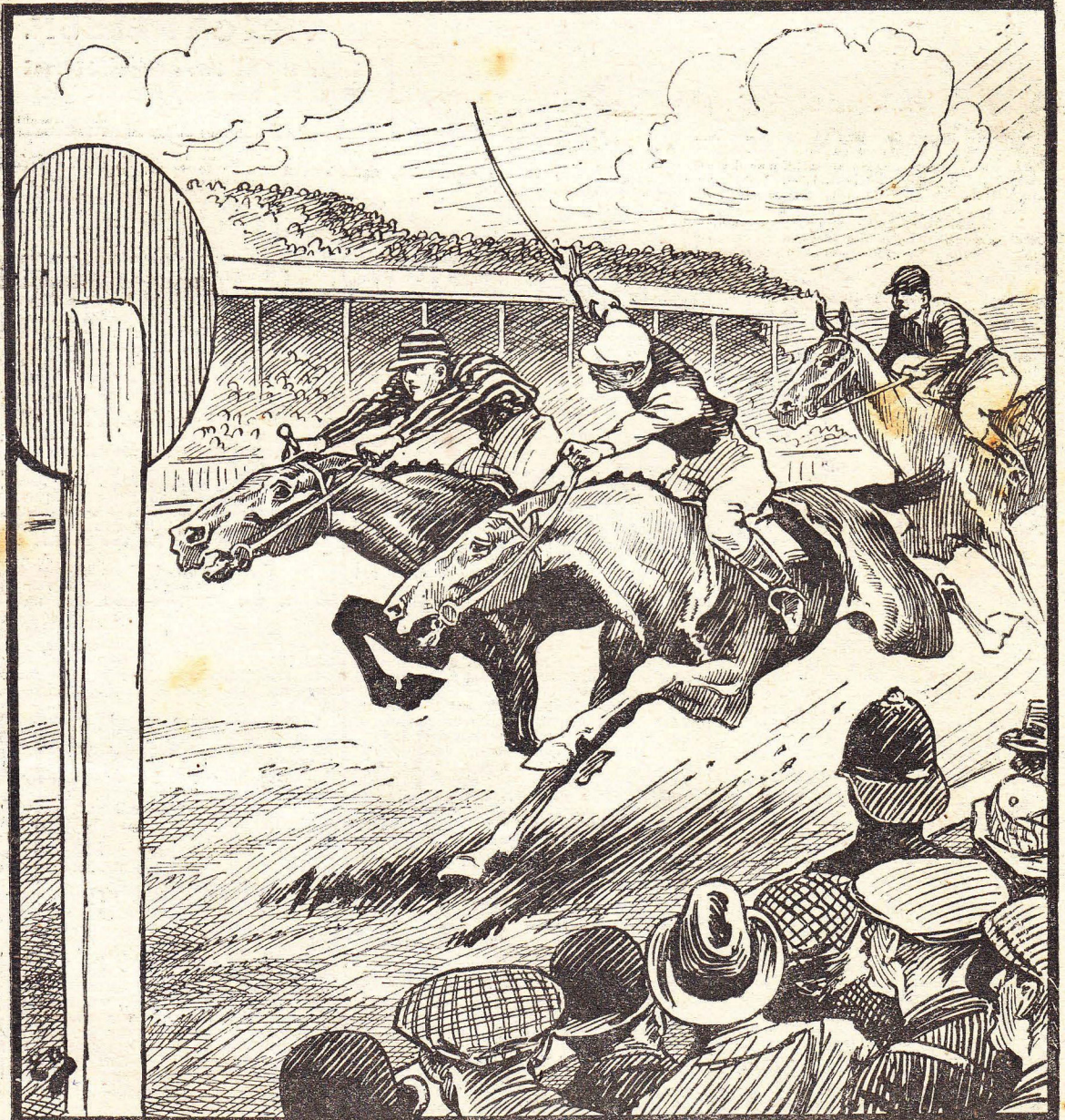
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28
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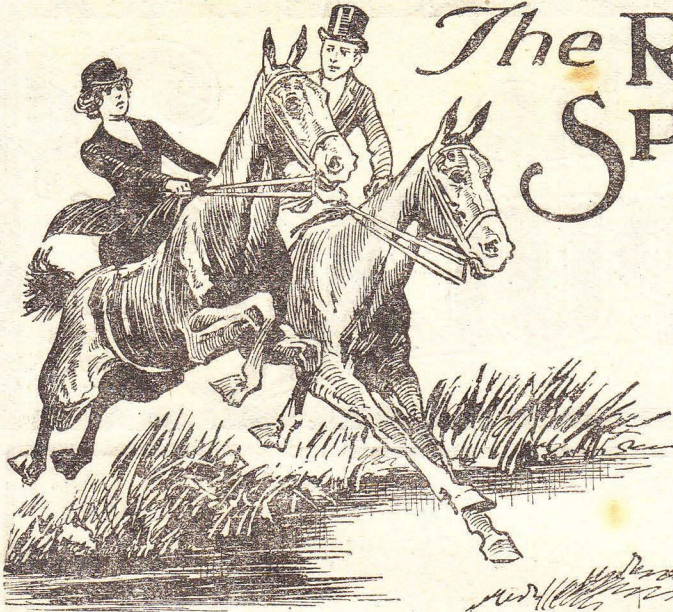
The POPULAR 2d

SPECIAL
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INSIDE.



THE RIVAL SPORTSMEN'S NECK AND NECK STRUGGLE FOR VICTORY!
(A Thrilling Episode from the Grand New Serial Story in this Issue.)

A WONDERFUL SPORTING STORY OF AN AMAZING STRUGGLE FOR A GREAT FORTUNE. START READING IT TO-DAY!



The RIVAL SPORTSMEN!

A Grand New Story, full of excitement and thrill, introducing HARRY LESTRADE and AUSTIN COURTNEY, and dealing with their extraordinary fight, on the field of sport, for the Lestrade Fortune.

By VICTOR NELSON.

(Author of "By Nero's Command!" and "The Boy With Fifty Millions!" etc.)

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

By the terms of the late Sir Charles Lestrade's will, Harry Lestrade and his cousin, Austin Courtney, must fight for possession of the Lestrade fortune on the field of sport. The one who distinguishes himself most becomes owner of a vast amount of wealth. Harry Lestrade receives the first opportunity to distinguish himself in a local football match, for which club he is "signed on."

The next sporting event in which the cousins meet is a steeplechase at Kempton Park. Harry Lestrade is riding his horse, Warrior, in the great race. As the horses arrive at the first hurdle, Warrior collides with another horse, and Harry is thrown. But, unhurt, he jumps to his feet and remounts his horse.

(Now read on.)

How the Race Ended.—A Fresh Plot.

DOGGEDLY, Harry Lestrade urged Warrior after the racers, not touching him with the whip, but coaxing him into a rattling pace with hands and knees.

Though it was little more than the beginning of the race, Harry knew that Warrior could stay for ever, as the saying goes, and that if he could overhaul the others he might yet give the best of them trouble. But could he again get on terms with them? It seemed almost impossible.

He carried an approximate stone in dead weight, and this was a disadvantage, as was the age of his mount. Though he possessed stamina, his speed was not now what it had been in his younger days; and to-day practically all the horses Warrior was opposed against were comparatively young, fresh animals.

As the next hurdle was reached and taken, Harry and Warrior were still badly in the rear, save for an outsider called Catfish, who fell.

For just a moment Harry Lestrade's eyes sought his cousin on Ugly Bird, and he saw that, amongst the leaders, Austin Courtney and his mount were well placed over by the rails. But with over a mile and a half still to go, there was little in it yet.

Nearer and nearer crept Warrior to the horses forming the tail of the field. The Watchman was overtaken and passed, and two others, who had stood at long odds in the wagering, shared his fate by the time the third obstacle was negotiated.

At the next Designer refused, then blundered badly as his jockey forced him to take the jump. He came down on top of the hurdle, almost turned a somersault, as he

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pitched awkwardly to the other side, and stunned his rider.

In his case "the money was in the air," and if a well-backed horse was to win now it looked as though Ugly Bird would be the one.

A mile covered—half the distance left behind! Finding the pace too hot for them, three more of the runners of no great account had been tailed off. In front of Harry Lestrade now were his cousin's horses, Ugly Bird, Italian, Quicksilver II., and Bridge of Sighs, with the latter and Ugly Bird beginning to take the lead.

Between six and seven lengths still divided Harry from Italian and Quicksilver II., but the boy's teeth were set, and he was riding with a steady determination that slowly but surely was decreasing the distance between him and those in the van.

Knowing that his mount had plenty in hand, and that he was capable of a good burst of finishing speed, the gentleman rider on Italian was taking matters easily. He had something of a shock, however, when, hearing the thunder of hoofs at his back, he darted a quick glance over his shoulder.

Looking as fresh as if he had cantered but a furlong, Warrior was almost at his mount's flanks! No matter how the race ended, the old horse was doing wonders.

Italian's rider sat down to race in real earnest; but Harry Lestrade clung to him, and once over the next jump he challenged and brought Warrior neck and neck with the younger horse.

Warrior was beginning to get his nose in front as the next hurdle was reached. Almost together the two horses soared over it, and Italian pecked slightly as he landed. The fact lost him a length, and Harry Lestrade raced his mount on and overtook Quicksilver II., who was obviously beginning to tire.

Bridge of Sighs came a purler at the last obstacle, and, as turning his head for a fleeting second Austin Courtney saw what had happened, he smiled.

He had nothing to beat now, nothing that was likely to trouble him was near, he told himself. If his cousin had so far scored over him in the direction of football, he would make up for it to-day on the Turf. The race was his!

Austin Courtney leant a little forward over Ugly Bird's neck, giving him a smart cut with the whip to force him into a stylish gallop for the run home.

But it was a bad mistake. Ugly Bird was feeling the effects of a fast-run race, and wearying. He had been doing his best, and greatly resented the stinging blow given him by his rider.

He swerved, lost his stride, and almost came down. With a muttered imprecation Austin Courtney saved him, but had partially

to pull him up to do so. The next thing he realised was that a horse was pounding towards him only a few yards in the rear.

He looked sharply back, and almost tumbled from his saddle in sheer amazement as he found his cousin, on Warrior, bearing down upon him—saw the horse and rider he had thought to be hopelessly left but two lengths away from Ugly Bird's flanks.

Austin Courtney's teeth came together with a snap, and riding with hands and knees, and urging the horse on with encouraging words, he quickly had Ugly Bird sprinting for the winning-post at the greatest pace he could muster. But the thunder of Warrior's hoofs still sounded dangerously near, and, with the post barely twenty yards distant, Courtney found the head of his cousin's horse on a level with him.

Low over Warrior Harry Lestrade crouched, seeming fairly to lift him over the ground. A tense hush fell upon those who watched followed by a gasp of mingled excitement and the gallant challenge of the rank outsider, surprise that sounded like a concerted effort as it was seen that the two animals were now neck and neck.

On—on at the speed of an express train they tore; but as they came level with the post it was Warrior's head that was in front.

His own gameness and clever nursing had enabled him to achieve something very like a miracle.

In racing parlance, Warrior, the forlorn hope, the twenty-five to one chance, had won by his nostrils!

Thunderous cheers welled up from the stands and enclosures. Though hardly anyone could have backed Warrior, it was a victory such as always appeals to your British sportsman, and enables him to lose with a good heart.

The applause was as gall and wormwood to Austin Courtney, and as he turned his horse after Harry, who was riding towards the unsaddling enclosure, the young man's face was white and working, and his eyes filled with a malignant hatred.

For a moment he felt that his uncle's fortune was already slipping through his fingers. But he shook that conviction off.

Harry Lestrade would have to be stopped—that was all! Austin Courtney decided to put into execution a plan that had been vaguely taking shape in his mind for the past week. And, as luck would have it, when after the racing was over he was leaving the course in his car, he espied the very man with whom he had determined he must again get in touch—Jerry Murker.

"Jump in!" Austin Courtney said curtly, as he guided his car alongside the limping little scoundrel.

Jerry the Limper started as he turned and saw who had addressed him. He did not

stop to respond just then, but opened the door of the auto, and seated himself beside the young man at the wheel. It was not until they were free of the crowds pouring from the various exits, and the congestion of other vehicles, that they conversed.

It was the Limper who spoke first. "Well, gov'nor, I got the hoss, Tearing Haste O.K. for yer, an' earned the money you gave me. I'm sorry the young cub won on his other entry; but I couldn't help that no more than you, could I?"

Austin Courtney shook his head. "No. He had the luck of the very dickens," he said savagely. "Jerry, you knock about amongst some strange characters at times, I expect. Do you happen to know any seafaring men—seafaring men who would be open to earn a few hundreds without being too squeamish as to how they did it. Wait!"—as the Limper would have spoken. "I have got to put my cousin out of the running by hook or by crook, for, up to the present, he is proving too good for me. I have been given a trial for Romford Rovers Football Club, and have been signed on, and as they are playing a mid-week match with Wessex Wanderers on Wednesday week, I might stand a chance of lowering my cousin's colours on the footer field. But I prefer to shine without his being there at all, if possible."

"I don't get you, gov'nor," the Limper said, looking puzzled. "I mean I prefer him to be got out of the way and kept out of the way. The whelp has been doing as well at football as he did to-day on the racecourse, and, as I said before, he has got to be stopped. Now, if you could put me in touch with some seaman who is not too scrupulous—preferably an owner—"

"I can, gov'nor," interrupted the Limper. "By a queer coincidence, I run into a pal o' mine only last night—a Cap'n Seth Jones, master of a tramp steamer called the Mustapha, which is now lying in the Royal Albert Docks. She'll be there for a week, whilst she loads a mixed cargo for the Argentine, so he told me. As for not being particular—the Limper laughed significantly—"there's not much Cap'n Jones wouldn't do for money, I can tell you."

Austin Courtney drew a sharp breath. "And his boat's bound for the Argentine when she leaves London! By Jove, nothing could be more fortunate!"

"But what's the idea, gov'nor?" Jerry Murker asked, still failing to understand.

As he drove slowly onwards towards London Courtney quickly whispered to him his plan, and when he had finished, Jerry the Limper was grinning.

"Phew! It's a bit daring, but it's some idea," he exclaimed. "An' you say he is playing with his team on East London United's ground, which is quite near the docks, next Saturday?"

"Yes," Courtney answered grimly. "And, provided your friend Captain Jones is agreeable to what I mean to propose to him, we ought to be able to get my dear cousin into our hands after the match!"

The Match with East London United—and After!

ALL through the morning on the following Saturday a fog that had rolled off the river had enveloped the East End of London and football enthusiasts in that district had wondered if it was going to cheat them out of their afternoon's sport.

But at one o'clock the fog began to disperse, and some half an hour before the time for the kick-off between Wessex Wanderers and East London United at the latter's ground near Upton Park, practically every sign of it had gone.

Away at the ground, Wessex Wanderers had turned up in company with the trainer Tony Wagg, and they were in the dressing-room slipping out of their ordinary attire into football rig.

Harry Lestrade was with them, looking as fit as ever and determined to continue to do his best for both his club and himself.

Through roundabout channels, he had learned that his cousin, Austin Courtney, had been signed on for Romford Rovers, who, as it happened, the Wanderers were to meet on the following Wednesday afternoon on their ground near Lestrade Castle.

The information had caused Harry to be even more eager to do great things on the

footer field than he had been before, if that were possible. For although he had entered the great contest between himself and his cousin with no ill-feeling against the latter, he had become fairly certain by this time that Austin Courtney had been behind this dastardly nobbling of Tearing Haste II. And Harry meant to beat his cousin now at all costs, to pay him out for his contemptible villainy.

Through his late father's trainer Williams, Harry had ascertained that no ante-post wagering had taken place over the Kempton race, so that the one person in existence who could have had a motive for putting Tearing Haste out of the running had been Austin Courtney.

Harry Lestrade was one of the first to stand clad in his blue and white footer shirt and shorts, and whilst he waited for his team-mates to make ready to take the field, he went to his clothes and re-read a letter he had received during the week from an old school friend.

"Dear old sport," it ran. "I see by the newspapers that your club will be playing East London this week-end. Won't you spend the Saturday and Sunday with me at my pater's house at Kensington? Anyhow, old bean, I shall send along the car, if I cannot come in it myself, to the ground, in the hope that you will. Thine to a cinder. "SPECS."

Harry smiled as he returned the epistle to the pocket of his jacket. He and Theodore Grainger, known to his intimates as "Specs,"—as he was abominably short sighted and wore large black-rimmed glasses, had been fast friends in the Fifth Form at Harry's school. He decided that a short rest after the strenuous athletic life he had been leading of late would do him no harm, and that he would accept his old school-fellow's invitation. It would be a change to spend a day or a little over in town, and—"well, it would be good to see old Specs again."

"Now, boys, jump about!" Tony Wagg urged, as he glanced at his watch. "T'other side and the ref and linesmen are on the

pitch, and it's only us they're waiting for now."

The players hustled up. A few moments later they ran on to the field with their captain, Codling, the centre-forward, at their head.

The latter and the East London skipper met and gripped. Then the coin was spun, the Wanderers winning, and choosing the goal slightly favoured by a breeze that was beginning to spring up.

Almost as soon as the East London centre had kicked off, Harry Lestrade gained possession. But it was quickly evident that his fame had travelled here before him and that he was a marked player.

Harry was playing at inside-left, as was usual. The opposing forward, the East London inside-right, clung to him like a leech, and when, making a smart individual dash with the ball at his toes, Harry out-sprinted him, he found the East London right-half equally as attentive.

The later tackled, and contrived to rob him, and the play was transferred to the Wanderer's end of the pitch. From a mix-up in the goalmouth, the East London forward succeeded in heading the leather past Wills and into the net.

Thus, within a matter of minutes of the kick-off, East London was one up, and it looked as if the Wanderers were going to have their work cut out if they were to return home the winners.

"Specs."

The speedy success of the home team greatly pleased their supporters. The ground was crowded to overflowing, and the cheering, clapping, cock-crowing, and bell-ringing that hailed the goal was simply deafening.

After the restart, Harry Lestrade found himself being starved. Codling had seen how he was marked and would not risk passing to him. It was rough luck on the boy, but he had sense enough to see the wisdom of his captain's play and was also unselfish enough to appreciate it.

Codling more than once ballooned the leather to Harry's partner on the wing, and on several occasions the latter, who



The driver turned in his seat, and placed his lips to the speaking tube. The next moment he had given a vigorous blow through the piping, and a cloud of greyish powder was sent into Harry's face. As he inhaled it he reeled back in his seat. (See Page 4.)

was a fast and nippy little player, dribbled it into the penalty area with clever individual dashes, when he centred back to Codling. But both the East London backs and their goalie were determined to let nothing pass them if it could be avoided, and again and again Codling's pile-driving shots were rendered abortive by one of the three clearing.

At half-time only the one goal had been notched, and Tony Wagg was sarcastic in his remarks when the dressing-room was reached.

"What the mischief is the matter with you fellows?" he demanded. "Ping-pong seems to be more in your line to-day. Give Master Harry more to do in this next half, Codling. He's hardly had a fair chance so far."

"They're marking him—marking him like one o'clock, Tony!" Codling protested.

"Don't matter! From what I know of him he'll find a way of beating 'em!" the trainer returned. "Besides, it will be a surprise for 'em, if he's suddenly given something to do after being starved!"

Codling followed the trainer's advice when they were back on the pitch and the game was recommenced. But it seemed that Harry Lestrade was out of luck, and, though the ball came his way on several occasions, he did not succeed in getting it past the East London's strong defence.

Just as the referee, glanced at his watch Johnson, the Wanderers' inside-right, levelled out, side-stepping him, and slamming the ball into the undefended net.

A corner was awarded against East London almost immediately after the leather had been centred and set once again in motion, but, with the East Londoners packing their goal, it seemed unlikely that it would be converted, and the game locked like ending in a draw.

George Evans, the Wanderers' outside-right, took the kick, and placed it cleanly across the goalmouth. The custodian fisted it out; and then at last came Harry Lestrade's opportunity.

He saw the sphere coming his way, and, with a mighty spring, got his head to it. It described a beautiful arc, and, before the defending players and the goalie knew where they were, it had been returned, and lay over the goal-line, spinning in the mud.

"Goal! Goal!"

The cry that welled up from the Wessex supporters drowned the referee's long, final blast of his whistle.

At the last moment Harry Lestrade had made good. He had turned what had seemed an almost inevitable draw into a win for his side!

"Bravo, youngster!" Tony Wagg cried, when they met in the dressing-room, and he clapped the boy on the back with a vigour that caused him to wince. "That's the stuff to give 'em! If you keep it up like this for us for the rest of the season, we'll be making a scrap of it for the Cup in April!"

Harry Lestrade flushed with pleasure, knowing the trainer never gave praise unless it came from his heart. By the time the rest of his team-mates had congratulated him, his right arm ached and his back felt in need of some soothing ointment.

He was whistling cheerily, as he indulged in a warm bath, followed by a cold shower and a vigorous towelling. Apart from every success bringing him nearer the winning of his dead father's fortune, it was good to know that his team-mates thought well of his play.

When he was dressed, Harry Lestrade took leave of his fellow-players and the trainer, and, making his way from the ground by the players' exit, he found, as he had expected would be the case, that a smart closed motor-car stood waiting in the kerb.

A uniformed chauffeur stepped up to him and touched his cap.

"Master Lestrade?" he asked. And, as Harry nodded: "I've been sent by the young master to pick you up, sir. I'm from Master Grainger, you know."

Harry nodded, and entered the car as the man opened the door. The chauffeur climbed back into his seat at the wheel, and instantly started away from the kerb.

Suddenly, Harry Lestrade realised that the vehicle was threading its way deep into a network of slums. Although the shadows were deepening and darkness was at hand, he could see enough of his surroundings to be

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certain that they were not making towards Kensington by the most direct route.

He tapped upon the glass, then raised the speaking-tube to address the driver, meaning to ask him why he had driven into the unsavoury neighbourhood.

The man turned in his seat, but it was his lips instead of his ear that he placed to his end of the tube. The next moment he had given a vigorous blow through the piping, and a cloud of greyish powder was sent into Harry Lestrade's face.

As he inhaled it, the boy reeled back into his seat, the realisation that he had been cunningly tricked rushing into his brain, for his senses were reeling and leaden weights seemed to drag at his limbs, and he understood that the powder was formed of some powerful drug.

Desperately he staggered to his feet, and tried to throw open the door of the car. But his fingers were by this time too nerveless to turn the handle, and, with a choking groan, he collapsed to the floor of the car unconscious.

When Harry eventually regained his senses it was to find himself lying in total darkness on a hard, plank floor, and, in a dim kind of way, he was aware of a gentle and regular rocking motion.

He put out his hand, and touched what felt like a rough packing-case. Then his fingers encountered a coil of tarry rope, and, as memory began to flood back into his brain, he uttered a dismayed cry.

In a flash he realised the truth.

The letter purporting to come from his old school chum had been a forgery—a forgery doubtless copied from letters Specs Grainger, which he had kept in his bed-room in Lestrade Castle—and his cousin, Austin Courtney, had been behind the writing of it.

The rocking sensation he had noticed was caused by the motion of the sea, and he was a prisoner in the hold of some ship.

That his cousin might have a clear field in the great sporting contest between them that involved half a million of money, he—Harry Lestrade—had been shanghaied!

Bound for the Argentine.—Harry Lestrade's Daring.

SHANGHAIED! A last prisoner, and bound he knew not where!

A red rage seized Harry Lestrade as he realised the black treachery that had been at work against him.

He pressed his hands to his throbbing temples, and somehow struggled to a sitting posture. Then he became aware that his feet were bare, and also that both his collar and tie and his own clothes had been re-

moved. He was now dressed in a pair of trousers that were ill-fitting and ragged, and an old and patched jersey.

What was the idea of this? He sat upon the dusty floor of the hold in the darkness and tried to collect his thoughts.

"My cousin has scored over me this time with a vengeance," he muttered bitterly. "It was a clever ruse to copy the handwriting of old Specs and send me that letter. It completely took me in, and I walked blindly into his trap. I wonder where this vessel is taking me? There's one thing, unless they intend to starve me to death, they cannot leave me here for good, and perhaps I'll get a chance to escape, if I watch my opportunity."

Harry Lestrade brightened up a little at this thought, though his anger against his cousin Austin did not diminish.

Presently, as the effects of the drug that had been administered to him began to wear off, he struggled unsteadily to his feet.

For a moment the boy stood clutching at the edge of a packing-case his hands had encountered. Then, as his strength slowly returned to him, he climbed upon the case, and, raising his hands above his head, found that he could just reach one of the hatches.

He descended to the floor once more, and found the tarry coil of thick rope he remembered having touched when he had first regained his senses. Picking this up, he placed it on top of the packing-case, so that, when he climbed back on to it and stood upon the rope, he was able to get his hands to the battered-down hatch and force at it.

But it resisted all his efforts as he tried to push it up.

He pummelled at it for fully five minutes or so. If anyone was on the deck and heard, however, they paid no heed, and, with an indignant exclamation, Harry Lestrade sprang down from his perch, and again fell to thinking over his unenviable position.

He had no means of estimating what o'clock it was, though he judged that it was still some time on the Saturday night. For, however powerful the drug that the chauffeur had blown into his face, it would hardly have kept him unconscious for more than a few hours.

Three times did he mount again to the packing-case and hammer upon the hatch with his clenched hands. But it was without meeting with the least response, and Harry at length determined to give it up for a while and try to get some natural sleep that would doubtless rid him of the maddening pains in his head and enable him to fully regain his strength.

(Another thrilling instalment of our grand serial next week.)

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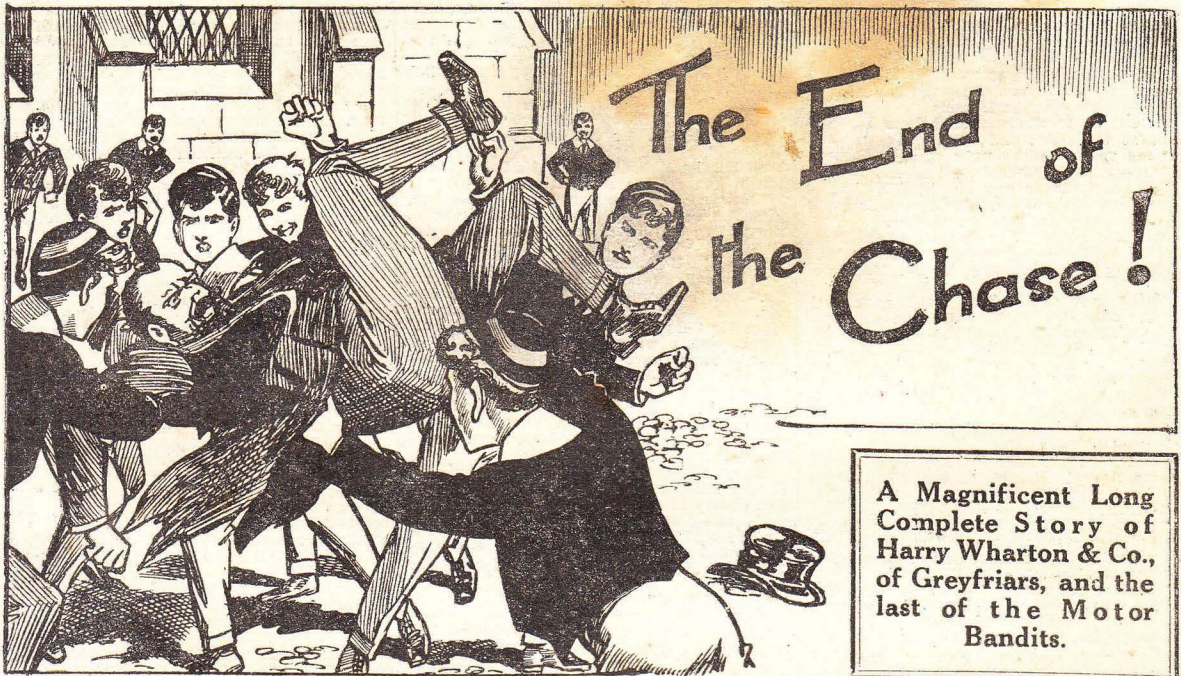
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ANOTHER INSTALMENT OF VICTOR NELSON'S BRILLIANT SERIAL!

NEXT TUESDAY!

"THE RIVAL SPORTSMEN!"

AFTER A STERN CHASE THE MOTOR BANDITS ARE ROUNDED UP, AND BILLY BUNTER RETURNS TO GREYFRIARS SAFE AND SOUND!



A Magnificent Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, and the last of the Motor Bandits.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the Famous School Tales of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars—appearing in The "Magnet" Library.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Suspicious Visitor!

HERE was great excitement in the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

William George Bunter, the fattest junior at Greyfriars, had completely disappeared. That alone was sensational enough. But when Lord Mauleverer's uncle came down and warned Mauly that a gang of motor bandits had sent him a demand for a very large ransom, the sensation was followed by a great deal of speculation amongst the Removites. For the note was in Billy Bunter's well-known, scrawling writing.

It became quite obvious to Harry Wharton & Co., the leaders of the Remove, that Billy Bunter, with his amazing capacity for swank, had carried himself off as Lord Mauleverer when speaking to the would-be kidnapers of the schoolboy earl, and had been there and then whisked away from Greyfriars.

They were quite right. Billy Bunter had passed himself off as Lord Mauleverer, and some French scoundrels had accepted him as such and kidnapped him. Then Billy Bunter, although thoroughly frightened, and admitting his real identity, was forced to send a letter to his "guardian," with a demand for a huge sum of money to be paid as ransom for his safety.

As Bob Cherry said, the kidnapers would be certain to discover sooner or later that they had got hold of the wrong bird, and they would come to look for Mauly. It was up to them to keep an eye on Mauly, and at the same time watch for Billy Bunter's kidnapers.

That afternoon there was to be a football match with Redclyffe, and quite a number of juniors forgot about the missing Billy Bunter and the possible attack upon Lord Mauleverer. But the Famous Five did not forget.

They went to Mauly's study, where they impressed upon Mauly that he was to be on the ground to watch the match.

"But it will be cold standing there, my dear fellow," the dismayed schoolboy millionaire protested.

"You can do some gymnastics to keep yourself warm," said Bob.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"A MYSTERY OF THE MOOR!"

"But there's a fire in my study."
"You're not going to slack over a fire in your study. How do we know that that blessed Frenchman won't sneak in while we're playing and kidnap you?" demanded Bob.

"My dear chap—"
"Do you want to go and join Bunter, wherever he is?" said Frank Nugent severely. "Poor old Bunter's getting it in the neck now. Do you want the same?"

"Begad, no! But—"
"If you hadn't been slacking in your study last Wednesday Bunter would never have been kidnapped," said Johnny Bull sternly.

"Yaas, but if I hadn't been slacking I should have been kidnapped myself, you know, and that would have been worse, wouldn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Well, you're not going to slack to-day," said Bob decidedly. "If I miss you from the ground I'll come after you. I've chucked away the key of your study, so you can't lock yourself in again."

"Oh, begad!"
"You chaps!" exclaimed Peter Todd, dashing up breathlessly. "Come on!"

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

"I've spotted him!"
"Eh? Whom?"

"The Frenchman!" yelled Peter excitedly. "The kidnapper! He's come!"

"Oh, my hat!"
"Where is he?"

"Walked in at the gates as bold as brass!" gasped Todd. "Come on! He's speaking to Gosling now! We'll collar him before he knows where he is!"

And Peter rushed off towards the gates, with the excited juniors at his heels. Even the coming football match was forgotten in the excitement.

"There he is!"

A little fat gentleman, evidently a Frenchman, was standing by the porter's lodge, speaking to Gosling. He was speaking in French, apparently having no knowledge of English, and Gosling was looking naturally scornful of a person who could not even understand plain English.

"Ere, will you young gentlemen speak to 'im?" said Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere."

"Ow them blessed furriners can go on speaking their silly lingo, when they might be speakin' Henglish, beats me! Fools, I calls 'em!"

The Frenchman turned to the juniors, gesticulating. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances, and drew round him in a circle. They did not intend to give the villain a chance to escape. The fact that he was a Frenchman pointed indubitably to his guilt. Frenchmen never came to Greyfriars. What could one want there? Evidently he was the kidnapper, or one of the kidnapping gang, pretending that he could not speak English for the purpose of throwing dust in their eyes. It was quite clear; at all events, it was quite clear to the junior.

"Bonjour, monsieur!" said Bob Cherry "Vous shairshay kelkun."

That was Lower Fourth French for "Vous cherchez quel-qu'un."

"Oui, oui!" exclaimed the foreign gentleman eagerly, evidently delighted at finding someone who spoke his language, even with a Remove accent. "C'est ca—je cherche quelqu'un ici—"

"Looking for somebody here!" murmured Nugent. "The awful cheek, to admit it. He's simply asking for trouble."

"And he's going to get it," said Wharton grimly. "Collar him!"

There was a rush, and the Frenchman was struggling the next moment in the clutches of a dozen pairs of hands.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not the Right Frenchman!

DOWN with him!"

"Hold him!"
"We've got him!"

"Mind he doesn't get away!"

"The scoundrel!"
"The kidnapping villain!"

There wasn't much danger of the Frenchman getting away. He was sprawling on his back on the ground, and the juniors were simply heaped over him. The Frenchman was screaming like a frightened fowl, and struggling violently. His silk hat had rolled off, his coat came up over his ears, and his collar was torn out. But he was secured.

"A moi!" shrieked the Frenchman. "A

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moi! Mon Dieu! Qu'est que c'est ça? Je suis tue—je suis tue. A moi! A moi!"

"Bring him in to the Head!" exclaimed Harry Wharton jubilantly. "We've got him!"

"Take his arms and legs!"

"March!"

"Hurrah!"

Clutched up in the grasp of the triumphant Removites, the Frenchman was rushed across the Close towards the House.

Crowds of fellows gathered from far and near at the sight, and there was a roar of excited voices at the news spread that the kidnapper had been captured.

Dr. Locke, as he saw the terrific disturbance from his window, hurried out into the Close to see what was the matter.

The crowd stopped in front of the alarmed Head, with the Frenchman kicking and struggling and shrieking in the midst of them.

"Bless my soul!" the Head exclaimed. "What does this mean? Wharton—Cherry—tell me at once, what—what—"

"We've got him, sir!"

"The Frenchman, sir!"

"The rotten kidnapper!"

"We'll make him confess what he's done with Bunter, sir!"

"He came here for Mauly, sir, and actually admitted it!"

"Dear me!" said the Head. "This is most extraordinary! I hope that a mistake has not been made?"

"Oh, no, sir! He admitted it!"

"Is it possible? Then there can be no doubt. However, you may allow him to rise. Keep hold of him so that he cannot escape."

"Yes, sir!"

"Get up, you rascal!"

"Get up, you terrific and ludicrous scoundrel!" exclaimed Hurree Singh, yanking the unfortunate Frenchman to his feet.

The French gentleman certainly looked a most disreputable character as he stood up, panting, in the midst of the juniors. He might have been a kidnapper or a pirate or a scarecrow. Seldom had so tattered a figure been seen in the old Close of Greyfriars.

He began stuttering rapid French, but Dr. Locke held up his hand.

"Explain yourself!" he said sternly. "Who are you and why are you here?"

"Mon Dieu! Je suis tue! Sacre bleu!"

"Who are you?"

"Je suis Monsieur Charpentier!" gasped the Frenchman.

There was a yell of derision from the juniors.

"My hat! What awful cheek!"

"Does the silly ass think he can pass himself off on us as our own French master?" thumped Bob Cherry. "He must be potty!"

"Je cherche mon frere ici—"

"What!"

"Je suis ici pour faire une visite—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, in consternation. "You foolish, foolish boys! You have made a dreadful mistake! The gentleman says that he is Monsieur Charpentier's brother, and has come to pay him a visit."

"Oh crickey!"

There was a sudden exclamation of horror from Monsieur Charpentier as he rushed upon the scene. The uproar had drawn him out of the house.

"Mon frere! Mon pauvre frere!"

"Alas! my poor brother," murmured Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed the Head. "Monsieur Charpentier, is this your brother?"

"Oul, oul, oul!" exclaimed the French master, rushing upon the tattered gentleman and embracing him with Gallic effusion.

"Mon pauvre frere! Il iz zat he come to pay me one visit zis afternoon! Ah! Brigands, villains, scoundrels zat have use my poor buzzer like zis!"

"Oh, carry me away, somebody!" murmured Johnny Bull. "We've put our giddy feet into it this time!"

The Removites looked quite sickly.

It was only too clear that they had put their foot in it. Certainly they had jumped to conclusions rather quickly. The only evidence against the stranger was the fact that he was a Frenchman, and the other fact that he had come to Greyfriars looking for somebody. And both facts were easily explained by the circumstance that he was Monsieur Charpentier's brother.

Dr. Locke looked at the culprits sternly as they hung their diminished heads.

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NEXT
TUESDAY!

"A MYSTERY OF THE MOOR!"

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

"Boys, you have been guilty of an unparalleled outrage in assaulting this gentleman. What made you suppose that he was the kidnapper?"

"Well, he's—he's a Frenchman, sir!" stammered Peter Todd. "The kidnapper is a Frenchman, sir, so we put two and two together—"

"And made five of it!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"But he said he had come here looking for somebody!" stammered Nugent.

"Naturally, if he came here to see his brother."

"Well, he didn't explain that he wasn't the kidnapper!" murmured Tom Brown.

"How could he explain, you foolish boy, when he has probably never even heard of the kidnapping occurrence?" explained the Head.

"Ahem! Well, sir—"

"You will all be punished severely!" said Dr. Locke, frowning. "This is most outrageous! First of all you will explain to Monsieur Charpentier and apologise to him!"

The juniors were only too willing to do that. They were really sorry for their mistake. Monsieur Charpentier led his much-injured "buzzer" into the House, and the too-zealous juniors followed the Head into his study, and from that apartment loud sounds of anguish might have been heard proceeding directly afterwards.

Harry Wharton & Co. came out of the Head's study rubbing their hands dolefully. Bob Cherry shook his fist at Lord Mauleverer as he met him in the Close.

"You ass!" he roared.

"Begad! What's the matter, my dear fellow?" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer, in surprise.

"You chump!"

"Begad, you know—"

"This is what we get for looking after you!" roared Bob. "This is the last time I collar any kidnappers. You can be kidnapped twice a day in future, for all I care, and I sha'n't interfere! Br-r-r-r!"

And Bob marched off, rubbing his hands. The Remove fellows were still tenderly rubbing their hands when the Redlyffe footballers arrived.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

"MON Dieu! Thousand thunders!"

The angry voice of the Frenchman penetrated into the room where Billy Bunter was confined.

It was Saturday, and Billy Bunter was still a prisoner in the lonely bungalow on the shore. The fat junior was looking thinner in the face, and very pale and worried. He had been kept for three days now on the shortest of short commons, and he was storing up a hunger that would take a great deal of satisfying when he returned to Greyfriars. Bread and cheese and water formed his diet, and even of those there was not enough for Bunter.

As a matter of fact, the spare diet was doing him good. In spite of the confinement in the bungalow, he was in better health than when he was captured, owing to the cessation of unlimited feeding on pastry and cakes. But Bunter was not willing to purchase physical fitness at the price of denying his gargantuan appetite. He sighed for the fishpots of Egypt as bitterly as the Israelites of old.

Mysterious voices had been heard in the bungalow several times, but Bunter had not found an opportunity of getting out of the building again. Both Duval and Lewis Blanc were puzzled and troubled by the phenomenon—and they did not suspect Bunter of ventriloquism. The fat junior looked so stupid and so scared that it was impossible to suspect him of playing tricks on them, even if ventriloquism had crossed their minds as a solution of the mystery, which it did not.

But for the fact that Bunter had wrecked the motor-car in his attempt to escape, the kidnappers would have removed him to a more secure spot, though if they had known it the mysterious voices would certainly have followed them, so long as the Greyfriars ventriloquist had the use of his tongue.

Duval and his comrade were, greatly troubled in mind, and very uneasy. One of them now remained continually about the place. Duval had made the journey to London on Wednesday to post the letter, and Louis had remained, and since then Duval

had taken up the watch, while Louis was attending to the smashed car. The Frenchmen kept themselves supplied with papers, and they knew how much had been discovered by the police—that it was Sir Reginald Brooke's ex-valet and ex-chauffeur who were being looked for—that they were suspected of having a motor-car in their possession—and their uneasiness was growing.

They did not venture to have the smashed car taken to Courtfield, and Louis laboured upon it in the garage attached to the bungalow; but it was a long task to repair the damage the collision with the rocks had caused.

It was not till Saturday that the car was in condition again for use, Duval having made several journeys to a distant town for parts, while Louis was at work on it.

And on Saturday Duval's voice rang through the little building in angry tones, and Bunter heard it and quaked. He heard Louis Blanc inquiring in French what was the matter.

"Name of a pig!" yelled Duval. "We have been cheated!"

"Qu'est que c'est!"

"We have the wrong pig by the ear, after all!"

"What! It is not the young milord?"

Billy Bunter heard it all, and he shivered. The tones of the infuriated Frenchman boded him no good. In their disappointment and rage, what were they likely to do?

True, Bunter had told them all along that he was not Lord Mauleverer, but they had not believed him.

But they could not doubt it now.

Sir Reginald Brooke, acting on the advice of the police had inserted the demanded advertisement in the personal column of the "Daily Mail," in order to get into communication with the kidnappers.

It was not intended to allow them to discover that the wrong boy had been captured if it could be avoided.

But some enterprising journalist had found out the facts, the ease of the kidnapping having crept into the newspapers by this time.

And in the paper in Duval's hand that Saturday afternoon was the information that Lord Mauleverer was safe at Greyfriars, and that another boy named William G. Bunter had been kidnapped by mistake in his place. The two Frenchmen looked at one another in dismay.

"It is infernal luck!" said Louis.

Duval passed his hand over his brow.

"I cannot understand it," he said. "The boy was pointed out to me at the school itself as Lord Mauleverer. Did I not risk a personal visit there in order to see him? Then he received the letter I wrote to Mauleverer, and came to keep the appointment? How can it be that he is, after all, another boy, and not Mauleverer at all?"

"I do not know how it can be, but it is so, unless the paper is lying!" said Louis.

"You have made a bungle."

"And the brat declared that he was not Lord Mauleverer!" Duval muttered, clenching his hands. "I did not believe him, of course."

"And now?"

"Now," Duval snarled, "we have wasted our time, and our money for the car, and we have risked our liberty, to capture a fat fool who probably has not a franc to his name. We shall go to prison like a pair of fools, mon ami—unless—"

"Perhaps it is not too late!"

"That is what I am thinking. Listen! This hiding-place is not safe. Someone has been playing us tricks here. I am uneasy every moment. We intended to leave as soon as the car was repaired; it is repaired now. We will make another attempt, and seize upon the real Mauleverer, and fly at top speed to a distant part of the country. I had thought that this place was the safest I could find, but it is not so. We must get out!"

"And this garcon—this unspeakable Bunter?"

"I have a mind to fling him into the sea; but—but—"

"But you have only one neck, and you do not want to have it stretched!" grinned the ex-chauffeur.

"We can take him with us. He can lie bound and gagged in the bottom of the car," said Duval. "There will be no danger. Besides, we do not know the real Lord Mauleverer by sight, apres tout. Perhaps this brat may be useful in helping us to get

hold of him. It is a half-holiday to-day at the school, as always on Saturday. Many of the boys will be out of gates. It is possible that we may find some opportunity—"

"It is fearfully risky!" said Louis, with a shake of the head.

"Thousand thunders! Are we going to throw it up, then? We have already done enough to earn penal servitude, and we have gained nothing!"

"But if we should find the boy, to seize him in broad daylight—"

"And trust to the speed of the car," said Duval. "Yes, yes; I know that it is desperate, but we are in a desperate position. It is all or nothing. I will assume some disguise, as I have been seen at the school. You also can wear a beard, and the car can be halted near the school on pretence of a puncture. Then, if we get a chance—"

"As you like!"

Duval unlocked Bunter's door and strode in. The Owl of the Remove shrank away from his fierce, scowling look.

"You are not Lord Mauleverer, you fat rascal!" the Frenchman exclaimed furiously.

"Well, I—I told you I wasn't, you know!" stammered Bunter. "Mauly is my best pal, you know, but I ain't Mauly! I told you so, didn't I?"

"You fool! You are coming away now—a prisoner! You will be hurt if you give me trouble. Take care!"

"I—I say, you needn't tie me!" stammered Bunter. "I'll give you my word—"

"Bah! Taisez-vous!"

Bunter was bound hand and foot, and gagged carefully, and then carried out into the car. He cast a wild glance round him—at the lonely road and the sounding sea. But there was no one in sight. The kidnapers had taken care of that before they brought him out of the house.

Duval locked up the bungalow, and threw away the key. He was finished there. The house agent who had let him the place had supposed that he was a foreign visitor with a taste for the bleak beauties of the seashore in winter, little dreaming of the real use to which the bungalow was to be put. A quarter's rent in advance had made the matter quite easy for Duval; but by the time the next quarter was due the agent was likely to have a long task before him in finding his tenant.

The car moved away.

Louis, in motor-goggles, with a black beard fastened upon his clean-shaven chin, was quite unrecognisable, and Duval had also donned a false beard. The two desperate men were resolved to set everything upon that last throw of the dice. They knew that their enterprise was desperate, but it was all that remained to be done after the mistake that had delivered Bunter into their hands instead of Lord Mauleverer. Either that or the abandonment of the wild scheme. If fortune favoured them, success might yet be theirs; and if not, the speed of the car would save them, and Bunter could be tossed into some field as they fled. The fat junior, palpitating with terror, lay in the bottom of the car, hidden by a rug, as the two rascals started. More than ever the Owl of the Remove repented him that he had ever appeared in borrowed plumes. And if he had been in fact a belted earl, he would have given up his earldom cheerfully to get out of his present terrible predicament.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

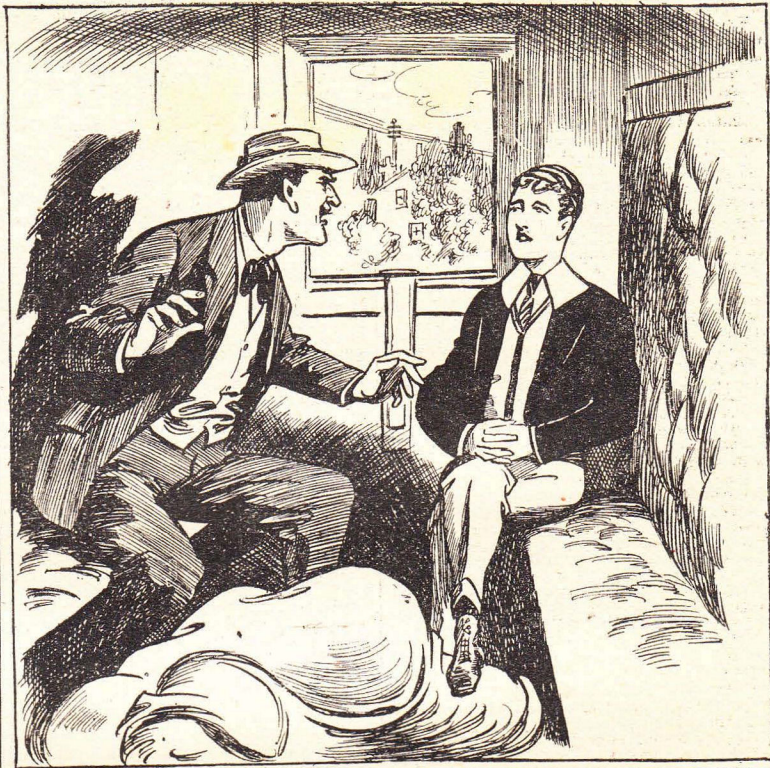
All Smithy's Fault!

"ON the ball!"
"Play up, Remove!"
On the junior football-ground at Greyfriars the struggle was keen and hardly contested.

Harry Wharton & Co. were fighting hard. It was the hardest match of the season for the Remove, and they were finding it very hard indeed.

Redclyffe were in great form. Harry Wharton's eleven, too, were in great form—with one exception.

That exception was the Bounder. His excesses of the previous night were telling terribly upon Vernon-Smith. The Bounder of Greyfriars had a constitution of iron, and he could afford to be reckless. After experiences that would have knocked up any other junior, he always seemed to pull round somehow. But this time he could not. Want of sleep, drinking, and smoking had put him into such a thoroughly "rotten"



THE COOLNESS OF MAULY! "Begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "It looks to me as if you're caught, my dear fellow. It was a dreadfully risky bisnai to kidnap Bunter. You'd better hop it while you've got the chance!" (See Chapter 5.)

state that he was not himself, and, with all his efforts, he could not play.

On previous occasions, although out of condition, the Bounder had played up with marked success by sheer force of will, quickness of eye and foot, and mastery of the game.

But now he was all at sea.

His head was aching, his eyes were dizzy, his breath was short and painful.

The keen struggle on the football-field was almost anguish to him. To his credit be it said he did his best. He played up as well as he could. But he was useless—worse than useless. He failed in speed, he fumbled with the ball when it came his way, he passed blindly and erratically, he blundered into the way of the other forwards and the halves. The crowd of fellows watching the match were soon quite aware that Smithy was a passenger, and they let him know it.

"Bellows to mend! Bellows to mend!" yelled the fags, as Smithy came panting along the ropes; and the Bounder scowled furiously.

The struggle was hard, but in a quarter of an hour Redclyffe had scored their first goal.

As the teams walked back to the centre of the field Harry Wharton touched the Bounder on the shoulder.

"You can clear off if you like," he said. Vernon-Smith gave him a fierce look. His temper was suffering as well as his body. He was in a dangerous mood.

"What do you mean?" he demanded. "I mean that you are no good, and you might as well be off the field as on it. You had better go and take a rest."

"I'm quite fit!"

"Rot!" said Wharton tersely. "You haven't a run left in you! You have been passing like a clumsy fag!"

"Are you thinking of playing a team like Redclyffe a man short?" the Bounder demanded, with a sneer.

"We're playing them a man short already! You're no good!"

Vernon-Smith ground his teeth.

"I admit I'm feeling a bit rotten, but it will pass off," he said.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"That's all rot! You'll be seedy all day

—and all to-morrow, too, by the look of you! You are simply a passenger in the team, and you know it!"

"Do you mean to say that I'm ordered off, then?" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

"No; you can stay on if you like—only, don't get into the way, that's all!"

Vernon-Smith's face was pale with fury as the teams lined up and he took his place on the right-wing.

He knew that was quite true—he was only a passenger, utterly useless to his side. In the match that the Remove had specially set their hearts upon winning he was failing them, owing to his own folly and wickedness.

But he resolved that he would do better. He would show the Remove—and Wharton above all—that he was not on his last legs.

And when the game restarted Vernon-Smith made really heroic efforts to play up, and for some minutes he seemed quite his old self.

The Greyfriars forwards brought the ball up the field, and Nugent, tackled by the enemy, passed out to Vernon-Smith, and Smith executed a brilliant run along the touch-line with the ball at his feet. Wharton was keeping well up, and as the back tackled the Bounder there was a good chance for one of Smithy's brilliant centres, and Harry Wharton was all ready to slam it home.

But the Bounder's bolt was shot. He missed-kicked, and the next moment the left-back had cleared right away to mid-field.

Wharton gritted his teeth.

It had been a splendid chance of equalising, and the Bounder had failed—failed in what would, under ordinary circumstances, have been quite easy to him.

The game surged away in the Remove half, and there was a fierce attack upon goal; and Bulstrode, between the posts, was called upon to do his best. He did well, very well, but the leather found its way into the net at last, and Redclyffe were two up.

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"A MYSTERY OF THE MOOR!"

The first half ended with the visiting team two to the good.

While they rested in the interval there was a grim silence among the Remove footballers.

The two teams were so equally matched that a feather-weight might have turned the scale on either side, and the Bounder's unfitness was the straw that gave the camel the hump, as Bob Cherry expressed it.

If the Bounder had been in form the balance would have inclined in favour of the Remove; but Wharton was practically playing ten men against eleven, and the chances of a victory were reduced to zero.

All the team knew that they were going to be defeated, and all of them knew that it was Vernon-Smith's fault, and the looks they gave him were not pleasant.

The Bounder knew it, too, and too late he repented of his folly. But repentance came too late, as it generally does. He had a keen desire to distinguish himself in that match, a keener desire to silence his critics by brilliant play—as he had done often before—but he was not capable of it now. And he had a more generous desire to play well for his Form, and help the Remove to a coveted victory, but it was an impossibility.

With a lowering brow and a sullen heart the Bounder observed the dark looks of his comrades and heard their muttered remarks.

Wharton said nothing.

He had resolved that the Bounder, after this exhibition, should not play for the Remove again; but he did not want to rub it in. A word to him after the match was over would be enough. And there was still a possibility that Vernon-Smith might show a glimpse of his old form. He had wonderful powers of recuperation. But Smithy himself knew by this time that it was not to be. His heart was thumping and throbbing irregularly, and it was only by sheer will-power that he kept himself going at all.

But he would not retire from the game. At any cost he would stick it out to the finish, and hope for the best.

The whistle went, and the second half started.

Redclyffe were flushed with success, and they pressed their opponents hard. But though there was a weak spot in the line, a flaw in the armour, the Remove gave them a good fight. The crowd cheered loudly as a goal came at last to the Remove from the foot of Harry Wharton.

But it was the last flicker of the candle before extinction, so to speak.

The Remove did not have a second chance. Redclyffe pressed them too hard. And Wharton was driven to packing his goal, with no better prospect than keeping down the score, and no chance even of equalising. And even that was not to be granted, for just before time the Redclyffians broke through and slammed the leather into the net, and when the whistle went the score stood at three to one for Redclyffe.

The Remove footballers looked glum enough as they came off. They did not mind a defeat in the natural order of things. They were good sportsmen. But to be beaten by the reckless folly of one of their own men was too bitter.

And when they changed, and were discussing the match with gloomy brows, after the departure of the Redclyffe team, Wharton looked out for Vernon-Smith, and found him, and spoke straight to the point.

"I suppose you know you've lost us the match!" he said bluntly.

"I suppose you will say so, at all events," said the Bounder.

"All the fellows say so, too."

"Hang them!"

"Well, hang them or not, you won't play for the Remove any more, so long as I'm captain! That's all I've got to say."

"You've been wanting to get an excuse for this for a long time!" said Smith bitterly.

"That isn't true, Vernon-Smith. I wanted you in the team. But after what you've done to-day the Remove eleven is finished with you, and you've only got yourself to thank."

And Wharton walked away without waiting for the Bounder to reply.

Bob Cherry came up to him excitedly in the Close. Bob was looking worried.

"Have you seen Mauly?" he asked.

Wharton shook his head.

"Wasn't he watching the match?" he asked.

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"I told him to," growled Bob. "I gave him strict instructions that he wasn't to leave the field till it was over. You heard me, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Harry, with a smile. "But I didn't really think that Mauly would stand there for an hour and a half."

Bob grunted angrily.

"Well, he didn't," he agreed. "He's wandered off somewhere, the silly ass! Looking for a chance to be kidnapped, I suppose. He's not in his study, and I shouldn't wonder if he's gone out. We'd better look for him."

"If he's gone out, we'll give him a jolly good bumping when we find him!" said Harry.

"Yes, rather!"

And the Co. started immediately to look for Lord Mauleverer. But he was not to be found within the school walls. Bob Cherry's threat of "yanking" him out if he went to his study to slack during the match had evidently impressed itself upon the mind of the schoolboy earl, and he had gone off to slack somewhere else.

Coker of the Fifth was outside the gates of Greyfriars with his motor-bike. He was persuading it to get it in order to start. The juniors questioned him.

"Have you seen Mauly go out?"

Coker nodded.

"Yes, he came out some time back—half an hour. I should think."

"Oh, the ass! Which way did he go?"

"Down towards the village."

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton.

And the juniors strode away towards Friardale.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Hot Chase!

"GET up, you fat fool!" Gaston Duval addressed Billy Bunter in that disrespectful manner. The prisoner of the kidnappers was no longer "my lord." His lordship had vanished.

Duval dragged him to his feet in the car. The car was halted by the roadside, under a group of leafless trees. Louis was making an elaborate pretence of examining the gear, as if the car had stopped on account of some defect, but, as a matter of fact, it was quite in order to start at once, if necessary. Inside the car, Bunter was dragged up, the grip of the Frenchman on his shoulder.

There were a good many of the Greyfriars juniors to be seen on the road. Duval had considered that upon a half-holiday many of them would be out of the gates, and he was right. Juniors who had been down to the village, and who had been for cross-country walks, came along the road in ones and twos and threes, glancing carelessly at the halted motor-car as they passed.

Was Lord Mauleverer among them?

Duval knew well enough that he was playing his last stake on a bare chance; that only

if Fortune favoured him could he hope to score. But he would not give up the game till the last chance had been tried. There was always a possibility of success.

"Listen to me, Bunter, if that is your name!" said the Frenchman, in a fierce whisper. "Look at these boys as they pass. When you see Lord Mauleverer, tell me!"

Bunter mumbled with his gag.

"Close your eyes as a sign if you see him," said Duval. "Mind, if we do not find him, you will be taken back to the bungalow, and kept without food! You are useless to me, you fat fool, and it will not concern me if you starve to death! I shall leave you locked up in the bungalow, and escape to France. Do you understand?"

Bunter shuddered. The Frenchman, in his savage disappointment at missing his prize, was quite capable of carrying out his threat. At least, Bunter thought so. And the fat junior fervently hoped that Lord Mauleverer would be among the Greyfriars fellows who passed down the road. It was probable enough. Mauleverer was not in the football team, and he regarded it as a fog to watch matches, and it was more than likely that he had gone out for a stroll on that keen, invigorating afternoon.

If he was outside the school, the car was near enough to the school gates for Bunter to see him from whatever direction he came.

Bunter kept his eyes fixed upon the window. Duval had pulled a large cap well down over the junior's face, and muffled his chin in a scarf, so that only the tip of his nose and his big spectacles were visible, and it was impossible for any passer-by to recognise him.

Bunter longed to yell for help as he watched fellows he knew passing by and at moments caught the sound of familiar voices.

But the gag in his mouth prevented that. Suddenly Bunter gave a start. The keen eyes of the Frenchman noted it at once, and he gave a quick, interrogating look at the fat junior. Bunter closed one eye.

Duval looked out quickly into the road.

A slim junior was sauntering along by himself, lazily swinging a gold-headed cane. He paused in the road for a moment to glance at the chauffeur bending beside the car.

"Is it he?" whispered Duval.

Bunter nodded. It did not even occur to Bunter that he was acting rottenly in thus betraying Lord Mauleverer into the hands of the kidnappers. Billy Bunter was thinking at that moment only of one person, and that one person was William George Bunter. "Good!" muttered Duval.

He thrust Bunter into the bottom of the car again, and threw the rug over him, completely concealing him from sight.

"Not a sound—not a movement!" he said, in a fierce whisper. "On your life!"

Bunter lay as still as a mouse when a cat is near.

Duval opened the door of the car, and stepped out. Lord Mauleverer was passing on, when the Frenchman spoke to him suavely.

"Pray, excuse me, young gentleman, can you tell me if that school yonder is Greyfriars?"

"Yaas, certainly," said Lord Mauleverer politely.

"You belong to the school, perhaps?"

"Yaas." Then Lord Mauleverer uttered a sudden yell. "Begad, what's the game? Hands off! Oh, my hat!"

The Frenchman was upon him with the spring of a tiger.

Lord Mauleverer, before he knew what was happening, was collared, and flung bodily into the car. Duval leaped in after him.

The chauffeur sprang to his place.

There was a shout down the road. Half a dozen Greyfriars fellows had seen the action of the desperate rascal.

Bolsover major and Skinner came running up.

"Help!" roared Bolsover. "Mauly's been kidnapped! My hat! Help!"

"Quick, Louis!"

The motor-car leaped forward.

The astounded juniors in the road dashed after it, wildly excited. The sight of Lord Mauleverer seized and bundled into the car in broad daylight simply took their breath away. The car rushed on past the gates of Greyfriars. Bolsover yelled to Harry Wharton & Co., as he caught sight of them in the road.

"Look out! Mauly's in that car!"

"What!"

Free!

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TEAMS

Every Week in

PLUCK

No. 1 NOW ON SALE

"A MYSTERY OF THE MOOR!"

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

"They've got him!"
 "Mauly! Got Mauly!"
 "Yes; in that car!" yelled Bolsover major.
 "Stop them!" roared Bob Cherry.
 But the car had rushed past, and was speeding on in the direction of Courtfield. The juniors broke into a desperate run after it, but it was hopeless. The zug-zug-zug of Coker's motor-bike struck Wharton's ear, and he ran towards the Fifth-Former. Coker's "stink-bike" was going at last, and the Fifth-Former was hopping along after it, preparing to mount.

"Coker!" yelled Wharton.
 "Hallo!"
 "Mauly's in that car. They've kidnapped him! Lend me your bike!"
 "Rats!" said Coker. "I'll go after them. It'll be all right!"
 Zug-zug-zug!

Coker was in the saddle, and the motor-bike rushed on.
 Away went the car, and away went Coker of the Fifth in hot pursuit. Harry Wharton stood in the road, and clenched his hands.

"Oh, for a bike now!" he said savagely.
 "My kingdom for a horse!" murmured Nugent.

Fortunately, just then a party of Remove cyclists were coming home. They had dismounted at the school gates to wheel their machines in, when Harry Wharton & Co. rushed upon them. The Co. did not stop to explain. There was no time. They simply borrowed the bikes without saying a word.

"Here, what are you doing with my bike?" howled Russell.

"Bring my jigger back, Cherry, you beast!" roared Ogilvy.
 But the juniors did not heed.

There were four bikes, and in a twinkling Wharton, Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Bob Cherry were mounted upon them, and pedalling away after Coker as if their lives depended upon it.

The motor-car was almost out of sight now. Coker could be seen zug-zugging away gallantly in pursuit. Coker was able to keep pace with the car, unless Louis should put on a desperate speed. The cyclists behind were at a disadvantage, but they were good riders, and they were making a desperate spurt, and the wheels fairly flew. Strung out in a line, heads down over the handle-bars, they scorched up the long white road as they had never scorched on the cycle-track.

In the motor-car Lord Mauleverer sat in amazement, but without any trace of fear in his calm, cheerful face. The Frenchman had a revolver in his hand, but it did not seem to disturb the schoolboy's nerves at all.

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "You've got me, Mossoo Frog-eater! I remember now my nunky told me not to go outside the gates. I forgot all about it, begad! I say, you're exceeding the speed limit, you know. If you meet Tozer, he will be down on you, begad!"

The Frenchman did not speak.

He looked out behind the car, and a haggard look came over his face as he saw the motor-cyclist in hot pursuit.

He signalled to Louis to put on full-speed. The car leaped forward, and the wheels seemed scarcely to touch the ground as they flew.

But suddenly there was a jarring of brakes, and the car rocked and jumped as it was dragged to a halt.

Duval uttered a yell.

"Madman, what are you stopping for?"

"Voyez!" muttered the chauffeur. "Look!"

The Frenchman looked, and his face went ghastly. Across the road ahead stretched the gates of the level-crossing—locked! In the distance a train was steaming towards the level-crossing, and until it had passed the gates would not be opened.

Duval raved with rage.

Two minutes at least to wait, and no turning at hand into which the car could dodge. To reach a turn it was necessary to return upon their tracks for a quarter of a mile, and then to plunge into a country lane leading he did not know where. And the zug-zug-zug of the stink-bike was audible in the distance already.

"Begad," murmured Lord Mauleverer, with perfect calmness, "looks to me as if you're caught, my dear fellow! It was a dreadfully risky bisnai, you know. Good, old Coker! Here he comes on his smell-tank."
 Zug-zug-zug!

NEXT TUESDAY!

"What is to be done?" muttered Duval. "Oh, thousand thunders! Name of a dog, what shall we do?"

"You'd better hop it," suggested Lord Mauleverer cheerfully. "This is where you get it in the neck. I warn you that Coker hits like a giddy steam-hammer."

Duval turned a murderous look upon him, and gripped the revolver. Lord Mauleverer yawned. In spite of his easy ways, he was made of sterner stuff than Billy Bunter, and the kidnapper's ferocious looks and threatening weapon did not frighten him.

"That's no good," he remarked. "You don't want to be hung instead of being sent to prison, surely. Take it calmly. Hop it while you've got time."

Louis the chauffeur had already settled the matter for himself. He looked back, and saw the motor-cyclist pelting on, and now, in the distance, the four juniors on push-bikes could be seen pedalling away frantically. And a couple of carters who had stopped at the level-crossing gates were looking curiously at the car, and would certainly lend a hand as soon as Coker arrived and called on them for help. And the signalman had come out of his box. The kidnappers had staked all on a chance, and the chance had failed them, or, rather, another chance had intervened. The chauffeur leaped down from the car, ran through a gap in the hedge, and disappeared across the fields.

"One gone!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "Begad, that's a good example to follow, Monsieur Froggy! You haven't much time, either."

"Name of a dog!" hissed the Frenchman. "Nom du chien! Name of a name!"

The French expletives sounded utterly absurd to Lord Mauleverer, and he burst into a laugh. The Frenchman, with a last furious look at the victim who had escaped him, leaped out of the car, and took to the woods just as Coker raced up.

Coker of the Fifth leaped off his bike and let it go whirling into the hedge, and made a terrific spring after Duval.

The Frenchman stumbled in the hedge, and Coker almost fell over him, coming after him with that sudden leap, and they rolled down a slope into the field together. Coker promptly collared the kidnapper.

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"Help!" he roared.
 The Frenchman had dropped his revolver in the fall. Perhaps that was just as well for Coker, though it is doubtful whether the ex-valet would have ventured to use the weapon. He fought savagely with Coker, but the well-groomed "gentleman's gentleman" was nothing like a match for the burly, powerful Fifth-Former of Greyfriars. Coker rolled him into the damp grass, and planted himself upon his panting chest.

"Lend a hand here!" roared Coker, as he heard the bikes ringing in the road.

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed on the scene, and the Frenchman, in spite of his savage struggles, was promptly secured. His wrists were fastened with pump-straps from the bikes, and he was yanked out into the road.

"Mauly!" shouted Bob.
 Lord Mauleverer looked out of the car. "Here I am," he said cheerfully. "Begad, it was jolly decent of you fellows to come after me like that! Rather a run, wasn't it?"

"Oh, you ass!" said Bob Cherry.
 "There's something alive under this rug," went on Mauleverer, pushing it with his foot. "I wonder what it is?"
 "Grooooooh!"

Lord Mauleverer dragged the rug aside. Billy Bunter, bound hand and foot and gagged, lay underneath it.

"Begad, it's Bunter!"
 "Bunter! What luck!"

The juniors seized Bunter, and dragged him out of the car. Bunter groped for his spectacles, and set them straight on his fat little nose, and gasped.

"Oh crumbs! I say, you fellows—Ow! I'm hungry!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I can drive this car," said Coker. "We'll take this scoundrel to Greyfriars in his own car, and the bobbies can come for him."
 "Good egg!"

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you haven't got a sandwich about you?" groaned Billy Bunter. "I've had an awful time. They starved me to death, you know—I mean, nearly to death—all because I let them take me instead of Mauly. I felt I was bound to take Mauly's place and save him from—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. I'm the only pal Mauly's got who would have allowed himself to be kidnapped instead of Mauly, out of pure friendship."

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bob Cherry. "We know how you came to be kidnapped—through sneaking Mauly's letter and reading it. We'd bump you for it, only—"

"Yaas, you are a rotten cad, Bunter, dear boy!" said Lord Mauleverer. "But I'll stand you a feed when we get back to Greyfriars, all the same."

"Just like my old pal Mauly!" said Bunter affectionately.

To which his old pal Mauly replied cheerfully:
 "Rats!"

There was amazement at Greyfriars when the car arrived, with Horace Coker looking very important in charge of it.

Duval was promptly handed over to the police, in whose kindly charge he was likely to remain for some years to come.

The next day the chauffeur was caught, and he joined his confederate in a place where, in the intervals of stone-breaking and turning the crank, he had plenty of time to wish that he had not entered into the scheme of kidnapping Lord Mauleverer.

Billy Bunter made a most heroic and determined attempt to make the fellows believe that he had deliberately allowed himself to be kidnapped to save Lord Mauleverer from the danger of falling into Duval's hands. But his explanations were only met with roars of laughter, and at last he gave it up. But the fact that he had palmed himself off for a short time, as a noble lord was not forgotten, and for many days afterwards the Owl of the Remove was addressed as Lord Bunter.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's splendid long complete tale of the famous Chums of Greyfriars.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 197.

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

"A MYSTERY OF THE MOOR!"

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.

VERY SPECIAL NEWS!

Before I proceed to give a necessarily brief outline of our programme of stories for next Tuesday's issue of the "Popular," I have to make public some very special news.

Many thousands of readers wrote to me in praise of the magnificent coloured engine plates which were presented to them with the "Popular," but some mentioned that they were sorry they had to miss the grand free real photos of famous sportsmen which were given away with other of our companion papers.

I have long thought over this, and at last I have been able to arrange for

FREE REAL PHOTOS OF FAMOUS SPORTSMEN TO BE GIVEN AWAY WITH NEXT WEEK'S "POPULAR"!

This, let me quickly add, is but the first part of a stupendous programme I have mapped out for

ALL THE COMPANION PAPERS.

Take, for instance, our famous Monday companion paper, the "Magnet" Library, the popular paper which contains a fine, long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., the "Greyfriars Herald," etc.

The issue dated November 11th, 1922—out on November 6th—will be the first of the

GREATLY ENLARGED "MAGNET"

and one of the most striking things about this will be

THE SPLENDID COLOURED COVER.

Once seen, you will know it anywhere. Many more pages, extra long stories, "Greyfriars Herald," Greyfriars Parliament—heaps of features, crammed with excitement and interest, competitions for money prizes to be awarded every week—so

WATCH FOR THE GREATLY ENLARGED "MAGNET" ON NOVEMBER 6th, AND SECURE THE GRAND, REAL PHOTOS OF FAMOUS FOOTBALL TEAMS

which will be given away with every copy.

Then we shall deal with the "Gem" Library, the most popular of the mid-week

papers, and the "Boys' Friend," the famous school and adventure story paper, which appears with the "Magnet" Library every Monday.

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I must ask my chums to take a note of the footlines on the pages of this number, for this week I am so short of space, I simply cannot spare the room to tell you about the stories. But the titles will give you some idea—and I'll warrant that idea is pleasing.

Be warned, my chums, and see that you obtain the companion papers every week. If you miss them, you are missing the greatest offers ever made to boys and girls!

Your Editor.

A Novel New . . . Football Competition

"HISTORIES."

No. 2.—Sheffield United.

FIRST PRIZE £5 0 0
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TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS



Here is a splendid Footer competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Sheffield Football Club in picture-puzzle form.—What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears under the puzzle, pin it to your solution, and post it to "HISTORIES" Competition No. 2, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C.4, so as to reach that address not later than Thursday, November 2nd, 1922.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide all, or any, of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Gem," "Boys' Friend," and "Magnet," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enter "HISTORIES" Competition No. 2, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

P.

THE POPULAR.—No. 197.

NEXT TUESDAY

"CAST ADRIFT!"

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

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE DOES NOT RUN SMOOTH—AS CHUNKY TODGERS DISCOVERS TO HIS SORROW!



Curing Chunky Todgers!

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

FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Tender Secret.

CHUNKY!"
Chunky Todgers did not answer. Frank Richards & Co. stared at him.

Chunky was standing beside the creek, at a little distance from the gates of Cedar Creek School.

There was an unusual expression of deep thoughtfulness upon his plump face, and his round, blue eyes had a far-away look.

Frank Richards & Co. were puzzled. They followed his glance, wondering what it was upon which Chunky's gaze was so intently fixed.

But the sunny creek presented its usual aspect.

Nothing was to be seen upon the shining waters, save a birch-bark canoe in which Tom Lawrence and his sister Molly were paddling.

"What's the matter with Chunky?" asked Bob Lawless, in astonishment. "Has he gone to sleep standing up, like a blessed horse?"

"Looks like it," said Vere Beauclerc, laughing. "Hallo, Chunky!"

Still no reply.

Chunky Todger's eyes, they could see, were fixed on the canoe on the creek.

Sturdy Tom and pretty, graceful Molly Lawrence were worth more than a passing glance.

But they were to be seen every day at the lumber school, and there seemed no reason why Chunky Todgers should stare with such a rapt gaze at the canoe.

Bob Lawless strode towards the fat and florid Chunky, and smote him on the shoulder with a sudden mighty smite.

"Wake up!" he roared.

Chunky jumped, then:

"Yow! What! Wharrer marrer? Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Bob. "What are you day-dreaming about?"

"Ow, ow!"

"Is anything up, Chunky?" asked Frank Richards.

"Oh dear!" mumbled Todgers, rubbing his shoulder. "Yes! No! Oh shurrup! Go and chop chips! Ow!"

The chums of Cedar Creek chuckled. Even while Chunky was gasping and mut-

tering, his gaze had turned again on the birch-bark canoe.

The canoe disappeared round a bend in the creek, and Chunky's fat face clouded, and he sighed.

It was so utterly unusual for the fat, contented schoolboy to sigh, that the chums almost blinked at him in their surprise.

"What on earth is it?" asked Bob. "Are you ill, Chunky?"

"Eh! No."

"Been eating too much maple-sugar?"

"Br-r-r-r! No!"

"Come on!" said Bob. "Let's run the canoe out, or we sha'n't be back for dinner! Coming along, Chunky?"

"Eh! No."

The chums were moving off, when Chunky Todgers called out:

"I—I say, Franky!"

Frank Richards stopped, and looked round.

"Yes, Chunky?"

"I—I—I—"

"Well?"

"I—I'd like to speak to you, Richards!" blurted out Chunky at last, his fat face burning crimson.

"Well, go ahead!"

"I—I—I—"

"Is it a merry secret?" asked Vere Beauclerc, laughing. "Let's go and get the canoe out, Bob, while Franky hears the secret."

"Right-ho!"

Bob Lawless and Beauclerc went along the bank, leaving Frank Richards alone with Chunky.

"Well, Chunky?" asked Frank.

"I—I say, Richards—" stammered Chunky.

"Yes."

"I—I think you'd understand," murmured Chunky. "You've got more sense than those chaps. I—I want to confide in somebody. And you—you've got a lot of—of tact!"

"Thanks! Go ahead!"

"You—you've noticed her?"

"Eh?"

"Isn't she ripping?"

"Who—Miss Meadows?" asked Frank, astounded.

He could not guess who "she" was, unless Chunky was alluding to the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek.

But Todgers gave him a look of deep reproach, which showed him that his guess was not correct.

"Not Miss Meadows?" asked Frank.

"Of course not, you ass!"

"Well, what are you babbling about, anyway?"

"Her!" said Chunky.

"Who on earth is 'her'?"

"Mum-mum-mum-m-m-m—" stammered Chunky.

"I don't know anybody named Mum-m-m-m-m."

"M-M-Molly!" gasped Chunky Todgers, getting it out at last.

Frank Richards looked at him.

"Molly Lawrence, do you mean?"

"Yes!" breathed Chunky.

"Well, what about Molly?" asked Frank, still not understanding.

Chunky Todgers looked reproachful again.

"I thought you'd understand, Richards," he murmured. "I—I—I say, isn't she— isn't she ripping, though? I—I—I—"

Frank Richards fairly jumped.

He understood at last what Chunky's deep blushes and confused mumbling meant.

"Oh, my hat!" he yelled. "Molly! Chunky! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I say, Franky, I—I—I—"

Frank Richards shrieked. "Mashed!" he yelled. "Chunky mashed! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, what are you chortling at?" demanded Chunky Todgers indignantly. "I—I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Frank. "Oh, Chunky, you young idiot! You silly young ass! Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards staggered away after his chums. He was almost in convulsions.

The idea of the fat and chubby Chunky being "mashed" was too much for him.

He had never thought of Chunky in connection with sentimentality before.

It was too rich; and Frank almost sobbed as he went down to the canoe, leaving Todgers blinking after him with speechless remorse.

"Hallo! What's the joke?" asked Bob Lawless, as his cousin tottered into the canoe and sank down breathless.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Frank.

THE POPULAR.—No. 197.

A SPLENDID TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"CAST ADRIFT!"

"What is it?" exclaimed Beauclerc, in astonishment.

Frank wiped his eyes. "I mustn't tell you. It's Chunky's secret!" he gasped. "Oh, my hat! I dare say he'll confide it to every fellow, sooner or later. Ha, ha, ha!"

On the bank, Chunky Todgers shook a fat fist at Frank Richards, and turned wrathfully away.

Perhaps he was going to seek some confidant who would treat his tender secret with more respect.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Rhyme, but not Reason.

TODGERS!" Miss Meadows spoke quite sharply.

Cedar Creek School was at afternoon lessons, but Chunky Todgers, for reasons best known to himself, was not giving much attention to the lesson.

Frank Richards looked round quickly as Miss Meadows spoke.

Frank could guess what was on Chunky's fat mind.

Chunky was scribbling on a paper which he had on his fat knee, concealed by his desk.

"Todgers!" repeated Miss Meadows, still more sharply.

Tom Lawrence nudged Chunky, who started and looked up.

"Ye-es. Yes, Miss Meadows?"

"I have spoken to you twice, Todgers."

"Have you, ma'am?"

"You were scribbling something," said Miss Meadows severely. "Bring that paper to me at once!"

"That—that paper, ma'am?" stammered Todgers.

"Yes, at once!"

"Wha-a-at paper, ma'am?"

"That paper you were writing!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "You must not pass notes to and fro in class. Bring it to me!"

"It—it isn't a note, ma'am."

"Do as I tell you, Todgers!"

Chunky Todgers had risen to his feet, the fragment of paper clutched in his podgy fingers.

But he did not come out before the class. He stood blinking at the schoolmistress with a crimson face.

Bob Lawless gave him a kick under the desks.

"Get a move on!" he whispered. "Are you dotty?"

"Yow-ow!"

"Lawless, you must not speak to Todgers!"

"Nunno, Miss Meadows!" stammered Bob.

"Come out before the class at once, Todgers!"

"Oh dear!" murmured Chunky, in dismay.

He obeyed at last, dragging himself out before the class, as if his feet almost refused to move.

The class stared at him in great astonishment, neither boys nor girls being able to understand for a moment what was the matter with Todgers.

He stood at last before Miss Meadows, who looked very severe.

"Give me that paper, Todgers!"

"If—if you please, ma'am—"

"Well?"

"I—I'd rather not, ma'am!" gasped Chunky.

"Bless my soul! Give me that paper at once!" said Miss Meadows, quite snappishly.

Chunky Todgers fairly groaned as the schoolmistress took the paper from his podgy hand.

Miss Meadows glanced at the irregular scribble thereon, and the expression that came over her face was extraordinary.

The class watched breathlessly.

There was evidently something of an astonishing nature on the paper taken from Chunky Todgers.

"Todgers!" gasped Miss Meadows

"Ow!"

"What do you mean by writing such utter nonsense, in lesson-time, too?"

"Oh, ma'am!"

"Have you no common-sense?" exclaimed Miss Meadows "If this happens again, Todgers, I shall be very angry with you. Take it and put it in the stove at once!"

"In the st-st-stove?" stammered Chunky.

"Yes; go at once!"

Chunky Todgers tottered towards the stove, with Miss Meadows' stern glance upon him.

But Chunky was a little deeper than Miss Meadows guessed.

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NEXT

TUESDAY

He made a motion of tossing the paper into the stove, but, as a matter of fact, he slipped it up his sleeve.

Miss Meadows did not observe that action, but two or three of the class did, and they grinned.

"Now go back to your place, Todgers, and pay attention to your lessons."

"Yes, ma'am!" gasped Chunky.

He rolled back to his place.

Kern Gunten, the Swiss, was seated behind him, and a little later he dropped a pencil, and in stooping to recover it he brushed against Todgers.

When he regained his seat Gunten was grinning.

With great deftness he had filched the crumpled paper from the pocket in which he had seen Chunky Todgers thrust it hastily when he came back to his seat.

Gunten spread out the paper on his knee, and read it under his desk.

Then the quiet of the school-room was suddenly broken.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a sudden and irresistible yell of laughter from Gunten.

Boys and girls turned their heads to stare at the Swiss in surprise.

Miss Meadows stood petrified.

"Gunten!" she exclaimed. "How dare you?"

"I—I'm sorry, ma'am!" stammered Gunten, reddening. "I—I—"

"Silence! How dare you?" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "If you interrupt the lesson again I shall detain you for an hour, Gunten!"

"Yes, ma'am," said Gunten meekly.

Kern Gunten did not interrupt the lesson again.

But several times after that a grin broke out on his face.

Evidently he had found something very entertaining on Chunky's mysterious paper.

When lessons were over, and the Cedar Creek pupils trooped out, a good many of them gathered round Chunky Todgers.

Kern Gunten joined the crowd with a paper in his hand.

"You fellows like to hear something funny?" he asked.

"What is it?" asked Bob Lawless. "What were you cackling over in class?"

"It's a poem."

"A poem!" exclaimed Eben Hacke.

"Yep! Listen to it! You listen, too, Chunky. It will interest you," chuckled Gunten.

He held up the paper and began to read. Chunky Todgers, with a startled look, was feeling frantically in his pockets.

There was a buzz of astonishment as Kern Gunten read out:

"Oh, where dost thou linger, my ownest, my own?

Oh, come to thy Chunky, who loves thee alone!

He worships the trail that is trod by thy feet,

The sweet maple sugar is not half so sweet!

To gaze upon thee is a joy and delight,

O, sweetest of visions that gladden my sight!"

"You rotter!" yelled Chunky Todgers, struggling towards Gunten. "That's mine! Gimme my poem, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's mine!" shrieked Chunky.

Kern Gunten held the paper out of Chunky's reach.

"Keep his off! There's some more of it!"

"Give it to me!" howled Chunky.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's mine! You foreign beast, you got it out of my pocket! Gimme my paper!"

roared Chunky. "I'll kick your shins!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's have the rest!" exclaimed Dick Dawson. "Here, hold that fat lunatic! He's getting dangerous!"

Dawson and Tom Lawrence grasped Chunky and held him back, almost foaming.

Gunten, amid yells of laughter, proceeded with the "poem."

"Oh, how I would like to be floating with you

Down Life's sunny stream in a birch-bark canoe!

I'd do all the paddling, and you should recline

On the cushions, my own, with your eyes fixed on mine!"

Chunky Todgers, with a terrific effort, tore himself loose and rushed at Gunten.

He grabbed at the paper, and snatched it away from the Swiss.

"You rotter!" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's have the rest!" roared Keller.

Chunky Todgers jammed the paper in his pocket and clenched his fat fists.

"Yah! You foreign trash!" he roared.

"You come near me and I'll lick you! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What did you write that silly rot for, Chunky?" shouted Bob Lawless.

"Can't you see?" gasped Lawrence.

"Chunky's mashed on somebody! Oh crumbs! Is it Black Sally, the cook, Chunky?"

"No, it isn't!" shrieked Chunky. "It's nothing of the kind, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give it ; name!" yelled Eben Hacke.

"Is it Miss Meadows? Is that why she got mad with you?"

There was a shriek of merriment.

"Oh, Chunky!" gasped Beauclerc. "You young ass!"

"You little donkey!" exclaimed Molly Lawrence, wiping her eyes. "Miss Meadows would cane you if she knew you had written this about her."

Chunky blinked at her reproachfully.

"Tain't about Miss Meadows!" he snapped.

"Is it the cook?"

"No!" yelled Todgers. "It isn't the cook!"

"Then is one of us!" exclaimed Kate Dawson. Oh dear! Chunky, you ridiculous little fat donkey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chunky wouldn't be so silly as that," said Molly, laughing. "But tell us who it is, Chunky. Do tell us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chunky did not answer.

With a crimson face he stamped away, leaving boys and girls shrieking with merriment.

Chunky's "secret" was a secret no longer—it had become the joke of the school.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Quite A Failure!

M-M-MOLLY!" "Hallo, Chunky!" "I—I say, M-M-Molly!" "Well?" asked the girl, in surprise.

Molly Lawrence was waiting by the canoe, to go home.

Her brother had stopped to speak with Frank Richards & Co. as they fetched their horses from the corral, and Chunky Todgers joined her on the bank of the creek while she waited.

Molly regarded him with a smile.

Chunky was evidently "mashed" on somebody—probably one of the Cedar Creek girls—but Molly did not yet guess that she was the object of the fat youth's devotion.

"M-M-M-Molly— Oh, I say—"

"Yes?"

"W-wow-would you like me to paddle you home?" asked Chunky bashfully.

"Tom's going to," answered Molly. "Besides, you've got your pony at the school."

"Tom could ride my pony home," said Chunky. "In—in fact, he's going to, Molly. I—I'm going to paddle you home, you know."

Molly looked a little cross.

"Tom ought to have told me!" she exclaimed. "I've been waiting for him. But I can paddle myself."

"Tain't safe for you to go alone," said Todgers seriously. "Might be some—some rustler about, or a grizzly bear!"

Molly laughed merrily.

"Well, what would you do with a rustler or a grizzly bear?" she asked. "Still, if my brother's got your pony, you'd better come in the canoe. You'll have a walk at the other end, you know."

"I don't mind."

"Well, come along, then."

Molly's manner was quite matter-of-fact, much to the bashful Chunky's disappointment.

He had hoped to see Molly look pleased, and perhaps blush a little, but she didn't.

Molly was a good hand with a canoe, but Chunky, though he meant well, was decidedly clumsy.

He plunged the paddle into the water, and

(Continued on page 17.)

BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

Greifriars

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

St. Jim's

Rookwood

Supplement No. 94.

Week Ending October 28th, 1922.

BILLY BUNTER'S BRAVERY.

By Tom Brown.

"HELP!"
Billy Bunter stopped short on the towing-path of the River Sark as that wild cry rang out.

"Help!"
The cry was repeated, feebler and fainter. Billy Bunter glanced upstream but saw nothing unusual. Then his gaze wandered downstream, and a grim scene presented itself.

Coker of the Fifth had been punting. Now Coker had about as much idea of managing a punt as the man in the moon. The punt had glided away from under him, leaving him clinging to the pole. Coker had then turned a complete somersault, and he was now struggling for his life in the icy water.

"Help! Help!"
Coker's knowledge of swimming was decidedly limited. He thrashed the water like a wounded whale, but he made no progress. Meanwhile, he was fast becoming exhausted.

And what did Billy Bunter do? Did he stand like a stuffed dummy on the bank, startled and helpless. No jolly fear!

Bunter went through a series of physical jerks. With the first jerk he kicked off his shoes, with the second he wrenched off his jacket, and with the third he discharged himself into the water.

For an instant Billy Bunter disappeared, and a number of bubbles rose to the surface. Then Bunter's head bobbed up, and he struck out with strong, swift strokes towards the scene of the calamity.

Meanwhile the hapless Coker was being borne away by the current towards the weir, which was a positive death-trap.

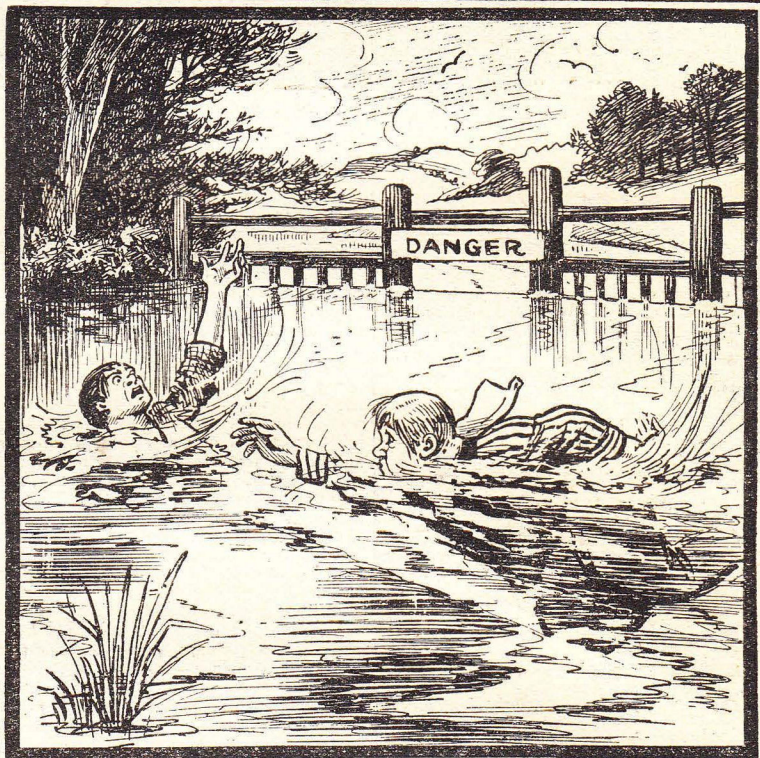
Billy Bunter swam like a Burgess and a Captain Webb rolled into one. He gained rapidly on Coker and caught up with him just as the Fifth-Former was about to go over the edge of the weir.

"Got you!" panted Billy Bunter. "Just lay flat on your back, and I'll tow you to the bank!"

"But the current!" gasped Coker. "You'll never be able to fight it!"

"Rats! I've fought worse things than currents," was the cool reply.

Swimming on his back, and clasping Coker round the middle, Billy Bunter steered the Fifth-Former to safety. He reckoned nothing of the powerful current, for, as we have said, he was a mighty swimmer.



TO COKER'S RESCUE! Bunter's head bobbed up and he struck out with strong, swift strokes towards the scene of the calamity. "Hold on!" he yelled to Coker. "I'm coming!"

At last Coker was safely deposited on the bank. He lay pumping in breath and bestowing glances of gratitude upon his rescuer.

"Bunter old chap," he panted, "you've saved my life!"

"You needn't make a song about it," replied the fat junior. "I do this sort of thing every day. Why, I've been known to save a dozen lives before breakfast!"

Coker staggered to his feet.

"I'd never suspected you of being a giddy hero, Bunter," he said. "But I've had proof of it now, and I'm going to reward you. Ask for anything you like, and it's yours."

"What do you value your life at?" inquired Bunter. "Five bob?"

"Oh, more than that."

"Make it ten, then."

"All serene!" said Coker. And he produced a wallet from the pocket of his drenched jacket, and handed Billy Bunter a ten-shilling note.

Coker then set off in the direction of Greyfriars, shedding a trail of water behind him. As for Bunter, he stood lovingly fingering the ten-shilling note.

"This will get me a first-rate feed at the Elysian Cafe in Courtfield," he murmured. "I'll go along and have a jolly good tuck-in."

When he reached the road which led to Courtfield, Billy Bunter heard a wild clatter of hoofs.

A dog-cart came bowling along the road at a furious pace. In it sat a distracted

THE POPULAR.—No. 197.

Supplement I.]

NEXT WEEK—A SPECIAL WINTER NUMBER! LOOK OUT FOR IT!

young lady, shrieking at the top of her voice.

"Hallo! The pony's bolted!" muttered Bunter. "Here's another little job for me!"

Billy Bunter was an expert in the art of stopping runaway horses. He simply leapt at them and flung his arms round their necks, and they stopped dead, being unable to support Bunter's tremendous weight.

When the pony drew near, Billy Bunter sprang. He timed his spring to a nicety. Clapping the animal lovingly round the neck, he brought it to a standstill. Then he patted and soothed it, and restored it to a state of docility.

"There!" said Bunter, sliding down from the pony's neck. "I don't think he'll give you any more trouble, miss."

"How can I ever thank you for your gallantry?" murmured the damsel.

"Not in words, but in cash!" said Bunter, with an eye to business. "My fee for stopping a runaway horse is ten bob."

Instantly the young lady opened her hand-bag and drew out four half-crowns, which she handed to her benefactor.

"You have saved my life," she said softly; "and believe me, I am more than grateful!"

"That's all right, miss!" said Billy Bunter. "It's nothing to make a song about, I can assure you."

He saluted the fair occupant of the dog-cart, and she drove away, with the pony under perfect control.

Billy Bunter rolled on towards Courtfield. His next act of bravery was to rush to the rescue of a well-dressed gentleman who was being attacked by hooligans.

There were four hefty roughs pitching into the gent, with the object of relieving him of his superfluous cash.

"Ah, I'm simply spoiling for a scrap!" murmured Bunter.

And he rushed full pelt at the hooligans, hitting out right and left.

Although the odds were four to one against him, Bunter was undaunted. He flogged the roughs one after the other, and then sat on them, thereby reducing them to a state of utter helplessness.

The rescued gentleman turned to Billy Bunter, his eyes glistening with gratitude.

"But for you, my boy," he said, in husky tones, "I should have been robbed of my life's savings—the sum of fifteen-and-sixpence! You have saved me from financial ruin, and I think it only right that I should present you with this ten-shilling note. It will still leave me five-and-sixpence, whereas had I been robbed I should have been destitute."

Billy Bunter eagerly grabbed the ten-shilling note.

The fat junior's exchequer had now risen to thirty shillings.

"If I go on at this rate," he murmured, "I shall be a giddy millionaire!"

Suddenly he was attracted by shouts of "Fire!"

On the outskirts of Courtfield there was a big paper factory, and Billy Bunter saw, to his horror, that the building was in flames.

White-faced girls were craning their heads out of upper windows. They were waiting for the fire-brigade to arrive. And they waited in vain.

Without a second's hesitation, Billy Bunter sped off in the direction of the blazing factory. He forced an entry, and, undismayed by the smoke and fumes, he dashed up the burning staircase.

On reaching the top of the building, he found the factory employees huddled together in one room, waiting for the end.

Bunter rushed to one of the windows, thrust out his head, and yelled to the crowd below:

"Don't stand there like graven images! Get some blankets, and I'll toss the girls down one by one!"

The blankets were quickly obtained, and the rescue work began.

With the strength of a Hercules, Billy Bunter carried each girl to the window in turn, and tossed her down so that she alighted safely on the outstretched blankets below.

Meanwhile, the flames were gaining rapidly. And Bunter was choked almost to suffocation by the time he had rescued the last of the girls.

He had just sufficient strength left to clamber through the window. For one

breathless instant he poised himself on the outer sill, and then prepared to jump.

Down he went—then, down through an infinity of space.

Bump!

Crash!

Billy Bunter alighted with a sickening thud on to the floor of the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars.

Blinking up in a dazed fashion, he saw Bob Cherry standing over him, grinning broadly.

"I simply had to pitch you out of bed, porpoise," said Bob. "Rising-bell went ten minutes ago!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bunter, still half-asleep in spite of his heavy fall. "Where's my ten bob?"

"Eh? What ten bob?"

"The ten bob I've earned for saving the lives of those fifty factory girls!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The loud roar of laughter which followed his remark convinced Bunter of the painful truth—that he had been seeing visions and dreaming dreams. His wonderful acts of heroism had been fancies, and not facts.

Uttering a deep groan, Billy Bunter staggered to his feet and started to dress.

THE END.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By Billy Bunter.

My dear Readers,—A hero is a chap with curridge—one who never flees from danger at the dubble, but stands to his guns like a man.

General Gordon was a hero. Sir Phillip Sidney was a hero. So was Sir Walter Rally. And so was Joan of Ark. (I beg pardon—the last-named was a heroess.)

Every day of our lives noble deeds are being done. Even while you are reading this editorial of mine, people are being fished out of rivers, dragged off railway lines in the nick of time, or chucked out of the top-storey windows of a blazing building.

When you come to think of it, the world is simply teeming with heroes. But alas! very few of them get the re-kermination they deserve.

Take myself, for instance. Just look at all the gallant deeds I have performed since I came to Greyfriars. I've rescued fellows from drowning; I've stopped runaway hoorses; I've plunged over the edge of a steep pressipice in order to save the life of a skool-fellow—in fact, I make quite a hobby of going about saving people's lives. And how much credit do I get for it? None at all!

This very day I have performed several deeds of valier. Bob Cherry slipped on a peace of banana-skin in the Close, and I dashed up and saved him from falling. But for me, he might easily have broken his neck.

I also raided a lobster sallad from Coker's studdy cubberd. If Coker had eaten it, he might have got toemaine poysoning. Just think what I saved him from!

I could go on multiplying these tails of heroism, but what's the use? Nobody will ever beleieve them!

This week I am producing a Special Heroism Number of my amazing WEEKLY. As I have already remarked, in the case of every Special Number published, this is the best number we have ever had! I trussed all my reader-chums will digest it, with ravvenus enjoyment.—Yours sincerely,

YOUR EDITOR.

THE HERO OF GREYFRIARS!

Written by Dick Penfold.
Recited by Billy Bunter.

Call me a glutton, if you like,
Call me a fat and fatuous ass;
Call me a twister, or a tyke,
And I will calmly let it pass.
Call me a greedy, grasping gen,
Who goes and eats up every chunk;
Call me a fibber and worm,
But not a funk!

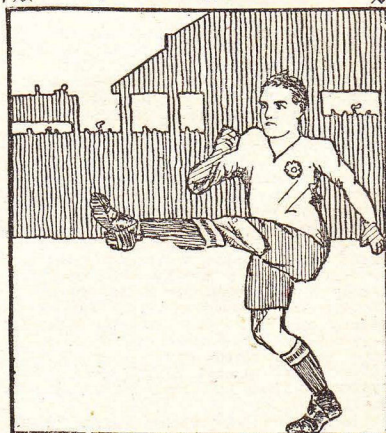
Say I'm a stupid, senseless clown,
Say I'm a traitor and a spy;
However much you run me down
I shall not whimper, whine or cry.
Say I'm a swindler, just like Fish,
Say I'm a scarecrow or a skunk;
Say I'm a fathead, if you wish,
But not a funk!

Tell me I've neither brawn nor brain,
That sawdust lies beneath my thatch;
Tell me that I am quite insane
And only fit for Colney Hatch.
Tell me I'm shabby, as a rule,
That all my togs are worn and shrunk;
Tell me that I'm an arrant fool,
But not a funk!

The name of Bunter, W. G.
Down to posterity will go;
People will always say of me,
"He was a chap who feared no foe!"
I know I am a clumsy chap,
An elephant (without a trunk);
But I'm a glutton for a scrap—
I never funk!

PEEPS INTO THE FUTURE!

By George Kerr.



JACK BLAKE.

(International Footballer.)

[Supplement II.]

HEROES OF ST. JIM'S!

By
Mr Victor Railton, M.A.

In the annals of every public school we find deeds of heroism recorded. Some of these deeds are soon forgotten; others will never fade from the memory.

St. Jim's is in no way behind its rival schools, so far as acts of heroism are concerned. Not a year passes but some gallant youngster risks his life for another.

When I first took up my duties as Housemaster here, there was a fellow in the Shell called Raleigh—a fitting name for a hero.

Raleigh seemed to make a speciality of saving people from drowning. In one summer alone he rescued four people from the River Rhyl, in varying circumstances. One boy capsized a Canadian canoe. He was a non-swimmer, and would have sunk like a stone had not Raleigh promptly plunged to the rescue. He was saved with great difficulty.

The other three were cases of cramp while bathing. In each case, young Raleigh went to the rescue. He nearly lost his life on one occasion when the boy he was trying to rescue gripped him by the throat and dragged him under. However, Raleigh stuck gamely to his task, and after a desperate struggle he succeeded in getting his human burden ashore. Raleigh's exploits did not go unrecognised. He received a certificate from the Royal Life Saving Society, and a special presentation was made by his schoolfellows.

In the following winter Raleigh saved two lives at a skating carnival. The ice was very treacherous in places, and a couple of fags were precipitated into the water. Raleigh plunged in and held them up until some of his schoolfellows arrived with a rope.

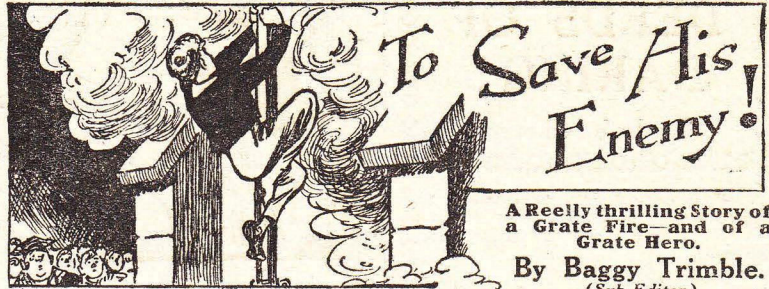
Coming to more recent years, it will be remembered that Talbot, of the Shell, once averted a serious railway accident. For this act of gallantry he was awarded the King's Pardon. There had been a warrant out against him in connection with his early exploits as a cracksman.

Another thrilling rescue occurred when Kildare, of the Sixth, was lying unconscious on the railway line. It was late at night, and the mail train was due to pass the spot. But for the timely assistance of Monteith, Kildare would have been killed. As it was, his fellow-perfect only managed to drag him clear in the nick of time.

I have no space in which to mention the many other acts of gallantry which have been chronicled. The heroes have preferred to hide their lights under a bushel.

I cannot do better than conclude my article with the words of a well-known writer:

"Not a day passes over the earth but men of no note do great deeds, think noble thoughts, suffer noble sorrows. Of these obscure heroes, philosophers, and martyrs, the greater part will never be known till that day when many that are great shall be small, and the small great."



A Reelly thrilling Story of a Grate Fire—and of a Grate Hero.
By **Baggy Trimble.**
(Sub-Editor.)

"FIRE! Fire!" The shouts re-ekkoed through the vast and stately eddifics of St. Percy's.

All the fellows were asleep when the alarm was given by the skool porter.

In less than a minnit the still and silent dormitories were transformed into beehives of activity.

Harry Handsome, of the Fourth, sprang out of bed.

"The skool's on fire!" he cried, in wringing toans. "Hurry up, you fellows, or we shall be roasted alive!"

All was hussle and bussle and confusion.

The juniors put on their dressing-gowns and slippers, and hurried down into the quad. They had to fight their way through fire and fumes, for the staircase was alite.

There were seens of grate Annie Mation—whoever that lady might be—in the quad. Seniors and juniors and masters and

Harry hezzitated, but only for an instant. "I'll save him!" he cried. And he rushed towards the rainpipe which ran up the side of the bilding.

"Come back, boy—come back!" shouted the Head. "This is sheer madness!"

Harry Handsome neither heard nor heeded. Already he was shinning up the rainpipe with the agility of Tarzan of the Apes.

Up and up he went, higher and higher, until he was a mere speck, almost lost to the view of the breathless crowd beneath.

The Head rung his hands.

"There will be two lives lost, instead of one!" he groned. "I feel it in my boans!"

Meenwhile, our hero had reached the window of Mr. Tarter's bed-room.

Smoke and fire and flame and fumes and sparks and soot came pouring out of the window. But Harry Handsome did not falter. A human life was at steak!

"Are you there, sir?" called Harry, peering into the room.

"Yes!" was the reply. "But I am unconshus!"

Harry gave a chuckle. He thought it rather funny for an unconshus man to answer his question.

"Hold on, sir!" he cried. "I'm coming to your reskew!"

And he clambered through the window. The hungry flames licked around him, and scorched and shrivalled his Etons. But he did not falter.

On the bed, which was burning away merrily, lay the helpless Form master. He was a man of immense gerth, but Harry Handsome picked him up and slung him over his sholder as if he had been a feather.

"My brave boy!" mermered the Form master. "How can I ever thank you enuff?"

"Keep your thanks till afterwards, sir," said Harry. "We're not out of the wood yet! I'm beginning to wonder how I'm going to get you down!"

Harry staggered with his burden towards the window. But this time his hare had caught alight, and he shuddered at the prospect of going bald for the rest of the term. But there is always a price to be paid for heroism.

The crowd gave a mity cheer when they caught sight of Harry's face at the window. "Stop that row," yelled Harry, "and rig up a ladder, for the love of old Ireland!"

Fortunately, Harry's chums had already had the presence of mind to fetch a ladder. They reared it up against the wall, and Harry Handsome started on his perilous dessent.

As he went down, step by step, with the Form master lying limply over his sholder, hefty chunks of falling masonry hit him on the head. But he did not flinch or falter.

After what seemed an eternity he reached the foot of the ladder. He laid his burden on the ground, and then dropped like a log.

The Head hurried forward, with tears streaming down his cheeks.

"The brave, gallent boy!" he eggscclaimed. "He has saved Mr. Tarter's life at the eggspense of his own! Look! His clothing is on fire!"

Harry Handsome's chums picked up the hosepipe, and turned a jet of water on him in the nick of time.

Our hero lay for several years in a critical condition. But he recovered in the long run, of course, and Mr. Tarter, his former enemy, became his sworn pal for life.

They still talk, at St. Percy's, of Harry Handsome's wonderful feet.

(You see, he happened to be an eggcellent footballer!)

THE END.
THE POPULAR.—No. 197.



As Harry Handsome went down, step by step, with the master lying limply over his sholder, hefty chunks of falling masonry hit him.

servants came pouring out of the blazing bilding.

The Head was prancing about like a cat on hot brix.

"Call the roll!" he cried eggstidely. "I want to make certain that everybody is hear!"

Mr. Lashingam, the master of the 5th, called the roll.

To the Head's reteeef, everyboddy replied "Had some!"

"Thank goodness there is no one left inside that roaring furniss!" he eggscclaimed, pointing to the skool-bilding.

"Hold on, sir!" cried the kaptain of the skool, pail to the lips. "Mr. Tarter, the master of the 4th, is not hear!"

"Not hear?" ekkoed the Head, in toans of horrer.

"No, sir! He is in his bed-room at the top of the bilding!"

"Good Evans!"

As soon as Harry Handsome heard this he kept klenching and unklenching his hands.

Mr. Tarter was Harry's worst enemy. The master of the 4th was always giving him lickings and impotts.

"Shall I save him?" muttered Harry. "Or shall I abandon him to his fate?"

It was a terribil ezyais. Unless Harry Handsome took a hand, Mr. Tarter would be left to the mercy of the flames.

Supplement III.]

DO YOU LIKE SPECIAL NUMBERS? THERE ARE MORE ON THE WAY!

DEEDS OF DARING!

By Bob Cherry.

The following acts of bravery took place during the week. I can vouch for the fact that the information is perfectly genuine.

* * *

Billy Bunter plunged into the bowl of the fountain in the Close in order to save a bag of doughnuts from drowning. After floundering in the bowl for some time, Billy brought the doughnuts to the surface. Artificial respiration was resorted to, and the doughnuts were then declared fit for human consumption. A full description of the rescue has been forwarded to the Royal Life Saving Society.

* * *

After an exciting scramble, Peter Todd succeeded in rescuing a mouse from the clutches of Theophilus, the kitchen cat. Just when it seemed that the mouse's number was up, Peter grabbed it, and put it back in its hole, much to the chagrin of the cat, which was compelled to go supperless to bed.

* * *

It isn't everybody who has the opportunity of saving the life of a famous sea admiral. But Dick Penfold, seeing his pal, Bulstrode, about to burn a book, promptly dashed up and saved "The Life of Nelson"!

* * *

Monty Newland has actually gone one better than Dick Penfold. He has saved a whole crowd of kings. You see, he collects old coins!

* * *

Billy Bunter has been responsible for yet another gallant rescue during the week. He overslept one morning, and was late for breakfast in consequence. But he just managed to "save his bacon."

* * *

I have myself put in a good deal of rescue work. There was a dog fight taking place in Coustfield, and I prevented Harry Wharton from "going to the dogs." I also saved Hazeldene, of the Remove, from falling. What was he about to fall into? Debt, of course!

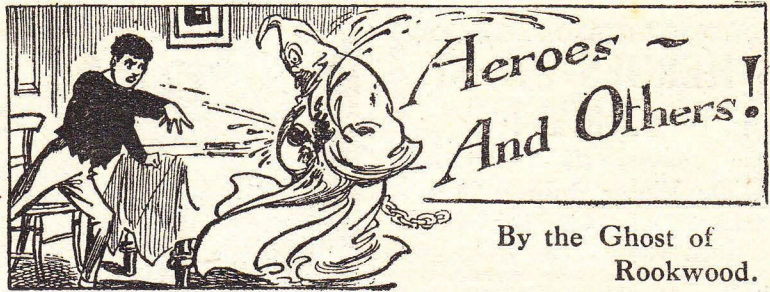
* * *

If it wasn't for me, Billy Bunter would now be in little pieces. You see, he was about to carry tales to Quelch, and I promptly stopped him from "splitting."

* * *

The "saving" habit is all the rage at Greyfriars. On Saturday the Remove goalie, Bulstrode, saved scores of shots, and rescued his side from defeat!

THE POPULAR.—No. 197.



By the Ghost of Rookwood.

FOR many moons I have haunted the studies and dormitories and corridors of Rookwood School. And I am often amused at the various receptions I get from different fellows.

Some fellows are frankly afraid of me, and they show it. Others are afraid, and won't show it. Others, again, are absolutely fearless. They invite me to do my worst.

A few nights ago I "appeared" to Tubby Muffin, who was working late in his study. I caused the electric light to go out, and then, clanking my chains, I advanced into the room.

Tubby Muffin gave a squeal of terror. "Yow! It's a gig-gig-ghost!" he stuttered. "Aha!" I cried, in my deep, sepulchral tones. "Evidently thou knowest my identity. I am the Ghost of Rookwood School. Tremble!"

The command was unnecessary. Tubby was already trembling from head to foot, and he was in a terrible state of funk. Great beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead, and his eyes were starting out of his head.



Tubby Muffin gave a squeal of terror as I advanced. "Yow! It's a gig-gig-ghost!" he stuttered.

"I—I say, Mr. Ghost, I wish you'd buzz off!" he faltered. "I don't feel at all happy with you fluttering around!"

"Be silent, thou saucy knave! I will remain with thee, even until the clock striketh one!"

"Oh crumbs!"

I could see that Tubby Muffin preferred my room to my company. He was in a state of panic. And when he saw that I had no intention of going, he yelled the roof off.

"Help! Fire! Murder! Ghosts!" Tubby's cries of alarm could have been heard all over Rookwood.

After a brief interval, there was a scuffling of feet, as Jimmy Silver & Co. came hurrying downstairs to see what was the matter.

With a mocking laugh, which struck terror into the heart of Tubby Muffin, I took my departure. And when Tubby's schoolfellows arrived in the study there was no sign of me, and Tubby's story of a midnight visitation sounded awfully thin.

"You've been having nightmare, you ass!" growled Jimmy Silver. "You ate a heavy supper, then you sat up swotting, and dropped off to sleep."

"Oh, really, Silver—"

"Better bump him, and bring him along to

the dorm!" growled Lovell. "He's robbed us of our beauty sleep for nothing."

Tubby Muffin was duly bumped, and then marched off to the Fourth Form dormitory. And ever since then he has been mortally afraid to sit up late in his study.

Another person, no less a coward than Tubby Muffin, is Mr. Manders. I once called on Manders at midnight, and he very nearly swooned. I expected him to burst forth:

"I fear thee, Ghost of Rookwood,
I fear thy skinny hand!"

But, as a matter of fact, Manders was tongue-tied. He could not have spoken to save his life. Never have I seen a man show such abject fear.

"Craven wretch!" I cried. "I have come to haunt thee until daybreak!"

Then Manders let out such a shriek of terror that I felt really sorry for him, and decided to leave him in peace.

In marked contrast to Tubby Muffin and Mr. Manders was Bulkeley of the Sixth.

I appeared to Bulkeley the night before last. He was sitting up late in his study, compiling the list of players for the next footer match.

Bulkeley didn't turn a hair when I appeared before him.

"It's a pleasant evening!" he remarked casually.

"Methinks thou wilt find it an unpleasant one, George Bulkeley!" I said grimly. "Behold, I am the Ghost of Rookwood School!"

Bulkeley laughed.

"Don't be an ass!" he said.

Now, this was the first time anybody had ever spoken to me like this. And I felt nettled.

"I will haunt thee until the hair of thy head standeth on end!" I said, in my most awe-inspiring tones.

Bulkeley pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said curtly. "I'm busy!"

I stood my ground.

"Verily," I said, "I have no intention of retiring."

Bulkeley gave a grunt.

"We'll soon see about that!" he growled. And he picked up an inkpot and hurled it at me with all his force.

The inkpot caught me full in the chest, transforming my white robes into black ones. With an unghostlike yell, I promptly turned and fled.

There are other heroes at Rookwood besides Bulkeley. Jimmy Silver & Co. are not afraid of me; neither are the three Tommies on the Modern Side. Time and again I have tried to "put the wind up" these fellows, but without result.

Among those I have succeeded in scaring out of their wits are Carthew of the Sixth, Sergeant Kettle, Smythe of the Shell, and Peele, Lattrey, and Gower, of the Fourth. These precious individuals are absolutely terrified at my approach.

It's great fun being a ghost, and noting the different impressions one makes on various people.

Now that winter is here I shall have a very busy time. Winter is always the ideal season for ghosts; and I expect I shall work over time during Christmas week.

There is just one thing that worries me.

I believe Bulkeley and others already suspect that I'm not a real ghost at all. And I tremble to think what will happen if they make the discovery that I'm Teddy Grace of the Fourth!

I shall have to walk very warily in future.

[Supplement IV.]

SOMETHING NEW AND FUNNY EVERY WEEK! KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!

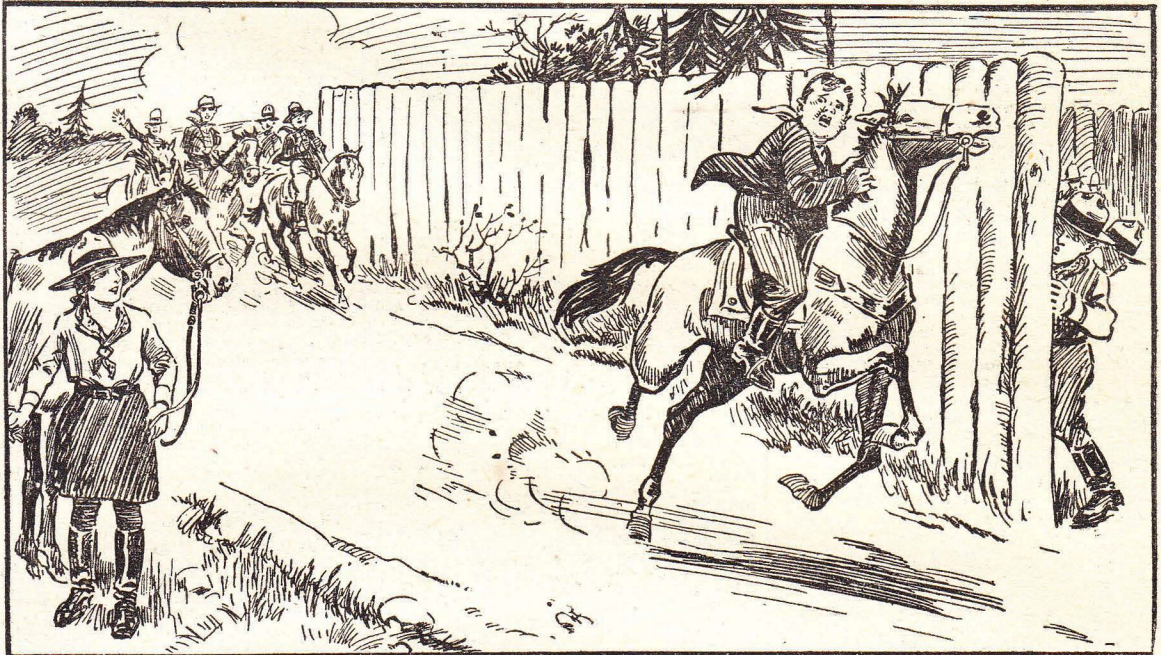
Curing Chunky Todgers.

(Continued from page 12.)

there was a splash as he started, and a shriek from Molly.
 "Look out! You've splashed me!"
 "Oh dear!" said Chunky, in dismay.
 "Don't you paddle," said Molly. "I can manage."
 "I—I'd rather you reclined on the cushion."
 "There isn't a cushion," said the practical Molly.
 "But—but I'd rather you reclined—"
 stammered Chunky.
 Molly stared at him.
 "I'm not so lazy," she answered. "Don't be silly, Chunky!" Then a sudden glimmer came into her pretty eyes. "Oh, that was in your poem. You little duffer!"
 "I'm not little," said Chunky warmly. "I'm bigger than you, and I'm older—months older."
 "You haven't so much sense!" said Molly.
 "Oh!"
 "Give me that paddle!"

"Of course it is!"
 "But—but it isn't—it isn't—"
 "You've just said it is."
 "I—I mean it—it isn't so—so sweet as—"
 "Molasses?" asked Molly.
 "Nunno! As—as—as Molly!" gasped Chunky, getting it out at last.
 He had taken the plunge, and broken the ice, so to speak.
 Molly Lawrence ceased wielding the paddle, and stared at him. She understood.
 "That—that poem!" gasped Chunky. "You—you know!"
 "Oh dear!" said Molly.
 "I—I—I say, Molly, I—I—I—"
 "You little idiot!" said Molly candidly.
 "Eh?"
 "I don't believe you're quite right in the head," said Molly crossly. "Kate thinks you are a little soft. I believe you are!"
 Chunky sat speechless.
 "If you talk any more, I shall splash you," continued Miss Lawrence warningly. "Now sit quiet, and keep your foolish mouth shut!"
 "Oh crumbs!" gasped Chunky.
 He sat quite in consternation as Molly paddled on again.

claimed Lawrence. "Would you I didn't want your silly pony. I came down to the creek, and found the canoe gone. What the thunder did you want to run off with my sister for, you fat idiot?"
 "I—I—I—"
 "What did you play such a trick for?" shouted Lawrence.
 "I—I—I—"
 "Can't you speak, you chump?" exclaimed the exasperated Lawrence, taking Todgers by the collar and shaking him.
 "I—I— Leggo! I wanted to!" gasped Chunky "I—I wanted Molly to recline her gaze on mine—I mean, I wanted—I— Yaroo! That is to say— Yoooop!"
 Tom Lawrence gave a yell.
 "Oh, so it's Molly, is it? You write your fathead poems about Molly, do you? I'll give you poems, you clam!"
 He swung Chunky Todgers round, and a heavy boot was planted upon Chunky, and he gave a howl.
 "Yow-ow! Leave off!"
 But Tom Lawrence did not leave off.
 Apparently he thought that Todgers wanted a lesson, and he intended to give him one. Chunky made a rush for his pony, but he



CHUNKY LOSES CONTROL! The fat pony thundered on into the school gateway, with Chunky clinging wildly to its mane and shrieking for help. "Ow! Ow! Yow!" he roared. "Oh dear!" (See Chapter 4.)

"But I—I say, I'm going to paddle you home," said Chunky feebly.
 "Stuff!"
 "Oh dear!" murmured Todgers.
 Miss Lawrence paddled the canoe away.
 Chunky looked back rather anxiously till they were past the bend.
 As a matter of fact, he had made Tom Lawrence the offer of his pony, and Tom had declined, rather gruffly.
 He expected every moment to see Lawrence come shouting down the bank.
 Fortunately, he was still talking with Frank Richards & Co., and the canoe passed round the bend out of sight.
 "I—I say, Molly—" began Chunky.
 "Yes?"
 "I—I say—"
 Molly looked at him fixedly.
 "Are you ill?" she asked.
 "Nunno."
 "Then what are you talking so queerly for?"
 "I—I—I—"
 "You shouldn't eat so much," said Molly severely. "You were bolting maple sugar in class this afternoon. I saw you!"
 "I've got some for you, Molly," said Chunky. "I—I say, maple sugar is sweet."

The course of true love was certainly not running smooth in Chunky's case.
 He felt a chill, and his "mashed" state was very nearly abolished on the spot.
 But he made another effort.
 "I—I—I say, Molly— Yaroo!"
 Molly kept her word, and sent a cruel splash over the lovelorn Chunky.
 The fat youth jumped, and the canoe rocked.
 "I warned you!" said Molly.
 Chunky Todgers did not speak again during the journey up the creek.
 He was rather relieved when they reached the Lawrence farmstead, in fact.
 As they landed, there was a clatter of hoofs on the trail, and Tom Lawrence dashed up on Chunky's pony.
 "Oh, here you are!" he shouted.
 "Yes, here we are!" said Molly.
 "What did you leave me behind for?" roared Lawrence wrathfully. "I had to ride home on this blessed fat pony."
 "Why, Todgers told me—" exclaimed Molly in surprise.
 "I—I told you you could have the pony, Lawrence!" gasped Chunky.
 "You young jay, you might have drowned Molly if you tried to paddle the canoe!" ex-

had no time to get into the saddle. Lawrence's heavy boot was still actively at work.
 He hopped along, holding the reins, running beside the pony, while Lawrence pursued him, still landing out with his boots, and yelling with laughter.
 Chunky was yelling, too, though not with laughter.
 Lawrence stopped at last, too overcome with merriment to run any further, and he stood roaring in the trail, while the unhappy Chunky clambered on his fat pony.
 "Yow-ow-ow-ow! Woop!" spluttered Chunky.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Chunky cast a glance back at Molly Lawrence.
 To his surprise and horror, Molly was laughing as heartily as her brother.
 Apparently Molly saw something entertaining in that chase down the trail.
 It was really too bad; and at that moment Chunky, mashed as he was, felt strongly inclined to punch Molly's nose as well as her brother's.
 The last thing he heard, as he trotted down the trail, was a shout of laughter.

THE POPULAR.—No. 197.

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

NEXT TUESDAY!

"CAST ADRIFT!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Not According to Programme.

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. spotted Chunky Todgers as they rode up the trail the following morning to Cedar Creek.

The fat youth was mounted on his fat pony, trotting along slowly, with a thoughtful shade on his chubby face.

"Hallo, Fatty!" shouted Bob. Todgers looked round, and met three grinning glances, and blushed.

The three chums were greatly interested in Chunky, in his present "mashed" state.

As Bob put it, they had never seen a mashed porpoise before.

Chunky did not seem very comfortable in the saddle.

He was shifting incessantly on the back of the pony.

"Anything the matter with you, Chunky?" asked Vere Beauclerc. "Or anything wrong with the saddle?"

"N-n-no! I—I've got some bumps!" mumbled Chunky. "I—I took Molly home last night in the canoe, and Tom Lawrence didn't like being left behind. The beast kicked me!"

"Ha, ha!"

"And Molly only laughed!" added Chunky plaintively. "Laughed, you know! At me! She—she thought it was funny!"

Apparently Chunky expected sympathy, but he did not receive any.

The three chums simply yelled.

"Oh, don't cackle!" said Todgers thoughtfully. "I—I say, Cherub, it was just here that you stopped Molly's horse when it was running away, wasn't it, a week or two ago? I—I wonder if her horse is likely to bolt again?"

Chunky looked back along the trail.

The fat youth would have been glad to see Molly's horse bolting, so that he could perform an heroic deed, and shine in her eyes.

Then she would not laugh next time Tom Lawrence kicked him, perhaps.

Tom Lawrence and his sister came trotting up the trail just then. They were riding to school that morning.

"I—I say, Cherub—" whispered Chunky excitedly.

"Well," said Beauclerc, his eyes twinkling. "Couldn't you—c-c-couldn't you—"

"Couldn't I what?"

"Just ride along and give a yell, you know, and—and start her horse, and—and I'll—"

Beauclerc yelled.

"Leave it to me!" gasped Bob Lawless. "Oh crumbs! Leave it to me! You fellows get aside, and give Chunky plenty of room."

"I say, you're a good chap, Bob!" gasped Todgers.

"None better!" grinned Bob. "Leave it to me!"

He dashed away up the trail at top speed, and joined Molly Lawrence and her brother.

"Hold on!" he exclaimed.

"What's up?" asked Tom Lawrence, drawing rein.

"The joke of the season!" gasped Bob. "Chunky wants to rescue Molly on a runaway horse, same as the Cherub did once. I'm to frighten Molly's horse, and send him along the trail. You don't mind, Molly?"

"Don't I?" answered Molly warmly.

"Just like a girl—you can't see a joke," said Bob. "I mean, get off at a gallop, and make Chunky think your gee's running away. He will be no end of a guy, trying to stop you."

Molly laughed.

"Go it, Moll!" grinned Lawrence.

The girl rode on, and Bob cracked his whip loudly, and Lawrence shouted.

Molly's horse was urged into a rapid gallop.

Chunky, blinking along the trail, could hardly believe in his good luck, when he saw Molly swooping down on him, with a thunder of hoofs.

It looked a dangerous task to attempt to stop the supposed runaway, but Chunky had plenty of pluck, though perhaps not a full allowance of common-sense.

"Help!" cried Molly, as she came dashing by Chunky Todgers.

"Gee-up!" gasped Chunky to his steed.

Either the horse, or Molly's guiding hand on the rein, dodged Chunky in the wild trail.

She rode round him, and kept on towards the school at a gallop. Chunky thundered after her, ready to attempt the impossible.

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He remembered how Beauclerc had stopped the runaway, and he was going to do the same.

But it was not so easy to carry out the plan as to make it.

Chunky's fat pony was not accustomed to violent exercise, neither was the fat youth a good rider.

He cracked his whip, and gave the pony a cut, and the startled animal whinnied and reared.

"Gee-up!" shrieked Chunky, as Molly drew further and further away, ahead.

"Gee-up, you brute! Gurrurr! Go! Gee-up!"

He cut, and cut again, and the scared pony tore down the trail after Molly.

But he had the bit between his teeth now, and Chunky was past all control of him.

The speed at which he went took Todgers' breath away, the reins flew out of his fat hands, and he clutched at the saddle, and then at the tossing mane of the galloping pony.

A yell of laughter followed him up the trail.

Frank Richards & Co. came riding after him, with Lawrence, and all four were nearly in convulsions.

Molly drew rein at the school gates, and dismounted.

Chunky Todgers came thundering on, unable to stop.

"Gee-whiz!" shouted Eben Hacke. "Get aside, you galoots!"

There was a rush to leave the trail free for the hapless rider.

The fat pony thundered on into the school gateway, and into the playground, with Chunky clinging wildly to his mane and shrieking for help.

The yelling and clutching on his back had finished it for Chunky's pony—the animal was scared and nearly frantic by now.

He dashed on across the playground, swerved at the palisade, and then tore round the enclosure.

The unhappy Chunky popped up and down in the saddle, clinging to his mane and yelling.

Molly Lawrence ran in the way, and caught the streaming reins.

With a strong and skilful hand the Canadian girl forced the excited pony to a halt.

The intended rescue had been reversed—it was Molly who was the rescuer.

Chunky Todgers, finding the pony still at last, sat up dazedly, still holding on to the mane.

"Ow—ow—ow!" gasped Chunky. "Oh dear! I'm out of breath! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Molly. "Get down! Katie, come and help Chunky down!"

Kate Dawson ran up, laughing, and the gasping Chunky was helped to the ground.

He stood palpitating and snorting for breath.

"Oh dear! Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Chunky. "Oh dear! The beast! He—he ran away with me! Oh crumbs! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Lawless. "Did you save Molly's life, Chunky?"

"Yow-ow-ow! Oh!"

Chunky Todgers, breathless and crimson, staggered away, leaving Bob to take his pony to the corral.

It was Chunky's first and last attempt to shine in Molly's eyes in the role of heroic rescuer.

Even Chunky realised that that wouldn't do.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Curing Chunky.

"I'M going to lick him!" growled Tom Lawrence.

"Don't!" said Frank Richards, laughing.

"He's not going to be such a funny ass! It's rough on Molly!" growled the indignant Tom. "He's got to chuck it! The howling chump has actually written her a poem—full of eyes and dies and sighs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Licking him won't do any good," said Bob Lawless. "Besides, poor old Chunky can't help being daft. Molly can give him a lesson, and I've thought of a way."

"Well, go ahead," said Tom restively.

Tom was very sensitive to the ridiculous side of Chunky's extraordinary attack.

Bob Lawless proceeded to explain his "way," and there was a chorus of chorities.

And when Molly was called into the council she laughed and said:

"Done!"

After lessons that day Frank Richards & Co. joined Tom Lawrence and Molly outside the lumber school.

Chunky Todgers was on Molly's trail, as usual, probably hoping to be allowed to ride home with his charmer.

"Is Chunky coming?" asked Molly demurely.

Todgers came rolling up, delighted that the fair one remembered his existence.

"I'm coming!" he announced, at once.

"Sure you'd care for a walk?" asked Molly.

"I guess so! Yes, rather! Why not ride, though?" asked Chunky, who greatly preferred to do his travelling sitting down.

"Oh, we're going to have a walk through the woods!" said Tom Lawrence. "You can come if you like."

"You'll walk with me, Chunky," said Molly.

Chunky almost purred with delight. The party started off walking.

Chunky Todgers was in the seventh heaven as he trotted by Molly's side.

Frank Richards & Co. were smiling. Tom Lawrence grinned. Molly's eyes were twinkling.

They covered a mile of rough ground on the forest trail, and at the end of that mile Chunky Todgers was breathing very hard.

"Like the walk, Chunky?" asked Bob Lawless blandly.

"Ye-es!" gasped Chunky.

"Not getting out of breath?"

"N-n-oo!"

"I'm so glad!" said Molly. "I'm thinking of walking to school now the weather's getting so fine, Chunky, and you can walk, too."

"W-w-walking to school!" stammered Chunky.

"Yes. It's only a few miles in the morning."

"Oh!"

"What did you say?"

"N-n-nothing!"

Another mile was covered, and Chunky deeply repented the last huge chunk of maple sugar he had disposed of that afternoon.

The other fellows sauntered carelessly; they were not so fat as Chunky, and more accustomed to active service.

"Come on!"

Chunky Todgers stumbled on.

He wondered why Molly did not get tired, and he wondered, too, why she was smiling all the time.

A dreadful suspicion dawned upon his mind at last.

He stopped.

"Aren't you coming?" asked Molly sweetly.

"Yow-yow-yow!" moaned Chunky. "It's a lark. I see it now! Yow-ow-ow! You've done this on purpose! Ow! You know I can't walk any further! Wow! I shall die if I take another step— Ow!"

"In your poem you said you would die for me," said Molly demurely. "Well, keep on, then!"

Chunky blinked at her.

He wondered how he ever could have been "mashed" on Molly.

"Aren't you coming?" demanded Molly.

"No!" howled Chunky. "I'm not coming! I won't ever go for a walk with you again— Ow-wow! I don't like you— Yow-ow! You ain't a nice girl at all— Oh dear!"

And Chunky fairly sat down in the grass and groaned.

"Enjoyed your walk, Chunky?" roared Bob Lawless.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I don't think Chunky cares for my society as much as he did," said Molly sadly. "He says I'm not a nice girl!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The unhappy Chunky remained where he was until Frank Richards fetched the horses.

He uttered no word on his way home.

He did not even say good-night to Molly, though she said good-night most sweetly.

And the next day there was no fellow at Cedar Creek who was more utterly and stonily indifferent to pretty Molly's charms than Chunky Todgers!

Chunky had been cured.

THE END.

(Another grand Backwoods story next Tuesday—and GRAND FREE REAL PHOTOS—in the POPULAR.)

A SPLENDID TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL
By OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"CAST ADRIFT!"

TELLING OF THE EXTRAORDINARY AND DRAMATIC CAPTURE OF A RASCAL, AND OF THE DEPARTURE FROM ROOKWOOD OF "CAPTAIN LAGDEN"!



BROUGHT TO BOOK!

A Magnificent Long Complete Story of the Amazing Mystery at Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST

(Stories of Rookwood appear every Monday in the "Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Missing!

"IMPOSSIBLE!"
Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, rapped out the word angrily. Mr. Bootles coughed.
"I regret to say, sir—"
The Head rose from his chair, his brows knitted. Mr. Bootles coughed again apologetically. He could not help being the bearer of unpleasant tidings.
Dr. Chisholm fixed his eyes upon the master of the Fourth.
"You say that Silver, of your Form, cannot be found, Mr. Bootles?"
"Quite so, sir!"
"He is not in the dormitory with his Form?"
"No."
"Has he been searched for?"
"Everywhere!"
"It is extraordinary!" exclaimed the Head, biting his lips. "He has, of course, left the school without permission, as his three friends have already done. It is unpardonable!"
Another cough from Mr. Bootles.
"Two boys of the Fourth, sir, have made a statement to me," he began. "They are Mornington and Erroll."
"Have they any knowledge of this affair?" snapped the Head.
"So they say, sir."
"Admit them at once, then!"
Mr. Bootles turned to the door, and made a sign to the two juniors, who were waiting in the corridor.
Mornington and Erroll entered the Head's study.
Dr. Chisholm glanced at them sharply.
"What do you know of Silver's actions?" he asked. "Were you aware that he intended to run away from school?"
"We know that he has not run away from school, sir," said Mornington quietly.
"What?"
"Something has happened to him, sir," said Erroll.
"An accident, do you mean—within the walls of Rookwood?" exclaimed the Head, in astonishment. "If so, where is he?"
"We last saw him enter the Oak Room—Captain Lagden's sitting-room, sir."
"Indeed! When was that?"
"About half an hour before bedtime."
"And after that?"
"Nothing after that, sir," said Mornington. "He never came out of the Oak Room!"
"Do you mean to say that all this disturbance is about nothing, and that Silver has visited Captain Lagden, and simply forgotten bedtime?"
"No, sir."
"Silver is not there now," interposed Mr. Bootles. "After Mornington told me this, I called on the captain at once, and found him alone."

"Then what does Mornington mean?" exclaimed the Head testily.
"Explain to Dr. Chisholm, Mornington."
"Certainly, sir. Since Silver's chums disappeared, sir—Lovell and Raby and Newcome, one after another—we've been keeping an eye on Jimmy," said Mornington. "I had a suspicion that something might happen to Jimmy Silver, too, and we hardly ever let him out of our sight."
"Indeed!" said the Head, in surprise.
"When we went to call on Captain Lagden in the Oak Room this evening, we went as far as the landing window and waited for him," said Mornington. "He couldn't have left the Oak Room without our seeing him. He never left it. We cut off to the dorm at half-past nine, expecting Jimmy to turn up there before lights out. But he never came."
"Undoubtedly he left the Oak Room after you left your post," said the Head.
"Then what became of him, sir?"
"He has left Rookwood, I suppose. His friends had already run away, and he has gone to join them!" exclaimed the Head angrily.
"He hasn't run away in this weather, without his cap or his coat, sir," said Valentine Mornington.
The Head started.
"What do you mean to imply, Mornington? That Silver is still in Captain Lagden's quarters, although Mr. Bootles says he is not there? Are you out of your senses?"
"I think Captain Lagden might be able to explain, sir."
"Nonsense! However, I will see Captain Lagden," said the Head testily. "I believe he was on friendly terms with this boy, and he may have some suspicion of his intentions."
The Head, evidently in a very irritated mood, left his study hastily.
Mr. Bootles coughed.
"You may go to your dormitory, my boys," he said mildly.
"Yes, sir."
Mornington and Erroll left the study, but they did not go to the dormitory of the Classical Fourth.
They followed Dr. Chisholm to the Oak Room.
Quite unconscious of the fact that the two juniors were at his heels, Dr. Chisholm tapped at the door of the Oak Room, and entered.
Captain Lagden was in his dressing-gown, the right sleeve of which hung empty at his side.
Apparently the captain had been going to bed when he was disturbed by Dr. Chisholm's visit.
"Pray excuse this intrusion, Lagden, my dear fellow!" said the Head.

"Not at all, sir! You are disturbed about Silver's peculiar conduct, I suppose?"
"Exactly. Two boys state that he was in this room up to bed-time."
Captain Lagden nodded.
There was a thoughtful expression upon his scarred face, and he looked very concerned.
"Silver certainly called on me this evening, sir," he answered. "I had made friends with the boy. That, I suppose, was his reason for confiding certain circumstances to me, which, in view of what has happened, I feel bound to tell you of. He confessed to me that his friends, Lovell and Raby and Newcome, have run away from Rookwood."
"I suspected as much," said the Head. "And Silver actually confessed this?"
"Yes, and admitted that it was arranged that he should join them. I earnestly dissuaded him," continued the captain. "I thought I had succeeded. When he left me he promised not to carry out his intention, but to write to his friends, and to urge them to return to school. But for that I should have felt it my duty to come to you at once."
"Quite so, but—"
"I am afraid that Silver has broken his word," said the captain slowly. "Having confided the matter to me, and found that I disapproved strongly, no doubt he guessed that I should warn you of his intentions, and, fearing to be stopped, he has left Rookwood without a moment's delay. But certainly he gave me the impression that he had abandoned his intention."
Dr. Chisholm compressed his lips.
"I understand perfectly," he said. "I do not blame you for relying on the boy's assurance."
Mornington and Erroll were outside the half-open door, and they exchanged a quick glance.
The captain's manner was perfectly natural.
It seemed impossible to suspect the scarred, one-armed man, bearing the signs of honourable wounds received in the war, of treachery and duplicity; but Mornington, at least, was certain in his own mind that Jimmy Silver had never left the Oak Room.
Yet what could have happened?
Why should Captain Lagden, a retired officer of the Loamshire Regiment, engaged as football coach at Rookwood School, harm Jimmy Silver of the Fourth?
The question was unanswerable; but Mornington's conviction remained unshaken.
His glance roved over the oak panels that formed the walls of the Oak Room, one of the oldest parts of Rookwood School, and he was wondering what dark secret those old panels might hide.
Captain Lagden made a sudden movement as he perceived the two juniors at the doorway.

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NEXT
TUESDAY!

"RAISING THE WIND!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

The Head, following his glance, turned his eyes upon them, and frowned angrily.

"Mornington! Errroll! What are you doing here? Go to your dormitory at once!"

"But, sir—" began Mornington.

"Go!" thundered the Head.

Mornington set his lips, but Errroll drew him by the arm, and the two juniors departed.

They returned to the dormitory, where the Classical Fourth were in a buzz of excitement.

"Any news of Jimmy?" called out Tubby Muffin.

"No!"

Bulkeley looked in.

"Turn in!" said the captain of Rookwood tersely. "You're a good bit past bed-time now. Enough talk. Turn in!"

The juniors turned in, and Bulkeley put out the light and retired.

But it was a long time before the excited discussion ceased in the Fourth Form dormitory, and sleep visited the eyes of the juniors.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

In the Hands of the Kidnapper!

"JIMMY!"

"Lovell!"

"You here, too!"

Jimmy Silver, panting for breath, looked round him in the dimness. He was still exhausted by the struggle with the kidnapper.

It seemed like an evil dream to Jimmy Silver.

In the powerful grip of the kidnapper he had been carried down the spiral stone stair, hidden behind the panelled walls of the Oak Room.

His strength was spent, and he was helpless in the iron grip of the ruffian.

He was flung into the vaulted cell below Rookwood School, and the iron grating had closed on him, the key turned in the padlock.

The dim glimmer of an oil lamp showed through the grating, faintly lighting up the cell.

There was a clink of chains in the shadows. There, in the obscurity, three forms lay on a heap of sacking, half asleep; but they started up as the grating clanged shut on the new prisoner.

Jimmy Silver recognised his missing chums Lovell and Raby and Newcome—pale and gaunt from their long confinement in the vault.

One by one the Fistical Four of Rookwood had fallen into the hands of the secret kidnapper. Jimmy Silver was the last.

Jimmy sat on the stone flags, panting.

"You, too!" repeated Raby, with a groan.

"Then it's all up!"

"You, too!" muttered Newcome.

Lovell clenched his hands.

The three juniors had never lost the hope that their chum would somehow, sooner or later, help them.

But that faint hope of rescue was dashed to the ground now.

Jimmy Silver had fallen a victim like the rest of the Co.

Jimmy looked at his pale and haggard chums.

They were secured by heavy chains that were fastened to iron girdles round their waists, rusty old fetters left in the cell for many long years unused.

Jimmy was not so secured, however; the kidnapper had departed hastily after flinging him in, and closing the grating on him.

Evidently the rascal was anxious to get back to his room above as quickly as possible, to keep up appearances there if any inquiry was made for the captain of the Fourth Form.

"So you're here, you fellows?" said Jimmy at last.

"It seems like years!" muttered Lovell. "We—we hoped that you would get us out of this somehow, Jimmy. And now—"

He broke off with a groan.

"Now I'm landed as well!" said Jimmy Silver grimly.

"And it's all up!" said Raby.

"Keep smiling!" said Jimmy, though without much conviction. "While there's life there's hope."

Something like despair was creeping into his own courageous heart, but he tried to keep up a cheerful tone.

"We're done!" muttered Lovell. "Oh, THE POPULAR.—No. 197.

Jimmy, I thought you might somehow get to suspect that villain and keep clear of this."

"I did half suspect him," said Jimmy. "I—I was caught, though. But—but who could suspect an Army captain of being a kidnapper? And even now I can't make out what his object is."

"I don't believe he's an Army captain at all," said Lovell. "There's more in it than we understand. When he collared me, I found out that he was not one-armed, as he pretended. If Captain Lagden of the Loamshire Regiment lost his arm in the war that man can't be Captain Lagden."

"Some swindling impostor," said Raby. "I'm sure of that."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

It seemed the only conclusion.

When the captain had seized him in the Oak Room, Jimmy had made the startling discovery that the empty sleeve was a lie and a cheat, and that the supposed cripple was in possession of all his limbs.

The discovery had almost dazed him.

If the man was not Captain Lagden, who and what was he, and what amazing deception was he playing at Rookwood School?

"You found him out first, Lovell," said Jimmy. "Tell me what happened that night when you went down from the dorm to play a trick on him in his rooms."

Lovell shivered.

"We traced you afterwards as far as the door of the Oak Room," said Jimmy. "But there we were beaten. We couldn't suspect—"

"I suppose you couldn't," said Lovell. "You didn't know what I knew. When I got down to his rooms I found them dark, and I supposed that he was in bed, and I went into the sitting-room. I thought he was in the next room—the bed-room, of course—and I was going in quietly to pitch the can of ink over him. Then all of a sudden—"

He broke off, and shivered again.

"Then?" asked Jimmy.

"All of a sudden there was a click, and I heard somebody in the dark. The next instant the light was turned on—an electric lamp he had in his hand—and I saw a big panel in the wall wide open, and Captain Lagden coming out. He saw me at the same moment. I—I was so stunned that I stood quite still, half thinking I was dreaming. I—I had thought he was asleep in bed, and there he was, coming out of the secret door in the wall. He was as startled as I was; but in a second he jumped on me like a tiger."

Lovell's voice shook.

"Even then," he went on, "I thought I had a chance, as he was one-armed; but I had found out fast enough that he had two arms, and he was as strong as a tiger, though he pretended to be wounded. He handled me like a baby. I hadn't a chance even to call for help—not that anyone could have heard me. He dragged me down here, and chained me up like this. I've lived on bread and water since—alone here, till Raby came."

"And you, Raby?" asked Jimmy.

"You remember you left me outside the door of the Oak Room," said Raby. "Captain Lagden opened the door suddenly, and asked me what I wanted. I told him we had been thinking he was ill, and he said he was feeling faint, and asked me to step in and help him into his bed-room. I stepped in, and he collared me. That's all."

"When Raby came," said Lovell, "I knew that the villain meant to collar the lot of us. He's playing some game at Rookwood, some deep game, and he was afraid we should spot him. Of course, if he'd let me go, after I'd seen the secret panel open, it would have been all up with his game, whatever it was. And after kidnapping me he was bound to finish with you fellows, for he knew, of course, that you'd never rest till you found me."

"I knew that—too late!" said Raby.

"And I!" said Newcome ruefully. "I walked into his room without suspecting anything at all, and as soon as he knew I was alone he seized me, and I was brought down here. I—I was afraid that you might follow me to his room, Jimmy, and follow me here, but you never came."

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"I've had some narrow escapes of this already," he said. "I can see it now. I understand now. The rotter kept it up to the finish that he was trying to help me. I went into the abbey vaults with him to

explore them, and he pitched into Mornington because he followed us—I know why now. If I'd gone into the vaults I should never have come out. I know now why he wanted to keep it all dark from Brown, the detective, too. What a fool I've been!"

"You couldn't know," said Lovell.

"He must be an impostor of some kind," said Newcome. "He keeps up appearances well enough, but he's no Army captain."

"But—but he must be an old Rookwooder, as he makes out, or he couldn't know anything about the secret panel in the Oak Room."

"That's true!"

"It beats me!" said Newcome. "Hark!"

There was a step in the darkness.

"He's coming back!" muttered Jimmy.

The eyes of the four juniors were fixed on the grating.

Into the dim radius of light from the lamp stepped a figure they knew well—that of the kidnapper, who was known to all Rookwood as Captain Basil Lagden.

His scarred face looked in through the bars with a grim smile.

He unlocked the grating, and stepped into the cell.

Jimmy Silver clenched his hands hard.

But his fettered chums could not help him, and the hopelessness of a renewed struggle with the powerful ruffian was only too clear.

"You villain!" muttered Jimmy.

Lagden did not speak.

He laid a strong grasp on the junior's shoulder—a grasp that was like iron, and showed at once the futility of resistance.

Jimmy was dragged to the nearest stone pillar, to which was attached one of the rusty chains and iron girdles.

The captain of the Fourth struggled, though without hope, as he was dragged to the fetters; but he resisted in vain.

The iron girdle was locked round his waist, and he was a prisoner like his chums.

"Oh, you villain!" he muttered.

Captain Lagden burst into a laugh.

"All here now!" he said. "You were a little too sharp, Master Silver. But not quite sharp enough, as it turned out. You should not have come and warned me that you intended to speak to the man from Scotland Yard."

"I did not know you were a rascally kidnapper then!" said Jimmy Silver disdainfully.

"You know it now!" said the captain, unmoved.

He left the cell, locking the grating after him, and picked up the lamp, and disappeared in the vaults beyond.

From beyond the stone pillars that hid him from view came the glimmer of light, and low sounds which the juniors could not understand, but which showed that the man was engaged upon work of some kind.

"What is he doing here?" muttered Jimmy.

"I don't know," said Lovell. "Nearly every night he comes down into the vaults, and we hear him at work. It's some kind of hand-machine he's using. Goodness knows what it means. But whatever it is he's doing there is the reason why he came to Rookwood."

"It's something against the law," said Raby. "and he knew this was a safe place, being an old Rookwooder, and knowing the secret of the vaults. We should never have known anything about it but for Lovell happening to find him coming out of the secret door that night."

"And no one but us will ever know!" muttered Newcome.

"We can't be kept here for ever!" said Jimmy.

"What's to prevent him from keeping us here as long as he likes?"

Jimmy was silent.

But he broke the silence at last, speaking in a low whisper.

"There's a chance for us, you fellows! Listen to me—I must whisper! Mornay and Errroll may guess—"

"Why should they?"

"Mornay had an idea that what had happened to you fellows, might happen to me," whispered Jimmy. "He set out to keep an eye on me, and hardly ever left me. He may know— He knew I was coming to the Oak Room this evening to see the captain, and he may know."

"Oh!" muttered Lovell.

"I don't know whether he was keeping it up, and whether he may have followed me there," said Jimmy. "But he may have

explore them, and he pitched into Mornington because he followed us—I know why now. If I'd gone into the vaults I should never have come out. I know now why he wanted to keep it all dark from Brown, the detective, too. What a fool I've been!"

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"Why should they?"

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"Oh!" muttered Lovell.

"I don't know whether he was keeping it up, and whether he may have followed me there," said Jimmy. "But he may have

Anyway, he knew I was there, and he may guess."

"You knew I went there, but you never guessed," said Lovell.

Jimmy was silent again.

The thread of hope was a slight one, but he would not part with it; it was the only glimmer of light in the darkness.

The juniors threw themselves upon the sacking wearily.

It was an hour later that the kidnapper came back, and placed the lamp by the grating, and disappeared.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were sleeping un- easily in the vaulted cell.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mornington's Decision!

MORNINGTON dawned upon Rookwood School.

There was only one topic that morning among the Rookwood fellows, and that was the disappearance of Jimmy Silver.

Every fellow at Rookwood, on the Classical and the Modern side, was talking of it.

Not that there was any mystery about it. Captain Lagden's statement to the Head was known to the school, and there was no doubt on the subject.

It was already generally believed that Lovell and Raby and Newcome had run away from school; and some of the fellows had suspected that Jimmy Silver was in the scheme, and intended to join his chums as soon as the coast was clear.

Now he had done so, and that was all there was about it.

But there were two fellows in the Classical Fourth who did not share the general opinion, though they said nothing about it.

Mornington and Erroll were not satisfied. They went into class with the rest of the Fourth that morning, but they were certainly not thinking much about the valuable instructions imparted by Mr. Bootles in the Form-room.

The two chums were glad when lessons were over, and they were free to think out the problem that weighed on them.

Mornington drew Erroll away, as the Fourth-Formers streamed out after morning lessons.

They retired to a quiet corner of Little Quad, while most of the other fellows went down to the footer ground.

Mornington and Erroll sat down on a bench under the leafless trees in Little Quad, and Morny's face was very serious.

"This is up to us, Erroll," he said.

Kit Erroll nodded.

"I think it is, Morny."

"You see, I was right about Jimmy disappearing after his pals," went on Mornington. "We oughtn't to have let him out of our sight."

"We couldn't follow him into Captain Lagden's room."

"No. But that was where he disappeared, Erroll."

"It looks like it," he said. "But—but it's impossible, Morny! How could he disappear there? Why should Captain Lagden harm him?"

"I don't know! But he has!"

"Morny!"

"Think of it, Kit! Lovell's friends have disappeared, one by one, and each of them was somewhere about the Oak Room when he vanished."

"I know what it looks like, Morny! But what possible object—"

"That beats me!" confessed Mornington. "Unless the man's mad, I can't guess what it means."

"It's no good suggesting it to the Head, Morny."

"I know that; he's jawed me enough already," said Mornington, with a grin. "And we can't do anything alone. But we're going to take professional advice."

Erroll started.

"Brown!" said Mornington tersely. "Brown, the detective, is still at Coombe, and he's hanging about the school every day. He's looking for that man Baumann, the counterfeiter, who used to be at Rookwood when he was a boy. Like his cheek to be hunting for him here. But never mind that now. He's a Scotland Yard detective, and he must have some sense. My idea is to go to him, make him listen to the whole story, and tell him what we suspect. He can't refuse to hear us."

"I'm afraid the Head will be ratty if he hears of it."

"I know he will; but I'm willing to risk that, for the sake of the fellows who've been kidnapped—if they've been kidnapped. If it turns out that they hav' really run away from school, we shall look a pair of asses for our pains, I know that. But—"

"I think you're right, Morny. Let's go to Brown. It can't do much harm, even if it doesn't do any good."

"Good!" said Morny, rising. "Come on, then, and let's lose no time."

That decision having been reached, Mornington and his chum started for the gates at once.

Captain Lagden was sauntering in the quadrangle, and he came towards the two juniors as he sighted them, with a pleasant nod.

Morny gave Erroll one quick look.

The thought was instantly in his mind that the captain wanted to ascertain whether they harboured any suspicion.

But Morny's face expressed nothing of that thought to the captain, and Erroll was only looking quiet and grave.

"No news of your friend yet?" asked the captain, with a smile.

"Jimmy Silver, do you mean, sir?" asked Morny.

"Yes. He appears to have gone away to join the others, after all. I did my best to dissuade him," said the captain, shaking his head. "I certainly thought he had given up the idea when he left me last night."

"I haven't heard from him," said Mornington. "Fancy Jimmy Silver playing the goat like that! If he's at Lantham, though, he'll be brought back fast enough. I hear that the Head has telephoned to the police there."

"The sooner the better for the foolish boy," said the captain.

"Well, I should think he would come back in time for the Bagshot footer match," said Mornington gravely.

"I hope so," said the captain, with a smile.

He nodded, and walked on, and the two juniors went out of gates.

Kit Erroll glanced inquiringly at his chum as they went down the lane together towards Coombe.

"Morny, old man," he said, "I can't believe it—I can't suspect it! He spoke like—like what we've always supposed him to be—fair and above-board."

"He spoke as I expected him to," answered Mornington quietly. "He wanted to know whether we were suspicious, and I've made him believe that we are not. I feel more certain than ever, Kit."

The two juniors walked on in silence till they reached Coombe, and there, in the veranda of the Coombe Arms, one of the first persons they saw was Mr. Brown, of Scotland Yard, reading a newspaper.

"There's our man!" said Mornington.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

An Astounding Discovery!

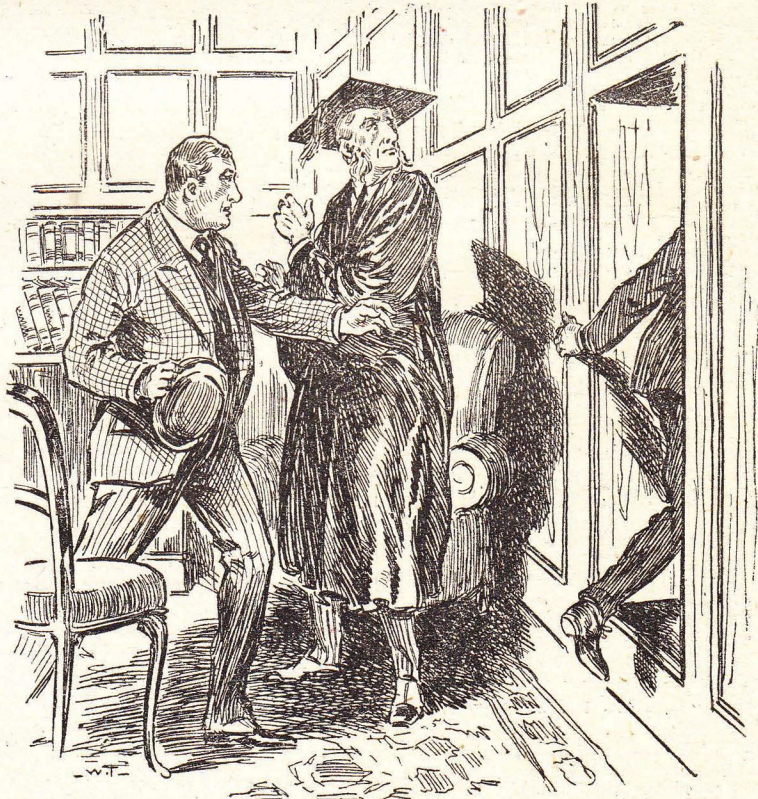
MR. BROWN looked rather grimly at Mornington as the two juniors joined him on the veranda of the village inn.

He thought he recognised Morny as one of the juniors who had "accidentally" rushed him over in the lane a short time before.

Mornington, like most of the Rookwooders, had been exasperated by the discovery that Mr. Brown was in the neighbourhood looking for an old Rookwooder who had fallen foul of the law.

Baumann, once a Rookwood fellow, had been expelled from the school in boyhood, and that was disgrace enough for his school, without Mr. Brown assuming that the fellow had any further connection with Rookwood.

"Excuse us, sir," said Mornington. "Can you spare us a few minutes? We've something to tell you."



A DRAMATIC DISCOVERY! Click! Dr. Chisholm spun round. A panel had opened and the Head was just in time to see Captain Lagden disappearing through the wall. The detective sprang forward with a cry. "Have you any doubts now, sir?" he asked. (See Chapter 5.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 197.

A SPLENDID TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL.
:: By OWEN CONQUEST. ::

NEXT TUESDAY!

"RAISING THE WIND!"

Mr. Brown's podgy face cleared at once. "Certainly!" he said. "If you have any knowledge of Baumann—"

"Oh, bother Baumann!"

"What?"

"I— I mean, it's not about Baumann," said Mornington hastily. "Quite a different matter. We believe there has been kidnapping—"

"Come into my room," said the detective briefly.

Mr. Brown's room opened on the veranda. The juniors followed him in, and the detective motioned them to be seated.

"Now," he said, "I have heard some talk from Rookwood boys, and I am aware that three juniors have left the school under somewhat peculiar circumstances. I have offered the Head my services in the matter, but he appears to believe that the boys have run away."

"All the school believes that—or nearly all."

"But you do not?" asked the detective sharply.

"No."

"You believe the three boys—"

"Four!" said Mornington. "Jimmy Silver disappeared last night!"

The detective gave a start.

"Is it possible? And you believe—"

"I believe they've been kidnapped," said Mornington.

"And why?"

"I can't guess," said Morny frankly. "You, being a detective, may be able to see light when it's all dark to me."

Mr. Brown smiled.

That tribute was not displeasing to the podgy gentleman from Scotland Yard.

"Possibly," he assented. "I may say that the affair has interested me. You suspect, then, that your friends may have made some discovery which endangered a certain person, and that he has secured their silence by kidnapping them?"

"I suppose it would be something like that."

"Baumann!" exclaimed Erroll suddenly. "Morny, what if that man is really in this neighbourhood, as Mr. Brown supposes— Jimmy Silver may have fallen foul of him!"

"Tosh, old chap!" said Mornington. "Jimmy Silver & Co. disappeared at Rookwood, and Baumann isn't at the school, wherever he may be."

The detective's eyes glistened for a moment.

"Whom do you suspect?" he asked.

It was evident that Mr. Brown took a very deep interest in what Mornington had to tell him.

"Captain Lagden!" answered Mornington at once.

"What?"

"You've seen the man," said Morny. "You called on him—"

"I did, with some difficulty," said Mr. Brown. "Owing to ill-health he was unable to see visitors; but I called on him at last."

"He don't look much like a chap in ill-health," said Morny. "I shouldn't wonder if he was not specially keen to meet a detective."

Mr. Brown smiled.

Perhaps that thought had already been somewhere in the back of his mind.

"But Captain Lagden is a man with a very honourable record," he said. "I understand that he was formerly at Rookwood, that he had a distinguished career in the Leamshire Regiment, and he lost his right arm in the fighting on the Somme, when his face received the scars he bears now. Surely such a man is above suspicion."

"I know," said Morny. "I know. But—"

"Tell me what you think, my boy."

"Well, Captain Lagden has two rooms at Rookwood. One of them, his sitting-room, is called the Oak Room, because the walls are panelled in old oak."

"That is where I saw him," assented Mr. Brown.

"That room had been disused for years, but it was specially prepared for Captain Lagden," went on Mornington. "He must have asked the Head specially to let him have it, for all that trouble to be taken."

"Why should he wish for that room especially?"

"Well—" Morny hesitated. "There's an old story at Rookwood of a secret passage from the School House to the abbey vaults."

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When that fellow Baumann was at the school he used to get in and out without anybody knowing how he came and went, and some of the fellows think he knew of the secret passage, since there's been a lot of talk about him, you know. Well, Lagden was Baumann's study-mate when they were both at Rookwood, a dozen or fifteen years ago. If Baumann knew of the secret passage he may have told his study-mate."

Mr. Brown looked very curiously at Mornington.

"Then you think Captain Lagden knows of a secret passage, of which the opening is in the Oak Room?"

"I—I know it sounds thick," said Morny falteringly. "But—Lovell first, and then Raby, then Newcome, now Jimmy Silver vanished—in the Oak Room or near it!"

"Is that so?"

"Lovell had gone there one night to play a trick on the captain," said Morny. "He never came back. Raby was last seen outside the door of that room. The last that was known of Newcome was that he had gone into the room."

"Oh!"

"Since then we've been looking after Jimmy, and last night we waited for him outside the room when he called on the captain. He never came out!"

"By gad!"

Mornington went on to explain fully, and Mr. Brown listened with the keenest interest, putting in a question here and there, till he knew all that Morny knew, and perhaps a little more.

He was silent when the junior had finished. "I know it sounds thick," said Mornington, encouraged by the detective's evident interest. "It looks, from what I've said, as if Lagden came to Rookwood and specially got hold of the Oak Room because he knew of the secret passage there, for the purpose of kidnapping the Pistical Four one after another. Unless he's mad it can't be so, I know. But he may be mad, for all I know."

"Or suppose," said Mr. Brown—"suppose he were carrying on some nefarious scheme of some kind, and Lovell happened to make a discovery by coming into his quarters unexpectedly at night?"

Morny brightened.

"Yes, that's so," he said. "But—but what could he be doing that Lovell mightn't see?"

Mr. Brown did not answer that question.

"In that case the secret passage was ready to his hand," he remarked. "And he may have chosen that room because his secret occupation—granted he had one—required to be carried on in a secret place. Lovell's disappearance would then be followed up by that of his friends, because they were anxiously hunting for him, and making endless surmises as to what had become of him, and might have hit upon something like the truth in time."

Morny gave Erroll a triumphant glance. "You saw I thought!" he exclaimed.

"You are a very keen lad, Master Mornington," said Mr. Brown, with a smile. "I am glad you came to me this morning. You have rendered me assistance beyond what you can possibly have thought of."

"I don't quite see that, sir," said Morny, puzzled. "I wanted you to help us find Jimmy Silver. I don't see how I've assisted you."

"You will see shortly, no doubt. Captain Lagden!" The detective spoke the name slowly and thoughtfully. "Right arm missing, face badly scarred. Old Rookwooder. H'm! Fool!" Mr. Brown was apparently addressing that uncomplimentary epithet to himself. "Fool! You knew that Baumann had his headquarters somewhere near the school; you even suspected that he was utilising some knowledge gained in boyhood of a secret den among the ruins; you even ascertained that Captain Lagden had had a key made to fit the door of the abbey vaults. Yet you never suspected—"

The juniors stared blankly at Mr. Brown. He was talking to himself, not to them, and his words astounded them.

"I will come back to Rookwood with you," said Mr. Brown, recovering himself. "I have only to call at the police-station for two or three constables. Cheer up, my boys! In a very short time now, I think, you will see your missing friends."

Mornington and Erroll, in a dazed frame of mind, followed the podgy gentleman from the room.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Brought to Book.

"REALLY, sir—" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm warmly.

Mr. Brown, plump and podgy and smiling, opened the door of the Oak Room without a knock and stepped in.

The Head was in the captain's sitting-room, chatting with Lagden. He had called on Basil Lagden to accompany him down to lunch.

He rose from his chair with an indignant frown as Mr. Brown came in unasked and unannounced.

Captain Lagden also rose, his sharp eyes on the detective.

"Really, sir—"

"Please excuse me, Dr. Chisholm," said Mr. Brown calmly. "I have called on rather important business with your guest."

"That is no excuse for this intrusion!" exclaimed the Head.

"I am afraid the business could not be deferred," said Mr. Brown, with a smile. "I am sure you will admit it when I explain. You are aware, sir, that I have been for some time in this neighbourhood, under the belief that Baumann, the forger and counterfeiter, was somewhere in the vicinity of Rookwood."

"What of that now?"

Captain Lagden's brows came together in a knitted line.

He moved, as it were carelessly, from his chair, along the panelled wall, and stood with his back leaning against a tall panel.

Mr. Brown did not appear to note it.

"I have already asked Captain Lagden if he could give me any information regarding Baumann, who was his study-mate at this school many years ago," Mr. Brown continued.

"I have replied that I was sorry I could not, Mr. Brown," remarked the captain.

"That is very curious," said Mr. Brown, with a cheerful smile. "I have reason to believe that Baumann's career is not quite unknown to you."

"Really, sir—"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the Head emphatically.

"Baumann, after leaving prison, was taken into the Army under the Conscription Acts," said Mr. Brown. "He was shot down while leaving the trenches with the obvious intention of deserting to the Germans—being of German descent himself. His injuries were chiefly in the face, and it appears now that they have rendered him so unrecognisable that I have talked with him face to face without knowing him."

The captain's left hand had disappeared behind him, as if feeling over the panel behind his back.

Still Mr. Brown, usually so sharp, seemed to be blind to his movements.

"Baumann, once at Rookwood, seemed to have made some discoveries while he was a boy here," resumed Mr. Brown, still addressing the amazed Head. "Is it not a fact that he was expelled from this school, sir, for certain actions, such as breaking bounds at night, gambling in low resorts—"

"That is true. But I do not see—"

"And it was a matter of conjecture how he contrived to enter and leave the school on so many occasions and for so long a period without being detected?"

"Quite so. But—"

"It never occurred to you that he had by chance discovered the secret passage which was supposed to exist between the School House and the abbey ruins?"

"Certainly I never thought of any such nonsense!"

"Yet it was true, sir."

"Wha-a-t!"

"For which reason," pursued Mr. Brown calmly, "he came back to Rookwood, as a safe refuge, under an assumed name, to carry on his work of counterfeiting bank-notes in the recesses of the hidden vaults, to which only he knew the mode of ingress."

"Are you joking, sir?"

"Not at all. He assumed for that purpose the name of a brave man who had once been his study-mate at Rookwood—in whose name he came here unsuspected. This disfigurement of his face made the deception easy. And it was easy, too, to affect the loss of an arm by wearing an empty sleeve."

"Are you mad?" exclaimed the Head huskily.

NEXT
TUESDAY!

"RAISING THE WIND!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL
By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
At Last!

Click!
Dr. Chisholm spun round.
The panel had opened, and the Head was just in time to see Captain Lagden disappear through the wall.
The detective sprang forward, and his foot was in the opening in a moment. But the captain had vanished down the spiral staircase hidden in the thickness of the ancient wall.
"Good heavens!" stuttered the Head.
"Have you any further doubts, sir?" smiled Mr. Brown.
Dr. Chisholm passed his hand over his brow.
"I cannot have," he said. "What does this mean? This man is—is Baumann, calling himself Captain Lagden?"
"Exactly!"
"And you have allowed him to escape you?" gasped the Head.
"Not quite!" smiled Mr. Brown. "The abbey vaults, of which he knows the secret, are guarded. The moment he emerges he will be seized. I saw to that precaution, sir, before I came here. Now he has kindly revealed the secret entrance to the vaults from this side, we shall have no difficulty in finding the juniors whom he has kidnapped."
"What!" stuttered the Head, amazed by that statement as much as by Mr. Brown's astuteness.
"That, however, can wait—first I must see to my prisoner."
Mr. Brown called in a constable from the corridor, and posted him on guard at the secret panel in case the desperate rascal should double back. The podgy gentleman from Scotland Yard was leaving nothing to chance.
Then he hurried out of the Oak Room and down the stairs, the amazed Head following him like a man in a dream.
Outside in the quadrangle there was a buzz of astounded voices—or, rather a roar.
Half Rookwood was gathered round a startling group—two constables, who held by the arms a handcuffed prisoner, whom they were bringing to the House.
It was the man who had been known at Rookwood as Basil Lagden.
His scarred face was white and tense, his eyes gleaming with rage and hatred.
Mr. Brown smiled as his eyes fell upon the exposed cheat.
"You've got him!" he said, with satisfaction.
"Yes, sir," said one of the officers. "He came out of the door in the abbey vaults and ran fairly into our arms. He unlocked the door from the inside."
"Quite so!" Mr. Brown rubbed his fat hands, making no attempt to conceal his satisfaction.
"But what does this mean?" exclaimed Bulkeley of the Sixth hotly. "What is Captain Lagden treated like this for?"
Mr. Brown did not heed. His shifty eyes were fixed upon the sullen, desperate face of the prisoner.
"Baumann, I arrest you in the name of the law!" he said. "I warn you that whatever you say will be taken down, and may be used in evidence against you."
Baumann glared at the detective.
"The game's up!" he said. "But how did you find it out, hang you? I thought I was safe here—safe and sound in this quiet corner! Hang you!"
"Take him away!" said Mr. Brown.
"Is that man Baumann?" stammered Bulkeley.
"Just so!" smiled Mr. Brown. "Baumann, once of Rookwood, afterwards of several of his Majesty's prisons, deserter from the Army, spy of the Germans, and, in fact, a pretty thorough scoundrel—kidnapper among the rest. He is not Captain Lagden. And now, if some of you care to come with me, I will show you where to find Silver and the other boys who have been missing."
"What-at!"
A crowd of fellows, in utter amazement, followed the detective back to the Oak Room. But Mornington and Erroll had been before them.

"HARK!"
Jimmy Silver uttered the word.
In the dim vault the captain of the Fourth hurried to the grating, his chains clanking as he moved.
There was a sound of hurried footsteps somewhere in the darkness beyond the iron grating.
And from the darkness came the sound of a voice—a voice that sent a thrill to the hearts of the kidnapped juniors.
For it was not the voice of the kidnapper—the only voice they had expected to hear in those gloomy depths.
It was the voice of Valentine Mornington of the Fourth Form.
"This way, Erroll! There's a light!"
"Morny!" roared Lovell.
"Morny!" shouted the four together, in joyous amazement.
Mornington's voice came ringing back from the shadows.
"Jimmy Silver! Where are you, Jimmy?"
"Here!"
"This way!"
Into the radius of the lamplight came Mornington and Erroll, breathless and excited.
The Fistical Four stared at them through the iron grating, scarcely able to believe their eyes.
The sight of their friends seemed too good to be true to the kidnapped juniors of Rookwood.
"Morny!" panted Jimmy Silver.
Mornington grinned through the grating.
"Here we are, old bird! How goes it?"
"Look out for that rascal!" panted Jimmy.
"Captain Lagden—he will attack you if he—"
"All serene, Jimmy!" said Erroll, smiling. "Captain Lagden is a bit too busy to think of us just now! He's trying to get away."
"And you're all here?" exclaimed Mornington.
"All of us!" said Newcome. "Oh, by gum, it does us good to see you fellows here!"
"It's like a dream," said Raby. "I'd given up hope! But what's happened? How did you find us?"
Mornington was shaking the iron grating, but he could not open it.
"We shall have to wait till we get the key," he said. "That villain will have it about him, and he's bagged—bagged as safe as houses!"
And Morny explained to the amazed prisoners what had happened.
"He's not Captain Lagden at all; he's that Hun beast, Baumann!" he said. "The rotter borrowed Lagden's name to come here—his face being disfigured made it all safe. Even Brown talked with him without guessing who he was, though he has arrested him twice. The Head never had the slightest suspicion. Nobody might ever have had, if Lovell hadn't blundered into his hands and been kidnapped, and if the rotter hadn't thought to make all safe by bagging Lovell's pals after him."
"My hat!" said Lovell. "And now he's—"
"Now he's scudded off by the secret panel," grinned Mornington. "There's a way out in the abbey vaults, of course, and there's two bobbies waiting there for him—in fact, they've got him before this."
"Hurrah!"
"We came up to the Oak Room after Browney. There's a bobby in charge there, and he didn't want us to get through the secret door; but we insisted," grinned Mornington. "We were rather in a hurry to see you chaps, so we pushed him out of the way, and came. Ha, ha!"
"I don't think I've ever been so jolly glad to see anybody!" said Jimmy Silver, with a deep breath. "Good old Morny! If you hadn't gone to the detective—"
"But I did!" chuckled Mornington.
Clink, clank! Clank, clink!
The chains rattled and rang as the Fistical Four executed a war-dance in their cell in the exuberance of their delight.

A light gleamed, and there were voices and footsteps.
The podgy gentleman from Scotland Yard came up to the grating, with Bulkeley and Neville and a crowd of other fellows at his heels.
There were exclamations on all sides as the Fistical Four were seen behind the grating.
"Good-morning, Mr. Brown!" sang out Lovell.
Mr. Brown grinned.
"We'll soon have you out of that!" he said.
He produced a bunch of rusty keys which he had taken from the handcuffed rascal above.
The grating was unlocked, and the Rookwood fellows swarmed into the vaulted cell, surrounding the kidnapped juniors with loud congratulations.
Mr. Brown unlocked the fetters one by one.
Jimmy Silver & Co. were free again at last.
It seemed almost like a happy dream to Jimmy—and more especially so to Lovell & Co., who had been so much longer in the hands of the ruthless kidnapper.
Mr. Brown left the cell, evidently to make investigations in the hidden vaults, of which the existence had not been previously known at Rookwood, save to Baumann in his school-days—the result, probably, of an accidental discovery.
The former Rookwooder had remembered that discovery in later years, and undoubtedly it had been the cause of his coming to Rookwood, under an assumed name. The real Captain Lagden, as he happened to know, was at present abroad.
In the next vault was found the handiwork of the counterfeiter—the dies and stamps and other appliances with which he had produced the forged notes.
In addition, bundles of notes, ready to be passed as soon as opportunity came—opportunity that would never come now.
That was the work upon which Lovell & Co. had so often heard the kidnapper engaged, and which had so puzzled them.
But while Mr. Brown, in a state of simmering satisfaction, was taking possession of the counterfeiter's outfit, and making his notes, Jimmy Silver & Co. were conducted to the upper air by the crowd of delighted Rookwooders.
Dr. Chisholm met them when they emerged into the Oak Room.
The Head shook them by the hand, and welcomed them in a voice that trembled with emotion.
The juniors had never seen the good old Head so deeply moved.
And, after that, the Fistical Four were given a tremendous ovation when they reappeared among their schoolfellows.
The mystery of Rookwood was a mystery no longer.
The Fistical Four were restored to their friends, and that evening there was a tremendous celebration in the end study, which overflowed into the passage, Moderns as well as Classics coming in crowds.
Meanwhile, "Captain Lagden," alias Baumann, was in the hands of the law, and not likely to escape them again for a good ten years to come.
Mr. Brown had departed in a mood of supreme satisfaction.
He had bagged his man, and he admitted that he owed his success in part to Jimmy Silver & Co., and especially Mornington.
The Fistical Four felt the effects of their imprisonment for some days; but they soon pulled round, and they were quite fit again by the time the Bagshot match came round.
By that time the kidnapping and the imprisonment in the secret vault seemed like an evil dream of the past to the chums of the Fourth. But they were never likely to forget that it was mainly due to Mornington that they had recovered their freedom, and that the kidnapper had been brought to book.
THE END.

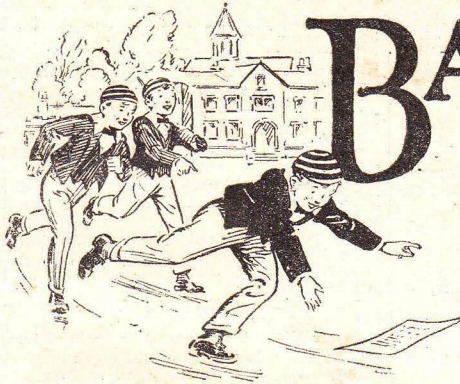
NEXT TUESDAY.

"RAISING THE WIND!"

Another grand long complete story of the Chums of Rookwood.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

BAGGY TRIMBLE HAS GREAT IDEAS OF HIS OWN WRITING ABILITIES—BUT HE FAILS TO CONVINCE OTHER PEOPLE THAT HE IS A GENIUS IN THAT DIRECTION!



BAGGY'S BID FOR FAME

A Grand New Long Complete School Story, dealing with the adventures of Tom Merry & Co. the Chums of St. Jim's.



By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

(Author of the famous tales of St. Jim's appearing in the "Gem.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Great Expectations.

RESCUE that sheet of paper!" shouted Tom Merry. It was necessary for him to shout. The wild west wind of autumn was blowing great guns in the old quadrangle of St. Jim's.

The Terrible Three were battling their way along, arm-in-arm, when a sheet of paper came whirling through the air. It fluttered for an instant at their feet, and was then borne away by the wind.

"It blew out of somebody's study window, I expect," said Manners. "After it!"

The juniors gave chase. The sheet of paper had been whisked along almost to the school gates before Monty Lowther managed to retrieve it.

"Got it!" said Monty breathlessly. "It's a bit mudstained, and somewhat the worse for wear."

"What is it?" asked Tom Merry. "A sheet of impot paper?"

Monty Lowther shook his head.

"Looks to me like a part of a manuscript," he said. "Yes, that's what it is, the commencement of a story."

"Let's have a look," said Manners.

"We'd better shelter from the wind first."

The Terrible Three squeezed themselves into the porch of the porter's lodge, where they were fairly sheltered from the fierce gusts. Then they examined the rescued manuscript.

The title of the story and the name of the author caused them to chuckle unanimously.

"THE FITTING FOOTBRAWLER!"
By BAGLEY TRIMBLE."

"One of Trimble's efforts for 'Billy Bunter's Weekly,' I suppose," said Tom Merry.

"Just listen!" chortled Monty Lowther. "This is perfectly priceless!"

And he started to read aloud:

"Gole!"

"A mighty roar went up from the specked taters who were prezzant at the grate match between Wopham Wanderers and Rushington Rovers.

"For the third time in succession Frank Feernought, the famus fitting footbawler, had laid out the opposing gole-keeper and rushed the ball into the net.

"Frank was a fine, hansom fellow of about seventeen summers. His footbawl flannels were a perfect fit."

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NEXT TUESDAY: "GUY FAWKES' NIGHT AT ST. JIM'S!"

"Enough to give anyone a perfect fit, to see a fellow playing footer in flannels!" said Manners.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't interrupt," said Monty Lowther. "This is too killing!"

And he read on:

"Our hero had alreddy scored three goles. But was he sattisfied? Not a bit of it! He was determined to make his sentury.

"Frank reeseved a perfect pass from the wicket-keeper, and away he went like a streak of light.

"The golekeeper came rushing out to meet him. Frank hit him in the ribs with a sickening thud.

"Now shoot!" roared the specked taters.

"And Frank shot.

"The ball went wizzing in like a pip from an orringe. It crashed into the net, and Wopham Wanderers were four up."

"I suppose the other team was licked by an innings at the finish?" said Tom Merry, with a grin.

"Can't say," said Monty Lowther.

"That's the end of the first sheet."

"Well, if Billy Bunter publishes tosh like that in his 'Weekly,' I wonder anybody reads it," said Manners.

"I say, you fellows!"

A shrill voice was borne on the wind to the Terrible Three. The voice was followed by the appearance of a flying figure.

Baggy Trimble came rushing up, panting and gasping.

"I've lost a sheet of manuscript," he explained breathlessly. "It must have blown out of the study window."

"This is the perpetration," said Lowther.

And he handed it over.

Baggy Trimble took the sheet of paper and blinked wrathfully at the Terrible Three.

"Have you fellows been reading my story?" he demanded.

"Yes, rather," said Tom Merry. "It sent us into convulsions!"

"But it's supposed to be a serious story!" hooted Trimble.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Does Billy Bunter really accept junk like that?" asked Manners.

"It isn't junk! And it isn't for Billy Bunter!"

"Then what—"

"It's for a competition."

"Oh!"

"Haven't you fellows seen the competition in the 'Football World'? They're offering a prize of five guineas for the best football story."

Instantly the Terrible Three became interested. Although they were not competition fanatics, a contest of this sort always appealed to them. A cash prize of five guineas was certainly a big inducement.

"I'm having a copy of the 'Football World' delivered to-morrow," said Tom Merry. "We'll have a shot at this competition, you fellows."

"Yes, rather!"

Baggy Trimble scowled at the juniors.

"That's not fair!" he protested.

"Eh? Why isn't it fair?" demanded Manners.

"You've read the first page of my yarn, and you'll very likely crib the idea."

"Great jumping crackers!" gasped Monty Lowther. "I read the thing very thoroughly, but I couldn't discover even the germ of an idea!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble fairly danced with wrath.

"It's a rattling good story, with a clever plot!" he exclaimed. "And if it doesn't take the prize, I shall know that one of you has cribbed the idea and killed its chances!"

"Why, you fat duffer," shouted Tom Merry, "your yarn won't stand the ghost of a chance! The spelling alone would cripple any chance it might have had."

"Look here, what's wrong with my yarn?" demanded Trimble wrathfully.

"Oh, nothing!" said Monty Lowther.

"Except for the fact that it hasn't a plot, and that it's badly written and badly spelt, it's quite all right!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble flourished a fat fist in the faces of the Terrible Three.

"Beasts!" he growled. "You don't know a good story when you see one! Just wait a week or two, and then you'll see my name popping up in the prize-list."

"Rats!"

Tucking his precious sheet of manuscript into his pocket, Baggy Trimble rolled away.

He dreamed dreams as he made his way across the wind-swept quad—dreams of winning the five guineas offered by the 'Football World,' and of "blueing"

A NEW LONG TALE OF TOM MERRY & CO.
By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

Have You Got a Copy of the "Holiday Annual"? If Not, Get One To-day! 25

the sum in a series of first-class feeds at the school tuckshop.

Baggy Trimble was quite convinced that he possessed literary ability. He was equally convinced that writing football stories was his speciality. And he confidently expected to see the "Fiting Footbawler" published and paid for.

On returning to his study, the fat junior worked long and late. He had Mr. Railton's permission to stay up beyond the usual bed-time, and he made the most of it.

Baggy covered page after page with his spider-like scrawl until at last the story was finished and ready for despatch. Meanwhile, other pens were busy at St. Jim's.

Lots of fellows had come to hear of the competition in the "Football World," and those who had sufficient brains and energy to write a five-thousand-word story were already engaged on the task.

The Terrible Three were competing, and so were Figgins and Fatty Wynn and Dick Redfern of the New House.

Grundy of the Shell also took a hand. And Grundy's effort was, if anything, even more amusing than Baggy Trimble's.

"I've thought of a ripping wheeze," Grundy confided to his study-mates, Wilkins and Gunn. "I shall write my football story in verse."

"In verse?" gasped Wilkins.

"Certainly! Nobody else will think of that, and the editor's bound to be struck by the novelty of it. I'm going to call my yarn 'Billy Brown, of Huddersfield Town.' Even the title rhymes, you see. And the story itself will start off something like this:

"Play up, play up, play up, play up!
And win the Cup, the Cup, the Cup!
Play up, play up, play up, up play,
And win the merry Cup to-day!"

Wilkins shuddered. Gunn made a grimace.

"Call that poetry?" asked the former. "Of course it's poetry! Jolly good stuff, too!" said Grundy.

"There's too much repetition about it for my liking," growled Gunn.

"Ass! That's just what you want in poetry. Look at Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade.' It's only because he repeated 'Half a league' umpteen times that the poem became famous. Repetition," concluded Grundy, with the air of an oracle, "is the soul of poetry."

"Rats!" growled Wilkins.

"Bosh!" snorted Gunn.

Grundy dipped his pen savagely into the ink-well.

"You fellows haven't the intelligence to understand poetry—real poetry," he said scathingly. "But the editor of 'The Football World' will understand it, and he'll send me a cheque for five guineas as a mark of appreciation."

"Per-haps!" said Wilkins, with the emphasis on the first syllable.

"The editor's more likely to bung the blessed thing into the waste-paper basket," said Gunn. "Come along, Wilkins. This is no place for us. Let's leave Kipling minor to do his work in peace."

Wilkins and Gunn promptly left the study. And "Kipling minor" sped them on their way with a well-aimed cushion.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Trimble Goes to Town!

BAGGY TRIMBLE made a tremendous discovery next morning. The fat junior received a letter from his mother containing a whole budget of family news.

Trimble waded through the letter impatiently until he reached the following paragraph:

"You will be interested to hear that your cousin Robert is now the editor of a flourishing sports paper—'The Football World.' Your cousin is only twenty-two years of age, and he must be one of the youngest editors in London."

This information caused Baggy Trimble to tremble with excitement.

"Cousin Bob running 'The Football World'!" he exclaimed, "Oh, how ripping! I don't know him very well—haven't seen him since I was a kid in knickerbockers—but I've no doubt he'll be pleased to wangle this prize for me. Nothing like keeping the money in the family. I expect he realises that. I'll go up to London and see him, and take my story with me. Jolly lucky I didn't post it last night!"

Baggy Trimble was very elated. In his heart of hearts he knew that his story would have stood no chance in the ordinary way. But with cousin Bob as editor of the paper—why, all things were possible!

It would be perfectly easy for cousin Bob to award the prize to Baggy. And the latter could give him a percentage of the money for his trouble, if necessary.

"The next item on the programme is to get permission from the Head to go to town," murmured Trimble. "It won't be easy, but I'll have a jolly good try."

Directly after breakfast Baggy Trimble made his way to the Head's study. Dr. Holmes happened to be in a genial mood. "Well, Trimble?" he inquired pleasantly.

"Ahem! I—I wondered if it would be possible for me to have the day off, sir."

"For what purpose?"

"I've got a cousin in London, sir, and he hasn't seen me since I was a tiny kid. He's simply dying to see me—keeps on writing and imploring me to go up."

"But surely you could see him at some other time, Trimble—during the holidays, for instance?"

"Ahem! The—the fact is, sir, my cousin's very ill. Purple fever, I think it is."

"What!" gasped the Head.

"I—I meant scarlet fever, sir. I forgot the colour of it for the moment. Cousin Bob's very anxious for me to sit by the bedside and hold his hand, sir. Please tell me I can go!"

"If your cousin is lying seriously ill, Trimble," said the Head, "it would be churlish of me to refuse your request. You may go to London, provided you return this evening."

"Thanks awfully, sir!"

Baggy Trimble hurried out of the Head's study before Dr. Holmes had time to change his mind.

Fortunately the fat junior possessed sufficient money to get to London, his mother having enclosed a remittance with her letter. He hadn't enough for the return fare, but he had no doubt that cousin Bob would fix him up for the journey back.

It did not occur to Trimble that he was behaving caddishly. He had lied glibly to the Head, for one thing. And for another, he was endeavouring to secure a prize of five guineas by the exercise of unfair influence.

But Baggy's conscience—if he possessed one at all—failed to prick him. He had "wangled" the day off, and he started on his journey with a light heart. Naturally, he had not breathed a word to his schoolfellows concerning his plans.

Baggy's train arrived in London at midday.

"I shall be in good time for cousin Bob to take me out to lunch," Trimble reflected happily.

He squeezed himself into an already crowded motor-bus, which bore him along to Fleet Street.

On catching sight of the offices of "The Football World" Baggy jumped off the bus and entered the large building, which was the headquarters of many other sporting publications.

Baggy's cousin, Mr. Jones, worked on the top floor. The fat junior tried to go up in the lift, but the liftman declined to take him.

"This 'ere lift ain't for the likes of you," said the man. "Can't you read the notice? 'Load not to exceed a ton,' that's what it says."

"Oh, really! I don't weigh a ton!" protested Baggy Trimble indignantly.

"I reckon you ain't far off it, anyway!" said the liftman.

And he pointed to the flight of stairs, up which Baggy was obliged to toil. Finally, puffing and blowing like a grampus, he reached the editorial office of "The Football World."

The youthful-looking editor was seated in a revolving-chair.

Mr. Robert Chester Jones, to give him his full name, was good-looking and athletic—not at all flabby, like his cousin from St. Jim's. He swung round in his chair and stared hard at Baggy as that youth entered.

"I seem to know your face," he murmured.

"Well, I reckon you ought to, seeing that I'm your cousin!" was the reply.

"Great Scott! Are you Bagley Trimble?"

Baggy nodded.

"You must pardon me for not recognising you," said the editor. "You were quite an infant when I last saw you."

Mr. Jones shook hands with his plump cousin and waved him towards a chair.

"Sit down," he said. "What brings you here?"

"I see you're running a story competition," said Baggy Trimble.

"That's so."

"Well, I want to talk to you about it," Mr. Jones frowned slightly.

"We make it a rule," he said, "never to hold interviews or enter into correspondence on the subject of competitions."

"Yes, I know all about that," said Baggy Trimble impatiently. "But then, don't you see, I'm your cousin!"

"I fail to see what difference that makes."

"It makes all the difference in the world, cousin Bob. I quite understand that you don't want to be pestered all day long by people who go in for these competitions. But when it comes to your cousin—"

"Very well, I will stretch a point in your favour," said Mr. Jones. "Say what you've got to say, and be as brief as possible. I'm busy!"

Baggy Trimble groped in his breast-pocket and produced the manuscript of "The Fiting Footbawler."

"This is the winning story, cousin Bob!" he said.

"The winning story! What do you mean?"

Baggy Trimble gave the editor a sly wink.

"This is the yarn that's going to prance off with the five guineas," he said.

"What!" gasped Mr. Jones.

"You can mark it down right away

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as the winner. I expect you'll be getting dozens of other stories—you'll be flooded out with them, in fact—but you needn't trouble to read them."

"I—I needn't trouble?" stuttered the editor dazedly.

"No; every other story that's submitted in this competition can be chucked into the waste-paper basket."

"Oh, can it?" said Mr. Jones ominously.

"Yes. You can award the prize to me, as I'm your devoted cousin, and all the rest of it. As for the other competitors—well, you needn't bother about them. Whether their yarns are good, bad, or indifferent, they can be scrapped."

"Oh!"

"You can pay me the five guineas right away if you like, cousin Bob," said Baggy Trimble.

Instead of suddenly producing a bundle of Treasury notes, or groping frantically for a cheque-book, Mr. Robert Chester Jones stared hard at his rascally cousin.

"Do you realise what you've been saying?" he demanded.

"Oh, quite!" said Baggy Trimble, with a smirk.

"You have actually suggested that I should conduct this competition on dishonourable lines!"

"Oh, really, cousin Bob! Don't look at it like that!"

"There is no other way of looking at it. You have asked to be awarded the prize, irrespective of the merits of your story. I—I am ashamed to think that any cousin of mine should stoop so low!"

"Draw it mild, cousin Bob!"

There was such a stern expression on the editor's face that Baggy Trimble was beginning to feel quite alarmed.

"I know why you're ratty with me," said Baggy. "You think I shall pocket the five guineas and not give you anything for your trouble. I assure you that I shouldn't dream of doing anything so

mean. I shall be pleased to pay you a guinea for—for wangling this business."

Mr. Jones rose to his feet. His expression had been growing blacker and blacker whilst his fat cousin had been speaking. He pressed an electric bell on his desk, and almost on the instant a powerfully-built man burst into the room. This was Mr. William Pugsley, the fighting editor.

Mr. Jones, who occasionally received visits from racecourse pests and other types of hooligans, had found it necessary to engage a fighting editor. And in selecting Bill Pugsley for the job, he had chosen well and wisely.

"You rang, sir?" said Mr. Pugsley.

"Yes, William. I want you to show this—er—this individual the way out."

The fighting editor grinned. He knew what was expected of him.

When gentlemen called to interview the editor, Mr. Jones always showed them out himself. When blackguards called to see him, he invariably rang for the fighting editor to show them out. And the two methods of showing out were totally different. The gentlemen went out on their feet; the blackguards went out on their necks.

Baggy Trimble went the way of the blackguards. He gave a yell of alarm as Mr. Pugsley gripped him round the middle and whirled him through the open doorway.

"Here, hold on—I mean, leggo! I haven't finished with you, cousin Bob!"

"But I've finished with you," came the cold and cutting reply. "You are an arrant young rascal! Don't you dare to come to me with any more dishonourable suggestions! Proceed with the showing out, William!"

"Yes, sir! Werry good, sir!"

Baggy Trimble was whirled along the corridor as if he were at the mercy of a cyclone. He was hustled and hustled to the top of the staircase. And then Mr.

Pugsley proved that he was not only a useful fighting editor, but a fine footballer. He bestowed a couple of lusty kicks upon the rear of Baggy Trimble's plump person, and Baggy was hurtled headlong down the stairs.

Mr. Pugsley, panting from his exertions, leaned over the balustrade and watched his victim's descent.

"Get out, you young whelp!" he belted.

Baggy Trimble went rolling down the stairs, and he was badly bruised by the time he reached the bottom.

As soon as he alighted in the entrance-hall, he scrambled to his feet, and scuttled away as if a dozen fighting editors were in fast and furious pursuit.

Baggy Trimble ran nearly the whole length of Fleet Street before he pulled up, gasping for breath.

He had come up to London feeling confident of being awarded the prize in the story competition, and the only award he had received was the order of the boot!

Cousin Bob had not turned up trumps; he had let Baggy down badly, and dashed his great expectations. In a word, cousin Bob was a beast!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Winner!

"WHAT'S going to happen to me now?" groaned Baggy Trimble.

His mission to London having failed, the obvious thing for Baggy to do was to return to St. Jim's. But he lacked the wherewithal to pay his return fare. He had counted on cousin Bob doing that; but cousin Bob had failed him utterly.

To make matters worse, Baggy Trimble was desperately hungry. He could have eaten a donkey's hind leg off, as the saying goes.

Here, again, cousin Bob was to blame. Instead of taking Baggy out to lunch, and filling him with good things, he had sent him empty away.

The fat junior had reached the Strand by this time. He was jostled this way and that by the throngs of pedestrians.

"I can't possibly walk back to St. Jim's!" he muttered. "It's miles and miles and miles, and then some!"

Baggy was well-nigh in despair, when he suddenly remembered that he had an aunt who lived in Kensington—his Aunt Matilda.

"She's awfully mean," he murmured, "but I might be able to squeeze some cash out of her."

Having exhausted all his money, there was nothing for it but to tramp to Kensington.

It was late in the afternoon when Baggy arrived at the big house in which his aunt lived.

A smart footman answered the door-bell, and, on stating his business, Baggy was ushered into his aunt's drawing-room.

Aunt Matilda was a lady whose face seemed to have been hewn out of granite, and her heart was as hard as granite, too—harder even than Pharaoh's of old.

"Bagley!" she exclaimed, in astonishment. "What are you doing here?"

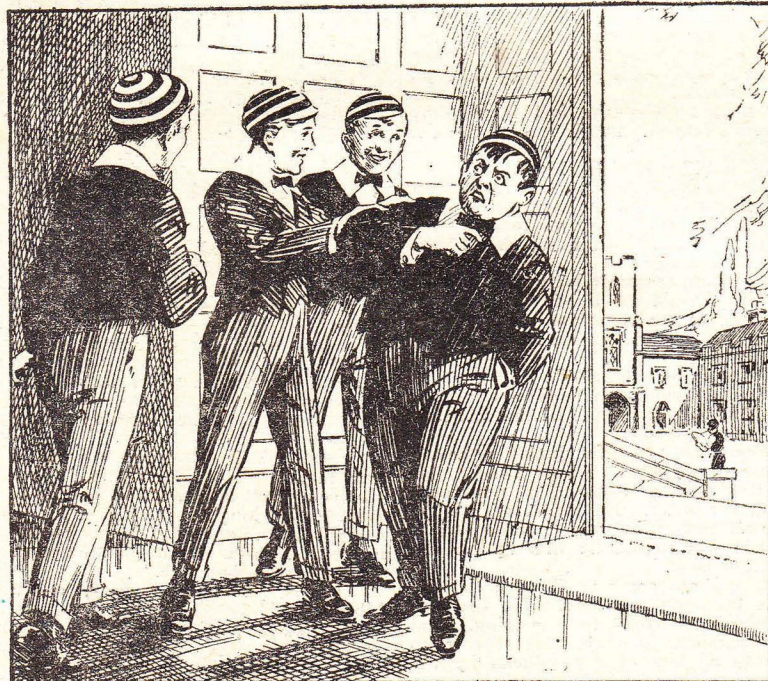
"Ahem! I—I'm in a fearful hole, aunt. I came up to town to see cousin Bob on important business, and I've no money to pay my fare back to St. Jim's."

Aunt Matilda frowned.

"That is no concern of mine," she said coldly.

"But—but how can I get back to the school, aunt?"

"You should not have come on such an



NEWS AT LAST! "Merry, I've seen the result of the story competition—Manners has won it! And what I want to know is, where do I come in? Seeing that Manners pinched my plot, I consider he ought to give me half the takings, at least!" growled Baggy. (See Chapter 3.)

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NEXT TUESDAY: "GUY FAWKES' NIGHT AT ST. JIM'S!"

A NEW LONG TALE OF TOM MERRY & CO. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

expedition without having sufficient money to finance it."

Baggy Trimble threw out his arms appealingly.

"I simply must have some money to get back with, aunt," he said pleadingly. "I'm absolutely stranded. Don't you understand?"

Trimble was one of those fellows who can produce tears to order. He produced them now. Having turned on the tap, so to speak, he stood blinking at Aunt Matilda with streaming eyes.

The stern old lady relented a little. She consulted a railway guide, and ascertained the exact fare from Victoria to Rylcombe. Then she produced the sum from her handbag and handed it to her nephew.

"You must clearly understand, Bagley," she said, "that this is merely a loan. It must be returned to me within a month. If you fail to return it I shall write to your headmaster."

"Oh crumbs!"

"I will now ask the footman to show you out," said Aunt Matilda.

"But I—I say, aunt, I'm starving! I've had nothing to eat since brekker this morning!"

"It is not my place to provide you with food."

"Oh, really, if I don't have some tea, aunt, I shall collapse on the way back!"

Again Baggy Trimble turned on the tap of tears, and again his aunt relented a little.

"Very well, Bagley," she said, "I will supply you with tea."

A maidservant was summoned, and Trimble's eyes sparkled with anticipation.

"Now for a tip-top feed!" he muttered under his breath.

Alas for Baggy's hopes!

Instead of returning with a laden tray the maid brought a cup of very weak tea and a couple of biscuits which were mere wafers.

Like Oliver Twist, Baggy asked for more; but Aunt Matilda shook her head.

"I do not encourage greed," she said. "Gluttony is repellent to me. Eat what has been put before you, and be satisfied."

Baggy Trimble ate, but he was far from satisfied. However, it would have been easier to get blood out of a stone than to get more tea out of Aunt Matilda.

Having disposed of the tea and biscuits, the fat junior took his departure.

It was a very mournful and dejected Baggy that turned up at St. Jim's late that evening.

In response to inquiries as to where he had been, Baggy was sullenly silent.

He found his schoolfellows very excited on the subject of the story competition:

Crowds of fellows had gone in for it, and at least a dozen of them were cocksure of winning the five guineas.

Grundy of the Shell was so confident of success that he had actually ordered a tuck-hammer on the strength of his expectations!

The Terrible Three had competed as a matter of course. Tom Merry had sent in a serious football story, and Monty Lowther had written a humorous one, concerning a football-match played in the Stone Age. Manners had written a true story—a thrilling account of the last match between St. Jim's and Greyfriars. And it was illustrated with snapshots which Manners had taken himself.

Jack Blake and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had written stories with which they were well pleased, and quite a

number of New-House fellows had taken part in the competition.

Baggy Trimble had not yet given up hope of winning the five guineas.

Although cousin Bob was not prepared to "wangle" the result, it might happen that Baggy Trimble's story would win the prize on its merits. Baggy hoped so, anyway, and he was on tenterhooks for the result to come out.

A fortnight of suspense elapsed and at last the long-looked-for result was published.

Toby the page was the first person to get hold of a copy of the "Football World." Toby was a staunch supporter of Tottenham Hotspur, and he wanted to read all about his favourites.

Baggy Trimble bore down upon Toby in the quad.

"I say, Toby, is that this week's?" he asked excitedly, glancing at the paper which Toby was reading.

"Yes, Master Trimble."

Without waiting to ask Toby if he might look at it, Baggy snatched the paper out of the pageboy's hand.

Eagerly he turned over the pages until he came to the competition result.

Toby tried to retrieve his paper, but Baggy Trimble thrust him aside without ceremony.

Ah, here it was!

"RESULT OF FOOTBALL STORY COMPETITION."

Baggy Trimble glanced swiftly down the column, hoping to find his own name printed in large capitals.

But the fat junior's luck was dead out. The paragraph ran as follows:

"Quite a large number of excellent entries were received in this competition, and the task of adjudication proved extremely difficult. After careful consideration, however, the Editor has awarded the prize of Five Guineas to

Harry Manners, St. James' College, Rylcombe, Sussex,

whose story, 'The Great Game with Greyfriars,' will be published in our next issue.

"The winner's story has the merit of being true. Moreover, it is illustrated with splendid snapshots. Master Manners is to be heartily congratulated on his success."

That was all. Not a word about Baggy Trimble. No consolation prize for him—not even an "honourable mention"!

"It's a swindle!" cried Baggy, hurling the paper from him in disgust. "A rank, rotten swindle!"

"Hi! Steady on with my paper, Master Trimble!" yelled Toby.

But Baggy neither heard nor heeded. He rolled savagely away towards the school building.

In the hall, Baggy bumped into the Terrible Three.

"Hallo, porpoise!" said Monty Lowther cheerfully. "You seem slightly ruffled about something."

"So would you be if another fellow cribbed your idea, and won five guineas with it!" snorted Trimble.

Tom Merry gripped the fat junior by the arm.

"What on earth are you babbling about?" he demanded.

"Leggo, Merry! I've just seen the result of the story competition."

"What?"

"Manners has won it."

"My hat!"

"And I want to know where I come in. Seeing that Manners pinched my plot, I consider he ought to give me two and a half guineas, at least!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't believe I've won the blessed thing at all," said Manners. "This is one of Trimble's fairy tales."

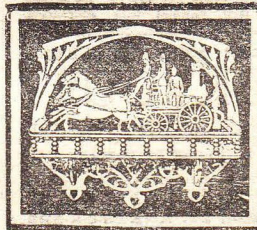
Subsequent events, however, proved that Manners was the winner, for the next post brought him a cheque from the "Football World."

Manners was hugely elated, and so were his chums.

But there were loud lamentations on the part of Baggy Trimble, who, needless to state, did not share in the spoils

THE END.

(Another stirring new long tale of St. Jim's next week.)



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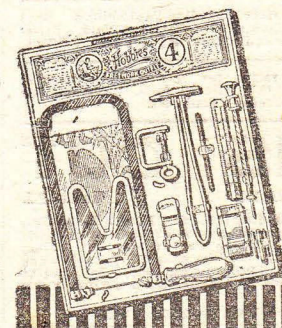
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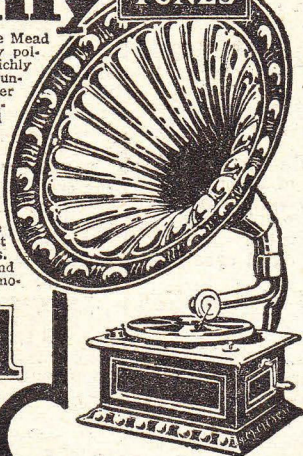
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