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Week Ending—
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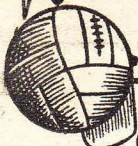
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*Four School
Tales This
Week*

“JOKER OR THIEF?”

Topping Tale of Rookwood.
By Owen Conquest.

“IN LAWLESS HANDS!”

Thrilling Greyfriars Story.
By Frank Richards.

“THE RED RAIDER!”

Stirring Yarn of Cedar Creek.

**“BY RIGHT OF
CONQUEST!”**

Fine Story of Tom Merry.
By Martin Clifford.

and “Billy Bunter’s
Weekly.”



A REDSKIN RAID ON THE LUMBER SCHOOL!

(An Amazing Episode from the Long Backwoods Tale Inside.)

AN ASTOUNDING PLOT TO ROB GREYFRIARS!

(Read the Gripping Tale, “In Lawless Hands!” in this Issue.)

TUBBY'S LITTLE GAME! Tubby Muffin is the biggest and fattest duffer at Rookwood School, and when he tries to wangle a big reward from Val Mornington for the recovery of the latter's "ruising" gold watch, there's some fun!



JOKER-OR THIEF?

You know Jimmy Silver & Co., the Famous Chums of Rookwood—what do you think of this week's story?

By OWEN CONQUEST

(Author of the Stories of Rookwood appearing in the greatly enlarged "Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
The Watch That Went.

WHERE'S my watch?" Valentine Mornington, of the Classical Fourth, asked that question in the dormitory at Rookwood.

The Classical Fourth had turned out at the clang of the rising-bell—with one exception.

Tubby Muffin, the fattest and laziest fellow at Rookwood, was snatching a few extra minutes, at the risk of being late down—and the added risk of being bumped out of bed "on his neck" by Jimmy Silver, or some other fellow of an energetic nature.

Mornington was looking annoyed as he held up his waistcoat, upon which a slim gold chain glistened, to which a watch should have been attached, but was not.

Kit Erroll glanced round quickly as his chum spoke.

"Lost your watch, Morny?" he asked.

"No."
"Then what—"
"It's been taken off the chain."
"Draw it mild!" remarked Jimmy Silver.

"It's been taken," repeated Mornington. "Don't look as tragic as the ghost of Hamlet's father. I'm not accusin' anybody of stealin' it. Some silly idiot has bagged it for a joke, I suppose, and I want to know where it is. So I'm addressin' everybody present. Where's my watch?"

"Blest if I know," said Arthur Edward Lovell—"or care much, if you come to that. You shouldn't leave gold watches lying about."

"I didn't leave it lying about! I left it on the chain in my waistcoat, after windin' it up last night. Some silly chump has got out of bed and pinched it!" growled Mornington.

Jimmy Silver glanced round the dormitory. He was frowning.

Practical jokes with such valuable articles as gold watches seemed quite "past the limit" to Jimmy Silver. They were likely to give rise to disagreeable suspicions and surmises.

And Morny's gold watch was a very valuable one—a relic of the days when he had been the richest fellow at Rookwood, and had never denied himself any luxury, however expensive.

It was known in the Lower School that Morny's watch had cost twenty-five pounds, and it had often been admired.

"Look here, this is a fool joke, if it is a joke at all!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "As likely as not the Modern rotters will begin saying there's a thief on this side of Rookwood, if this gets talked about. The chap who's hidden Morny's watch had better own up!"

"Not guilty, my lord!" grinned Lovell. "Make every chap speak up, 'Yes' or 'No,' before we go out of the dormitory!" suggested Raby.

"Good!" assented Jimmy. "You stick at the door, Newcome, and see that nobody goes out!"

"Right you are!" Arthur Newcome took up his position at the door, and the fellows who were ready to go down had to halt.

Then Jimmy Silver, as captain of the Fourth, proceeded to question the Classical Juniors.

But every fellow answered at once with clear and emphatic "No!"

With most of the fellows, it was certain that if they said "No," "No" it was, and there was no further room for doubt.

But Jimmy looked rather keenly at Lat-trey and Peele and Gower, and one or two of the others, whose word was not always their bond.

But he had to admit that they spoke up readily enough.

"You haven't asked Muffin yet," remarked Lovell, when Jimmy was "through" with the Fourth-Formers.

"Tubby! Forgot him!" said Jimmy. "Where is the fat bounder?"

"In bed!"
"Have him out, then!"
Arthur Edward Lovell strode towards Muffin's bed.

Tubby Muffin had been snoring steadily through the questioning process, and was apparently asleep.

But as Lovell reached his bed he sat up suddenly and yawned.

"Hallo! Is it rising-bell?" he asked. "Out you go!" was Lovell's answer. "Hold on—I mean, let go—Yah, you rotter!" roared Tubby, as he was bundled out of bed, and rolled on the floor in a tangle of bedclothes.

"Tubby!" called out Jimmy Silver. "Yaroooh!"
"Have you seen Morny's watch?"
"Yow-ow-ow!"
"Answer me, fathead!"
"Yoooop!"
"I'll squeeze a wet sponge down his back!" said Oswald, taking one from his washstand. "That'll liven him up!"
Tubby Muffin bounded to his feet. "Yaroooh! Keep off, you Hun!" he roared.

"Leggo!"
"Have you taken Morny's watch?"
"You're chook-chook-choking me!" spluttered Tubby Muffin.

"I'll chook-chook-choke you in earnest if you don't answer!" howled Jimmy Silver. "We shall have a prefect after us soon! Somebody's taken Morny's watch away. Was it you?"

"If you think I'm a thief, Jimmy Silver, you—" spluttered Tubby indignantly.

"I don't, you fat idiot! Somebody's hidden the watch somewhere for a fatheaded joke, I suppose! Was it you, you burbling jabbercock?"

"Catch me getting up in the night to play a joke!" grunted Tubby Muffin. "Most likely it was you, Jimmy!"

"What?" yelled Jimmy Silver. Tubby blinked at him.

"Well, you got up in the night to raid the Moderns once!" he replied. "So you might have done it to hide Morny's watch!"

"You crass ass!" gasped Jimmy Silver. "You—"

"Perhaps it was Lovell, though!" said Tubby Muffin thoughtfully.

"Me!" roared Arthur Edward. "Well, you're ass enough!" argued Tubby. "Now, you'll admit that yourself, Lovell, as a reasonable chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Arthur Edward Lovell made a stride towards Tubby Muffin, who jerked himself away from the captain of the Fourth and dodged.

"Keep him off!" he roared. "Shut up, you howling ass!" growled Raby. "Look here, Jimmy, it looks as if it wasn't a chap in this dorm at all. One of the kids from the Third Form dorm, perhaps."

"I say," gasped Tubby—"I say, perhaps it hasn't been bagged at all!"
"It's gone!" snapped Mornington. "Yes; but I dare say you've pawned it!"
"P-pawned it?" hooted Mornington.

And there was a chuckle in the dormitory at the idea of the dandy of the Fourth paying a visit to a pawnbroker's to raise money on his watch.

"Well, if you've pawned it, you know, you'd spin a yarn like this to keep it dark, wouldn't you?" said Tubby. "Looks like it to me, I must say!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"You—you fat idiot!" howled Mornington. "I'll jolly well burst you!"

He made a rush at Tubby Muffin, who bolted across a bed to escape, and caught his foot in a blanket, and rolled over, with a yell.
"Yah! Help!" roared Tubby. "Help! Yooop! Help!"
The door opened, and Bulkeley of the Sixth looked in.
"Not down yet?" he rapped out. "Get a move on, you lazy young beggars!"

"Yarrah! Help!" roared Tubby. Bulkeley stared at the fat Classical on the floor.

There was no one near Tubby, and what he was yelling for help for was a mystery to the captain of Rookwood.

"Muffin!"
"Help! Fire! Keep him off!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly young ass! What's the matter with you?" shouted Bulkeley. "There's nobody near you!"

Tubby Muffin sat up and blinked round him. Mornington was sedately finishing his toilet.

The other fellows were chortling.
"Oh," gasped Tubby, "I—I thought I—"

"You'd better think out what you'll get if you're not down in five minutes!" grunted Bulkeley.

And he left the dormitory.
Tubby Muffin contrived to be down in five minutes.

To do it in that short space of time he had to leave out most of his washing, but he made up his mind to that sacrifice cheerfully.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Moderns' Little Joke.

TOMMY DODD & CO. of the Modern Fourth rejoiced.

They rejoiced greatly. It had seemed to Jimmy Silver judicious to say nothing about the queer happening in the Classical dormitory, and most of the fellows quite agreed with him; they did not want to give the Moderns a "handle" against them.

But during the morning the Moderns became fully aware of what had happened.

Tubby Muffin was probably the culprit. Tubby never could keep his mouth closed indeed, he never had any desire to keep it closed.

It was, as Lovell remarked, always open either for eating or talking, two occupations that Tubby revelled in.

In the Fourth Form room that morning Tommy Dodd & Co. showed that they knew all about it.

That there was a thief in the Classical Fourth the Moderns, of course, did not believe for a moment.

But it suited them to assume that such was the case for the sake of pulling the Classical leg.

Finding himself next to Lovell in class, Tommy Dodd went through a motion of buttoning up his pockets.

Arthur Edward Lovell gave him a volcanic look.

He understood what that implied.
"You Modern worm!" gasped Lovell.

There came a whisper from Tommy Cook.
"Mind your pockets, you fellows!"

And there was a subdued chuckle.
Mr. Bootles glanced round, becoming aware that all the attention of the Fourth was not bestowed upon his valued instruction.

The chuckle died away.
"You will kindly pay attention, my boys!" said Mr. Bootles, with mild severity.

Attention was paid, but certainly most of the Fourth were thinking of other matters as well as lessons.

Mornington's missing watch was in their thoughts, causing intense annoyance to the Classics and great joy to the Moderns, who realised that this was a quite unique opportunity for ragging their old rivals.

Mr. Bootles happened to step out of the Form-room to speak to Mr. Bohun, the master of the Third, in the corridor, and while he was out Tommy Dodd jumped up.

He stepped coolly out before the Form and took the chalk, and began to chalk on the blackboard.

The juniors watched him curiously.
They supposed Tommy was going to chalk a caricature on the board to surprise Mr. Bootles when he came back.

But they soon saw that that was not the intention of the merry Modern.

What Tommy Dodd put on the blackboard was an inscription, in big capital letters, as follows:

"BEWARE OF PICKPOCKETS!"

Then he returned to his place, with a satisfied grin.
The Modern juniors burst into a roar.

A fat chuckle came from Tubby Muffin, but the rest of the Classics looked furious.
"You Modern rotter!" roared Lovell.
"What do you mean by that?"
"Can't you read?" answered Tommy Dodd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Beware of pickpockets!" howled Tommy Doyle. "Look after yer watches, bedad!"

Jimmy Silver jumped up, his face pink with wrath.

"You—you Modern rotter!" he exclaimed.
"Rub that out at once!"
"Bow-wow!"

"Rub it out, or I'll rub it out with your silly head!" roared Jimmy Silver.
"Rats!"

"Collar him!" shouted Oswald.
Most of the juniors were on their feet now.

Jimmy Silver scrambled along the desks to Tommy Dodd, who stood on the defensive, with an exasperating grin.

"Will you rub that out?" demanded Jimmy.

"Not to-day, old top!" answered Tommy Dodd cheerfully. "Isn't it valuable advice to the public? Ain't there pickpockets about?"

"No, you rotter, and you know it!"
"Ha, ha! Where's Morny's watch?"
"Not your bizney, you Modern worm! Rub that out at once!"

Tommy Dodd laughed. He was not likely to take orders from a Classical fellow, even the captain of the Form.

His laugh was suddenly cut short as Jimmy Silver pounced upon him.

"Now, you Modern rotter!"
"Yah! You Classical ass!"
"Mop him up, Jimmy!"
"Biff him, Tommy!"

"Go it!"
Jimmy Silver, with a strenuous effort, yanked the Modern junior out before the class.

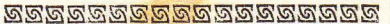
There were shouts of encouragement on both sides.

They nearly reached the blackboard, but there Tommy Dodd rallied, and swept Jimmy back to the desks.

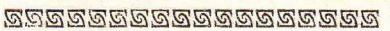
But Jimmy Silver made another effort, and rushed the Modern up to the blackboard, getting a firm grip on Tommy's collar.

His intention was to rub out the offending inscription with Tommy Dodd's hair, as a just punishment.

But there was likely to be a terrific struggle before the Modern leader's head could be used as a duster.



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They bumped into the blackboard, and it reeled a little, and there was a shout of warning from the class.

"Look out! You'll have it over!"
Tommy Dodd rallied again, but again Jimmy Silver rushed him on, and Tommy's nose, instead of his hair, came in contact with the board.

There was a fiendish yell from the Modern. At that moment Mr. Bootles, in the passage, became aware of the fact that something rather unusual was transpiring in the Form-room, and he hurried back.

A startling sight met his gaze.
The easel was over, and on the fallen blackboard Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd were struggling in deadly combat.

Jimmy had the advantage, and his grip was like iron on Dodd's collar, and Dodd's face was being used to wipe off the chalked inscription.

It was a painful process for Tommy Dodd, as he testified by a succession of howls.

Cook and Doyle naturally, rushed to their leader's aid; and equally naturally, Lovell and Raby and Newcome rushed to stop them.

A battle royal was starting round the fallen blackboard, when Mr. Bootles fortunately returned.

The Form master's glasses almost fell off at the sight that met his eyes.

He stood blinking in the doorway, dumb-founded.
"Boys!" he gasped at last.
"Cave!" yelled Towle.

"Oh, my hat! Bootles!"
"Look out!"
The combatants separated as if by magic.

They bolted back to the desks, leaving the blackboard and easel strewn on the floor.

Dusty and crimson and dishevelled, they sat and blinked at the wrathful Form master.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The Talk of the School.**

BLESS my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles.
He could scarcely believe his eyes.

Certainly there were raggings between Classics and Moderns often enough, but this was the first time that the Form-room had been used as a battle-ground.

Mr. Bootles blinked at the blackboard, from which the chalked inscription had been rubbed—with Tommy Dodd's features, which were in an extremely soiled state in consequence. Then he blinked at the class.

"What does this mean?" he thundered.
Dead silence.

"Silver! Dodd! Lovell! How dare you!" Silence.

"This—this riot—this outbreak of—of violence— Bless my soul! I shall punish you all severely!" gasped Mr. Bootles.

"Silver!"
"Ye-es, sir?"
"How dare you!"
"Ahem!"

"What was the cause of this uproar, Silver?"
"I—I—I—"

"Explain at once!" roared Mr. Bootles wrathfully. "What was the cause of this unexampled outbreak?"

"The—The Moderns were cheeky rotters, sir," said Jimmy at last.

"Wha-at?"
"Only Classical cheek, sir," said Tommy Dodd.

"Bless my soul!"
None of the juniors felt inclined to mention the incident of the missing watch—with one exception.

That was Tubby Muffin.
The fat Classical rose to his feet.

"If you please, sir, I can explain," he said.
"You may do so, Mullin!" snapped Mr. Bootles.

"Mornington's watch is missing, sir—"

"What?"
"Shut up, you fat beast!" hissed Jimmy Silver.

"Silence! What have you to say, Muffin? What has Mornington's watch to do with the matter?"

"It's missing, sir. Morny missed it this morning in the dorm," said Tubby Muffin. "Some chap has put it somewhere. The Moderns think it's been stolen."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles. "This is very serious. Is it possible that you, Dodd, have brought an accusation of theft against other boys?"

Tommy Dodd crimsoned.
He gave Tubby Muffin a look that ought to have withered the fat Classical on the spot; but Tubby, not at all withered, sat down with a fat grin of satisfaction.

The matter which the other juniors did not want known to the masters was "out" now.

There was no possibility of keeping it dark.

"Nunno, sir!" gasped Tommy. "I—I never meant anything of the kind, sir! It was only a joke!"

"You should not make such jokes, Dodd. So that is the cause of the uproar!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "You are to blame, Dodd."

"I—I—"

"You should not say such things, even for a joke, Dodd! I shall cane you severely for being the cause of this disturbance! Come here!"

Swish, swish, swish!
Tommy Dodd retreated to his place, squeezing his hands.

The juniors looked daggers at Tubby Muffin.
Tubby had not meant to sneak about the

Here's a School Yarn, Boys! Full of Fun and Thrill! You Read It!

Modern junior, certainly; but his uncalculated statement had been the cause of Tommy Dodd's punishment.

"And now," said Mr. Bootles sternly, "I must hear the particulars of this matter, which should have been communicated to me earlier. Mornington, it appears that your watch is missing?"

"Yes, sir," said Mornington reluctantly.

"Was it a valuable watch?"

"Yes, sir."

"Kindly give me the particulars of the loss."

Mornington, with visible reluctance, explained; and Mr. Bootles' face grew more and more portentous as he listened.

All the juniors were serious enough now, Moderns as well as Classics.

Now that the matter was officially known, it was for the masters to deal with, if not the Head himself.

That was quite enough to make the juniors grave.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "Mornington, you have been very careless with your watch, considering its value. That, however, does not excuse the boy who has taken it. I command that boy to stand up at once!"

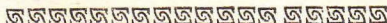
No one stirred.

"Unless the watch is returned to Mornington immediately, I shall be compelled to conclude that it has been stolen!" boomed Mr. Bootles.

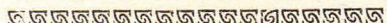
The juniors looked very uncomfortable. Nobody in the Fourth believed for a moment that the watch had been stolen.

That theory seemed to them absurd, for Morny's gold ticker was so well known that a thief could not hope to dispose of it undetected.

Morny's monogram was on the case, in



DON'T MISS



diamonds, and the watch could be easily identified anywhere.

Even if anyone in the Fourth was rascal enough, it was difficult to believe that anyone was stupid enough to take so easily recognised an article to keep.

But Mr. Bootles was portentously grave; and, indeed, it was difficult to see why the practical joker should keep the watch so long, if he intended to return it at all.

A practical joker who carried his joke to the extent of starting suspicions of theft in the school was less a joker than a born idiot.

The affair was, in fact, a puzzle, and Mr. Bootles had reason for taking a serious view of it.

There was a long silence in the Form-room. Mr. Bootles, like Brutus, paused for a reply; but no reply came.

Nobody in the Fourth seemed to have anything to say.

"In order to have this matter cleared up, and prevent unpleasant discussion, I will allow the foolish boy to pass unpunished," said Mr. Bootles, more mildly. "That is, if the watch is restored to its owner at once."

The juniors looked at one another.

It was a good offer, and a chance for the unknown culprit to get clear of the affair, which was now becoming so serious.

But there was no answer.

"I am waiting!" boomed Mr. Bootles.

"If you please, sir—" began Jimmy Silver.

"Was it you, Silver?"

"Eh? Oh, no, sir! But—but I was going to suggest that it may have been a chap from some other dormitory, sir."

"That is very improbable, Silver," said Mr. Bootles dryly. "A boy from another dormitory could scarcely have entered without awakening someone, especially as he would not know precisely where to look for Mornington's clothes, and would have to search for them in the dark. If he had struck a light, someone would certainly have awakened."

Jimmy was silent.

Put like that, he realised that the affair could not be due to a raider from another dormitory.

How was a fellow from the Third or the

THE POPULAR.—No. 201.

Shell to find Morny's waistcoat in the deep darkness without giving the alarm?

Evidently it was one of the Classical Fourth who had relieved Morny of his watch, and the fellow was then present in the Form-room, listening to what was said on the subject, without giving a sign!

Was it, after all, a thief?

It certainly began to look like it, for a practical joker would scarcely have refused Mr. Bootles' offer to get clear of the affair by handing over the watch and owning up.

Yet no one spoke.

The joker, or thief, whichever he was, was there undoubtedly, but he was keeping his own counsel.

Mr. Bootles' plumb face set more grimly.

"Very well," he said. "I am forced to conclude that Mornington's watch has been stolen. The thief, I need hardly say, will be expelled from the school when discovered. The matter closes here for the present. I shall discuss it in the session of masters this evening, and decide what measures are to be taken. We will now resume."

Lessons went on in the Form-room from that point, nearly every fellow in the room suffering from a sense of deep discomfort.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Masters' Session.

AFTER lessons there was endless discussion of the subject among the Fourth-Formers on the Classical side.

The Moderns, of course, were not concerned in the matter, as they had their sleeping quarters in Mr. Manders' House.

After tea there was the session of masters in the masters' room in the School House.

Masters' session was a regular institution at Rookwood.

At stated intervals the staff met to discuss school matters, the Head sometimes coming to the meetings, though more often not; for his assistants discussed matters much more at their ease in the absence of the awe-inspiring doctor.

On the present occasion there was a matter of unusual interest for the masters to discuss, and that was the measures to be taken for the detection of the thief in the Classical Fourth.

A number of the juniors lingered near the masters' room, watching the masters as they gathered.

From their serious looks it was clear that they had been already apprised of the topic to be introduced by Mr. Bootles at the meeting.

Mr. Bootles came along with Mr. Bohun, looking very distressed.

Mr. Wiggins, the master of the Second, was preternaturally grave.

Mr. Bull, the mathematics master, had his brows knitted.

Mr. Mooney, of the Shell, gave the juniors a severe glance as he passed them, as if he was trying to pick out the thief among them, as Arthur Edward Lovell muttered in furious tones.

Then came Mr. Greely, the master of the Fifth, with Monsieur Monceau, the French master.

The junior caught the word "voleur" on Mossos's lips as the two masters passed.

Mr. Manders, the science master, came last, with a look on his acid face that Lovell likened to a gargole.

The door of the masters' room closed, but a murmur of voices could be heard from within.

"They're at it!" growled Lovell.

"Rotten!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

"All Rookwood's going to ring with it," said Conroy. "My hat! I'd like to be within hitting distance of the silly idiot who bagged Morny's watch."

Jimmy Silver & Co. went up glumly to the Fourth Form quarters.

The honour of their Form was concerned in the discussion now going on in the masters' room, and they felt it keenly.

As they passed Mornington's study they heard the voice of Tubby Muffin.

"You'd better take my tip, Morny, old man."

"Oh, dry up!" came Morny's reply.

"You want to get your watch back, don't you?"

"Buzz off!"

"If you're hard up, Erroll can lend you the money," suggested Tubby Muffin. "In fact, I dare say the Fourth would be willing

to make a whip-round for it, as there's such a fuss being made."

"Will you clear off, you silly young ass?" demanded Mornington. "Kick him out for me, Erroll!"

"Certainly!"

"Here, I say, hands off! Why, you rotter, when I'm trying to do you a good turn!" howled Tubby.

A fat form came whirling through the study doorway, and Jimmy Silver grinned as he caught it by the hair.

"Yaroo!" roared Muffin.

"Steady on, steam-roller!" said Jimmy.

"Yow-ow! Leggo my hair!"

Tubby Muffin jerked his head away, and rubbed it.

"Look here, Jimmy," he began, "I've just been pointing out to Morny—"

"Bow-wow!"

"But it's jolly important, and I think you ought to speak to Morny—"

Mornington II., of the Second Form, came along the passage.

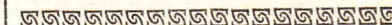
He put his head into No. 4.

"You're wanted, Morny," he said to his cousin. "Masters' room."

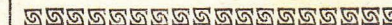
Mornington grunted as he rose to his feet. "More jaw about that dashed watch, I suppose!" he groaned. "All right, 'Erbert, you can tell 'em I'm coming, and tell 'em to go and boil their heads!"

The fag grinned.

He was not likely to take that message back to the severe assembly in the masters' room.



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Mornington made a grimace to the Fistical Four as he came out of the study.

"I'm going through it," he said. "I wish I'd never said a word about the watch now! I'd rather lose it than have all this bother."

"I've offered to show you how to get your watch back, Morny—" began Tubby Muffin. "Oh, ring off!"

Mornington walked away with his cousin, and the Fistical Four went on to the end study.

Tubby Muffin blinked after Morny, and then blinked into No. 4.

"I say, Erroll—" he started.

"Clear off, for goodness' sake!" said Erroll. "Can't you see when a fellow's fed up, Tubby?"

"But Morny's watch—"

"Oh, bother! Buzz off, or you'll get this cushion!" exclaimed Erroll, in exasperation.

Tubby Muffin promptly retreated from the doorway.

He gave a discontented grunt, and after some moments' reflection followed Jimmy Silver & Co. to the end study.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Fairly Caught

JIMMY Silver uttered an impatient exclamation as Tubby Muffin's fat face appeared in his doorway.

Jimmy was in a harassed mood, and the infliction of Tubby's company and Tubby's conversation was the last straw.

"Jimmy, old nut—"

"For goodness' sake, Tubby, buzz off!" said the captain of the Fourth. "Give a fellow a rest!"

"If you call that polite, Jimmy Silver—"

"Well, it's politer than my boot, which you'll get if you don't give me a rest!" growled Jimmy.

"With mine to follow!" said Lovell.

"Well, if you don't care for the good name of the Form, I suppose it's no good talking to you," said Tubby Muffin loftily. "Some

The FISTICAL FOUR of ROOKWOOD—Sportsmen True! More About Them Next Week!

fellows think of such things. I do! I don't like the Classical Fourth being the talk of the school. Fellows are saying we've got a thief in the Form. I think the matter ought to be cleared up."

"Can you clear it up, fathead?" snapped Raby.

"I think so."

"Oh, don't talk rot!" said Newcome.

"I can make a suggestion—" "Make it, and then ring off!" said Jimmy Silver. "And cut it short, Tubby!"

"I suppose that's what you call grateful?" said Tubby Muffin sarcastically. "Well, here's my suggestion. When things are lost, what do you think is the best way of finding them again?"

"Looking for them, I suppose."

"Better than that! The proper thing," said Tubby impressively, "is to offer a reward."

Jimmy stared at him. "A reward!" he repeated.

"That's it!" said Tubby, with a nod. "I've suggested it to Mornington, as it's his watch that's lost; but he won't listen to me. I suppose he's hard up—though I mentioned that he could borrow the money of Erroll. The watch was worth twenty-five quid. Well, Morny ought to offer at least five to the fellow who finds it. Don't you think so?"

Jimmy Silver did not answer. He was looking very fixedly at the fat, self-satisfied face of Reginald Muffin.

But Lovell broke in angrily.

"You fat idiot! Why should Morny spring five quid? He would have to pay it to the fellow who bagged the watch; nobody else would know where to find it."

"Well, anybody might find it," said Muffin. "Suppose a reward was offered, everybody would begin hunting for it. It would pay Morny to spring five quid to recover a twenty-five pound watch. Cheap, I call it!"

"Oh, you're an ass!"

"I'm not talking to you, Lovell! You haven't much sense, you know. What do you think, Jimmy Silver? Will you put it plain to Morny?"

"No!"

"Of course, you could offer a reward yourself," suggested Tubby Muffin. "As captain of the Fourth, it's up to you to look after the honour of the Form. You could raise a subscription in the Form. It's worth five quid to clear the fellows of suspicion of stealing a watch. Think of the honour of the Form."

Jimmy Silver was silent, and his gaze, fixed on Tubby's fat face, was growing more penetrating.

Muffin, absorbed by his own valuable ideas, did not notice it.

He blinked round appealingly at Jimmy's chums.

"I say, what do you think of the idea, Raby?"

"Rotten!"

"Newcome, old chap, you're a chap with some sense," said Muffin. "Don't you think a reward ought to be offered?"

"No, I don't!"

Tubby Muffin gave a snort of impatience. "Blest if I ever saw such asses!" he exclaimed. "It really looks to me as if you don't want Morny's watch to be found at all. I call that selfish. Why, I thought he'd jump at the idea rather than have the watch lost, and everybody saying there's a thief in the Form!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Lovell.

"Hallo! Here comes Morny!" said Raby, glancing out of the study doorway. "He looks worried."

Mornington glanced in at the end study.

"Been through it?" asked Jimmy.

"You bet! A blessed set of solemn old owls, all jawing at a fellow!" growled Mornington.

The Fistical Four grinned at that description of a masters' session.

It might have surprised that august assembly if they had heard it.

"I've had to jaw it all over again from the beginning," went on Mornington. "They've decided there's a thief in the Form."

"I told you so!" grinned Tubby Muffin.

"You fat owl! You seem to be glad of it!" exclaimed Mornington wrathfully.

"Oh, no! Nunno! Oh, no!" stammered Tubby. "N-n-not at all!"

"They dismissed me, an' I left 'em chaw-wowing over it," said the dandy of the

a businesslike chap. You take my advice, Jimmy, and put a notice on the board offering five pounds reward for the finding of Morny's watch."

"Do you think that would produce my watch?" asked Mornington.

"Sure of it!"

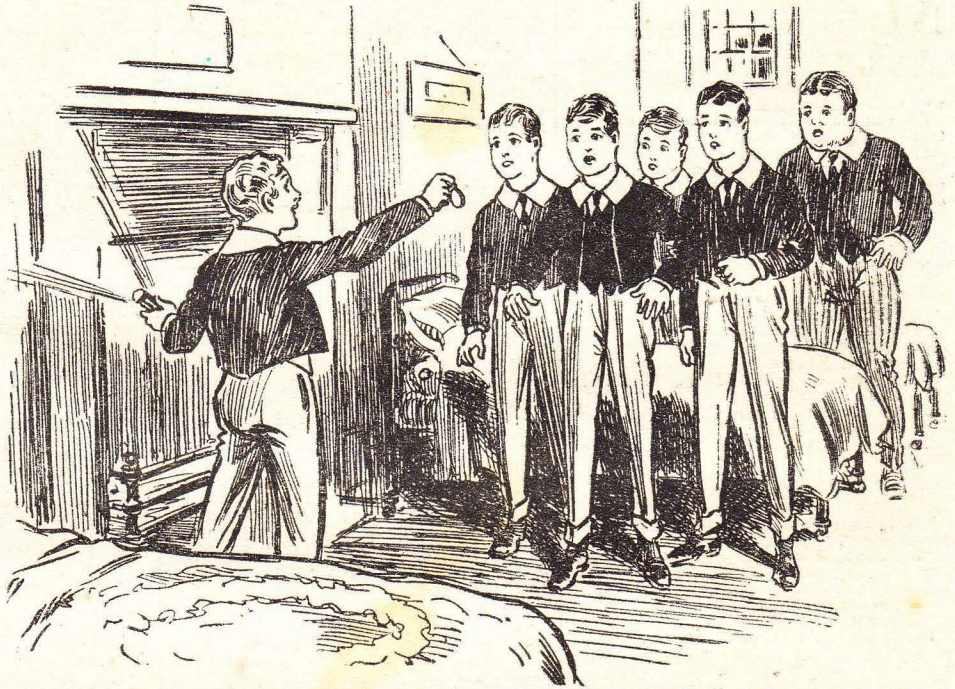
"Because the offer of a reward would start fellows hunting for it?" asked Lovell, staring blankly at Reginald Muffin.

Raby and Newcome were staring, too.

There was an atmosphere of grim suspicion in the end study, of which Tubby Muffin was blissfully unconscious.

"That's it," said Tubby.

"And where are they to hunt for it?" asked Jimmy Silver. "Fellows have been looking for it already, but they haven't had any luck."



RECOVERING THE MISSING WATCH! Jimmy Silver flashed the light of his electric torch up into the darkness of the chimney. A gleam of gold caught his eyes. A moment later he drew back his hand and held up Mornington's gold ticker. "Here it is!" he said. (See Chapter 6.)

Fourth. "I believe they're going to have all the Form up for examination. What silly ass was it invented masters' sessions? I say, let's scrag that fat villain for giving the show away to Bootles!"

Tubby Muffin backed away.

"I—I say, it will be all right if the watch is found!" he stammered.

"It's not found," said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, it could be if a reward was offered," said Tubby Muffin persuasively. "It would buck the fellows: no end, you know. I'm sure of it!"

"Quite sure?" asked Jimmy, eyeing him.

"I really feel that I could answer for it," said Tubby Muffin eagerly. "Make it a reward of five quid and I'll set to work."

Mornington's glance met Jimmy's.

The same thought was in both minds at that moment.

Jimmy compressed his lips.

"Well, let's think this over," he said. "How would you make the offer of a reward, Tubby?"

Tubby's fat face beamed.

"Put up a notice on the board," he said. "Might as well simply tell the fellows, if you're going to do it at all, which I think is rot!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell.

"That wouldn't do!" said Tubby promptly.

"Why not?" asked Jimmy very quietly.

"You'd be able to go back on it if it wasn't in writing."

"What?"

"I—I—I mean—don't fly out at a fellow!" spluttered Muffin. "I mean, it would be more businesslike to have it in writing. I'm

"Oh, a really clever chap, you know, like—"

"Like you—what?" asked Mornington.

"Like me," agreed Tubby. "I don't want to brag, but you fellows will admit that if there's a chap in the Fourth with real brains, I'm that chap!"

"You couldn't find the watch, though," said Mornington, shaking his head.

"Bet you I could!" said Tubby at once.

"Why haven't you done so already, then?" asked Raby.

"Oh, come now!" said Tubby warmly. "The labourer's worthy of his hire, isn't he? Chap's time is worth something. Besides—"

"Besides what?"

"Oh, nothing! Now, you draw up that paper and sign it, Morny."

"And leave the rest to you?" asked Mornington.

"Well, yes."

"In fact you guarantee to find the watch before Bootles calls the Head into the matter if I offer five pounds reward?" asked Mornington.

"Yes."

"Then we can't do better—" began Mornington, looking significantly at Jimmy Silver, who rose to his feet.

"Of course you can't!" agreed the delighted Tubby.

"Than collar this fat scoundrel, and make him own up where he's hidden my watch!" went on Mornington, much to Tubby's astonishment and dismay.

Tubby Muffin jumped. Then as the juniors advanced on him, he made a frantic rush for the passage. Mornington's finger and thumb on his fat ear swung him round. "Yaroo!" roared Tubby. "Leggo!" "I'll let you go when you've handed over my watch!" said Mornington grimly; and his grip tightened, to the accompaniment of a dismal yell from Reginald Muffin. "Lock the door, Jimmy!"

Click!

Tubby Muffin, in utter dismay, blinked round at the chums of the Fourth. He was fairly caught.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Too Tricky!

MORNINGTON released Tubby's fat ear at last, and the fat Classical rubbed it ruefully, and blinked at the five juniors.

The Fistical Four surrounded him, with grim looks.

As yet Tubby Muffin really did not know why he was suspected.

He was sublimely unconscious of the fact that he had given himself hopelessly away.

It did not occur to his fat mind that there was no reason why he should be so eager for a reward to be offered, unless he expected to finger that reward himself; because he knew where to find the watch.

If he knew where to find it, it was because he had hidden it; it was a case of "those who hide can find."

That was obvious enough to Jimmy Silver & Co., but not in the least so to Reginald Muffin's obtuse brain.

In fact, he was working up an expression of sorrowful indignation as he blinked at the incensed juniors.

"I'm surprised at this, Jimmy Silver!" he said at last.

"Surprised that you're caught, you fat idiot?" asked Lovell. "You might have expected it when you let your silly chin wag."

"Of course, I don't know anything about Morny's watch. How could I, when I was fast asleep all night?"

"What have you done with it?" asked Mornington roughly.

"Nothing! I haven't seen it! In fact, I'm not at all sure that you ever had a gold watch at all, Mornington!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"If you'll unlock that door," said Tubby, with dignity. "I'll go! I've not been treated in a friendly way in this study. I decline to remain any longer in your quarters, Jimmy Silver. Until you've apologised I'll thank you not to speak to me again."

"You didn't bag Morny's watch last night?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Certainly not!"

"With the idea of having a rumpus kicked up about it, so that we should be awfully keen to have it found, and you didn't think you'd be able to spoof us into offering a reward for it?"

"Not at all! Naturally, I thought you'd offer a reward, rather than have the Fourth set down as a lot of thieves," said Tubby reproachfully.

"You thought that before you took the watch?"

"Yes," said Tubby unguardedly.

"And then you took it?"

"No, I didn't!"

"You've just admitted that you did!" yelled Raby.

"Nothing of the kind, Raby! I never said anything of the sort! What I meant to say was, that Smythe of the Shell is waiting for me, and I'll thank you to unlock that door, Jimmy Silver!"

"Never mind the door at present," said Jimmy, laughing in spite of himself. "You bagged Morny's watch in the dorm last night, Tubby."

"Never even dreamed of such a thing, Jimmy! I'm afraid it's your guilty conscience that's making you suspect me," said Tubby, with a shake of the head.

"Oh, my hat! Then you started to talk about the affair, though we agreed to keep it dark. You thought a reward might be offered if the matter was made thoroughly unpleasant."

"Oh, no! Certainly not!"

"And then you brought it all out to Mr. Bootles, so that the masters would take it up."

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You Mustn't Miss "The Shylock of the Fourth!" Another Fine Tale of Rookwood Next Week!

"Ahem! I didn't!"

"You didn't tell Mr. Bootles in class this morning?" howled Jimmy.

"No!"

"Why, the whole Form heard you!" shrieked Newcome.

Tubby shook his head obstinately.

"Fellows make mistakes," he said.

"You've made a mistake. Very likely Morny told Bootles. Or Jimmy Silver. It might have been Lattrey. He's a bit of a sneak. Not me! I'd scorn the action."

"Oh crumbs!" said Jimmy Silver, almost overcome.

The chums of the Fourth fairly blinked at Tubby Muffin.

That he should tell such astounding whoppers was surprising, but that he should expect anyone to believe them was more astonishing still.

Tubby Muffin had not a good memory, which the proverb declares is useful for the class of persons to which Tubby belonged.

The astounded silence in the study was broken by Tubby.

Apparently he regarded the matter as settled satisfactorily, quite mistaking the meaning of the silence.

"Now, about the reward?" he said.

"The—the—the reward?" articulated Jimmy Silver.

"Yes," said Tubby briskly. "I'm willing to overlook this unpleasantness if you fellows do the proper thing. Is a reward going to be offered for finding Morny's watch?"

"Oh dear!"

"You're wasting time, Jimmy. Are you going to make it five pounds' reward?"

"No!" gasped Jimmy.

"Well, say four! What do you say to four?"

"No! Not fourpence!"

"Not a merry brown!" said Mornington.

"Well, it's your look-out," said Tubby.

"Your watch may be spoiled if a fire's lighted under it."

"Eh?"

"I don't say that it will, but it might. For instance, suppose a fellow hid it in a chimney?" asked Tubby. "I'm only putting a case, of course. He might have, or he might not. Well, if a fire's lighted under that chimney, what becomes of the watch?"

"My only hat!" gasped Lovell. "So you've hidden it in a chimney!"

"Certainly not!"

"B-b-but you said—"

"I said I was putting a case. And mind," said Tubby impressively, "if the watch isn't found soon it may be damaged. We haven't got central heating, like the Moderns in Manders' House, and fires may be started in the dormitory any time."

"In—in—in the dormitory!" stuttered Jimmy Silver.

"It's your look-out and Morny's," said Tubby fatuously. "Don't blame me if the watch gets spoiled, that's all."

"That chap," said Arthur Edward Lovell, in measured tones, "ought to be in a home for idiots, or some place of that sort. He's wasted at Rookwood."

"Jimmy's wanted!" called out Oswald, from the passage.

The door was unlocked and opened. Dick Oswald grinned at the captain of the Fourth.

"The great pow-wow's over," he said.

"All the Classical Fourth have got to trot into the Masters' Room to be jawed at, and you're to see that they all turn up, Jimmy. I've just had it from Bootles."

Jimmy laughed.

"Thank goodness it won't be necessary," he said.

"Watch not found?" exclaimed Oswald.

"No; but Tubby's just told us where to find it."

Tubby Muffin stared.

"Eh? What! I haven't!" he yelled.

"Nothing of the kind! I haven't the faintest idea where the watch is."

"Not in the dormitory chimney?" grinned Lovell.

Tubby gave a jump.

"How did you know?" he gasped.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I mean, it's not there!" howled Tubby, in alarm "I was simply putting a case—merely a figure of speech, you know. What I meant to say, really, was— Yaroooooo!"

Lovell grasped the fat Classical by the collar, and sat him down forcibly on the study carpet, and Tubby's remarks ended in a howl.

Then the juniors hurried up to the Classical Fourth dormitory.

They gathered round the chimney, and Jimmy Silver flashed the light of his electric flash-lamp up into the darkness above.

It was a roomy old chimney, and there was plenty of space for his head and shoulders.

As he turned the light round, a gleam of gold in the interstice of the bricks caught his eyes.

A moment more, and he drew back from the chimney, and held up Mornington's gold ticker.

"Here it is!" he said.

"Good!" grinned Lovell. "Hallo, and here's Tubby!"

Tubby Muffin rolled breathlessly in.

"H-h-have you found it?" he stammered.

"Look!"

"Where was it?"

"In the chimney, where you hid it last night, you fat villain!" hooted Raby.

"Oh, draw it mild, Raby! If you found it in the chimney, it's pretty clear that you hid it there."

"What!" shrieked Raby.

"Those who hide can find, you know!" said Tubby, with a shake of the head. "I must say I'm shocked at you, Raby! I must say that, at least!"

"You—you—you must say that, at least!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "Slaughter him, somebody, while I go to the Masters' Room!"

Jimmy Silver departed, watch in hand, and wild and weird sounds of woe followed him from the Fourth Form dormitory.

Apparently his chums were carrying out his instructions.

Jimmy hurried to the Masters' Room, where he found a circle of more or less bald heads gathered in awfully serious confabulation.

Mr. Bootles blinked at him over his glasses.

"All the Classical Fourth are required, Silver," he said. "Did you not understand—"

"The watch has been found, sir," said Jimmy meekly, holding it up.

"Bless my soul!"

"And who was the thief, Silver?" demanded Mr. Manders sourly.

"N-n-nobody, sir! The watch was hidden in the dormitory chimney, and—and we found it there."

Mr. Bootles drew a breath of relief.

"Then it was only a foolish practical joke after all," he said. "I am very glad to hear it."

"The practical joke, if such it was, should be severely punished!" snapped Mr. Manders.

"Were you the person concerned, Silver?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Can you give us the person's name?" asked Mr. Bull.

"Nobody has admitted hiding the watch, sir," said Jimmy, which was strictly true. Tubby Muffin certainly hadn't admitted it, and was never likely to. "We—we thought from the first that it had been hidden somewhere by some silly joking idiot—I—I mean, a practical joker, and—and—"

"Well, well; the matter has ended satisfactorily," said Mr. Bootles. "I am glad it is no worse. I shall certainly make endeavours to discover the foolish practical joker, and punish him as he deserves! You may go, Silver!"

And Jimmy Silver went gladly.

The watch had been recovered, and the mystery was a mystery no longer.

All the Fourth were glad to learn that it was not a case of theft, but nothing more than one of Tubby Muffin's weird devices for raising the wind.

But their wrath against the fat schemer knew no bounds.

It was generally agreed that it was necessary for Tubby to have a lesson.

Tubby did not see the necessity, and kept carefully out of the way of his incensed Form-fellows that evening.

But at bed-time he could keep out of the way no longer, and then the wrath of the Classical Fourth was visited upon his devoted head.

By the time Tubby Muffin crawled into bed he was feeling as if he had been through a succession of earthquakes, which was certainly no more than he deserved.

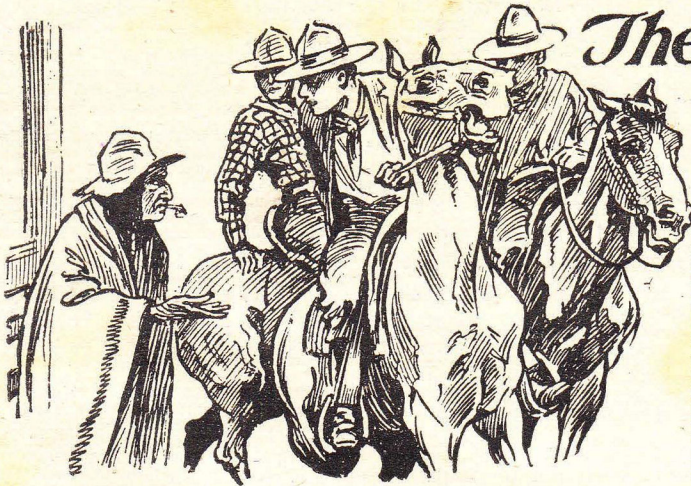
For some time after lights-out Tubby Muffin's voice was raised in woeful complaint, till a number of missiles from various parts of the dormitory added to his sufferings, but silenced his vocal expression of them.

After that Tubby Muffin suffered in silence.

THE END.

Stories of St. Jim's in the "Gem"—Stories of Greyfriars in the "Magnet" ! 7

THE PLOT AGAINST THE NEW MASTER! Frank Richards & Co., the Chums of Cedar Creek School, come to the conclusion that "Gentle" Shepherd, the new master, must be initiated into the real wild life of the Canadian backwoods right now!



The RED RAIDER!

In the far-off North-west of Canada, under the shadow of the Great Blue Mountains, lies a small lumber school. There the world-famous author, FRANK RICHARDS, spent his early schooldays with his cheery "rough neck" pals. This is another tale of their backwood adventures!

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The New Master.

"GATHER round!" grinned Bob Lawless.
"And listen!" murmured Chunky Todgers.

There was a suppressed chuckle among the fellows gathered in the playground at Cedar Creek School.

Frank Richards & Co. were smiling. Mr. Shepherd, the new master at the lumber school, had just emerged from his cabin. It was upon the new master that all eyes were fixed.

Apparently, Mr. Horatio Shepherd appealed to the humorous side of Cedar Creek. He was a tall young man, slim and rather graceful in appearance, and certainly very good-looking.

He was dressed with great care, in somewhat expensive "store-clothes," and at a glance it could be seen that he set great store by his personal appearance. In the rough-and-ready Thompson Valley that was not a great recommendation for any man.

Mr. Shepherd was newly out from England. He had had a post in a boarding-school in Ontario, and possibly had not given complete satisfaction there.

At all-events, he had transferred the scene of his activities to British Columbia.

Frank Richards, who remembered his earlier schooldays in the Old Country, had been rather interested to hear that Mr. Shepherd was a public-school man.

But that weighed little or nothing with the denizens of the Thompson Valley.

So long as a man could do his work, and did it, they cared little whence he came, or what he had been before he came.

It is possible that Mr. Shepherd had accepted the offer of a post at the backwoods school, without being fully aware of the remoteness and rusticity of Cedar Creek.

Certainly he did not seem to realise that he was in the backwoods.

He dressed with as much care as if about to promenade in a fashionable street in Montreal or Quebec, and he spoke with an accent that amazed and delighted the Cedar Creek fellows.

Miss Meadows, the schoolmistress, had been a little surprised by Horatio Shepherd; but the boys and girls of Cedar Creek were not surprised—they were amazed and overjoyed.

As Bob Lawless remarked, it prevented things from getting dull when a young man like Horatio came along to have his leg pulled.

Mr. Shepherd came along by the group and glanced at them in a languid way.

"Good-mornin' boys!" he said.

"Good-mornin' sir!" answered the boys in chorus, dropping their "g's" in imitation of Mr. Shepherd.

"A very fine mornin'" said the new master.

"Yes, sir; the sun is shinin', and the birds are singin', and everythin' is toppin'," said Bob Lawless gravely.

There was an irrepressible gurgle from Chunky Todgers, and the new master glanced at him.

"I hope you like Cedar Creek, sir," said Frank Richards hastily.

"Yaas!"

Another gurgle from Chunky.

He was really excusable; he had never heard "yes" pronounced like that before.

"A very pleasant quartah," added Mr. Shepherd condescendingly.

The "quartah" tickled the Cedar Creek juniors very much.

"It's a quartah where any fellah might like to lingah, isn't it?" asked Bob Lawless.

"Yaas."

"Especially now the weathah is gettin' bettah!" suggested Bob.

Mr. Shepherd looked at him.

"Yaas," he assented. "I rathah considah that the weathah has distinctly been improvin' lately."

And he walked on gracefully to the school-house.

The schoolboys stared at one another.

It really seemed impossible that Mr. Shepherd had not observed that Bob Lawless was making fun of him, but evidently he hadn't.

"Of all the howling asses!" said Tom Lawrence.

"Wrong!" said Bob. "You mean howlin' asses."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, there goes the bell!"

Cedar Creek crowded in to school, in a very hilarious mood.

The Gentle Shepherd, as the boys had already nicknamed the new master, had added considerably to the gaiety of the lumber school.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Quite an Accident.

MISS MEADOWS wore an unaccustomed frown in the school-room.

The Canadian schoolmistress was well aware of the hilarity with which her pupils regarded the new assistant master.

It did not make for order in the school, and Miss Meadows found it a little annoying.

Indeed, she had thought once or twice of giving Mr. Shepherd a hint that the manners and customs of Bond Street were out of place in the Canadian backwoods.

But it was rather a delicate matter.

Mr. Shepherd seemed so oblivious of his own defects.

He put on "side" with so much simplicity and naturalness, and he was so openly in a state of complete satisfaction with himself, that giving a hint was a difficult matter.

He was out of place at the lumber school, as a matter of fact, and, unless he was able to "shake down," he was not likely to be of much use.

Mr. Slimmey, the other master, glanced at him once or twice from his end of the big school-room.

Mr. Slimmey was a very quiet and un-demonstrative gentleman, and the new master had treated him with condescending patronage ever since his arrival.

Mr. Slimmey did not quite know how to deal with that, and for the present he gave the new man his head, so to speak.

But a slightly impatient expression crossed his face when he heard the new master speaking to his class about Anstraliah, and Canadah, and the British Emplah.

The Gentle Shepherd's class was in a state of subdued mirth, and but for the presence of Miss Meadows in the school-room, the mirth would have been a good deal less subdued.

Mr. Shepherd's peculiar fastidiousness would have excited remark anywhere; but in a backwoods school it was ludicrously out of place.

"That galoot's simply come along to make us joyful," said Eben Hacke, when the boys came out of school. "I guess I'm going to have some fun with him!"

Hacke ran off to the corral for a trail-rop.

He came back with the rope looped over his arm, a running noose at the end of it.

"Has he come out yet?" he asked breathlessly.

"No," answered Frank Richards. "He's talking to Miss Meadows inside. What are you up with that rope, Hacke?"

"I guess I'm going to lasso him—by accident!"

"What!" yelled Frank.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Only by accident, of course," said Hacke.

"He'll never see it. Mind you galoots, the minute I rope him in, you all drag on the rope, without knowing it's caught him!"

"I say, Hacke—"

"Draw it mild!" said Beauclerc. "He can't be such an ass as to think that it's an accident!"

"I guess he's jay enough for anything!" answered Hacke, grinning. "You watch out! I'm assailing you, Bob, and it falls on him by accident—see?"

"Ha, ha!"

"Here he comes!" murmured Chunky Todgers.

The schoolboys looked away from Mr. Shepherd as he came sauntering gracefully out of the porch.

Apparently they did not see him coming.

Eben Hacke whirled the lasso through the air.

He was half-turned away from Mr. Shepherd as he made the cast, and certainly did not look as if he were trying to lasso the master; but Hacke was an expert with the rope.

The noose settled suddenly over Mr. Shepherd's head, and slid down to his waist.

Hacke started running at the same moment, three or four fellows catching hold of the rope with him, and running, too.

The rope tautened instantly, and the

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Another Roaring Wild North-West Yarn Next Week—a Real Ripper!

noose was tight round Mr. Shepherd's slim waist.

Before the new master knew what was happening, he was whirled off his feet, and came down with a bump to the ground.

There was a wild yell as he landed. "Yah!—What—Great heavens! Yaroooh—Oh! Begad! Ah! Help!"

With hands and legs wildly flying, Mr. Shepherd was whirled along the ground at the end of the rope.

There was a shriek of laughter from all sides.

Mr. Shepherd made frantic efforts to get on his feet, but the dragging rope pulled him over again every time, and he went tumbling and flying along.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Bob Lawless clung to the porch, almost weeping.

The yells of laughter brought Miss Meadows into the playground.

The schoolmistress stood nearly petrified at the sight of the new master whirling along heels o'er head.

"Hacke!" she shrieked at last.

Eben Hacke looked round.

"Yes, marm?"

"What are you doing? Release Mr. Shepherd at once! How dare you!" panted the schoolmistress.

Hacke stared at Mr. Shepherd, who had now come to a halt, and was sprawling on the ground, struggling for breath.

"By gum!" ejaculated Hacke, with a look of astonishment. "It's Mr. Shepherd! Oh dear!"

The schoolboys rushed to the fallen man. Hacke unloosed the lasso, and it was dragged up.

Mr. Shepherd sat up dazedly.

"Groogh! Hoooh! Yoooop!" he spluttered.

"Not hurt, sir?" exclaimed Hacke. "How ever did you get in the way of the rope, sir? Why didn't you call out?"

"Groogh!"

"Help him up!" gasped Frank Richards, struggling to repress his merriment. "I hope you're not hurt, sir?"

"Groogh!"

Mr. Shepherd was set upon his feet.

His "store clothes" were in a sad state, torn and dusty, and he looked draggled and dishevelled from head to foot.

He stood gasping for breath, evidently not quite aware whether he was on his head or his heels.

Miss Meadows hurried to the spot.

"Mr. Shepherd, you are not hurt?"

"Groogh! Nunno!" gasped the young man dazedly. "Somethin'—er—caught me; a—er—rope, I think. I was—er—oh dear!—pulled over, by gad!"

"Hacke! How dare you play such a trick?"

"I couldn't guess Mr. Shepherd was going to put his head into the rope, miss!" said Hacke. "We often play with lassos in the playground."

Miss Meadows gave him an expressive look. She was not inclined to believe that the affair was an accident; but perhaps she deemed it judicious not to inquire too closely.

"I—I—I am feelin' rathah upset!" gasped Mr. Shepherd. "If it was an accident, please do not punish the boy, Miss Meadows. Groogh! I think I will—ah—retiah to my cabin!"

And he did.

And the Cedar Creek fellows streamed out of the gates, where they could yell without being heard by Miss Meadows.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bob's Little Scheme.

"I've got an idea," said Bob Lawless, as the three chums led their horses out of the corral after lessons at Cedar Creek.

"Go it!" said Frank. "Let's ride over to Thompson before we go home," said Bob. "I want to see a man."

"Right you are!" Frank and Bob and Vere Beauclere mounted their horses, and rode up the Thompson trail, instead of heading for home.

"Who's the man?" asked Frank, as they trotted along under the high branches that overhung the trail, green now in the early summer.

"Injun Dick."

"What!" exclaimed Frank and Beauclere together.

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"That's the pilgrim," said Bob. "I'm going to spring Injun Dick on the Gentle Shepherd. I guess Injun Dick will make his hair curl!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank.

"It's too bad, making fun of that duffer!" said Beauclere, laughing.

"Oh, rot!" answered Bob. "He was born to make people joyful—you can see that! He knows as much about Canada as he knows about the mountains in the moon; and I reckon that a real Red man on the war-trail will make him hop some! It will be no end funny!"

Frank Richards grinned at the idea.

It was not much use arguing with Bob Lawless when that cheerful youth was on the trail of a joke, and his chums let him have his way.

They arrived at the town of Thompson, and proceeded to look for Injun Dick.

Injun Dick was one of the sights of Thompson.

He was an Apache Indian, a race not native to Canada.

Injun Dick was many a hundred miles from his native hunting-grounds.

He had once been a great warrior of the Apache tribe, and he had fought in the last Apache war in Arizona, when the last defence of their hunting-grounds by the red tribes had been broken for ever.

The remnants of his defeated tribe had been scattered far and wide, and the warrior had wandered far from his native heath.

By way of California and Oregon he had wandered to the north, till he had found

**"THE SURPRISE—
 PACKET OF
 CEDAR CREEK!"**
**IS SURE SOME
 BIG THRILLER!**
**The Cedar Creek
 Chums Again!**

a kind of home in the Thompson Valley. But the old Apache had not taken to work.

Sometimes he carried messages, or did odd jobs in the town, and in the summer he was sometimes seen fishing, and occasionally he would go into the mountains to hunt, though whether he was hunting for game or other people's property was a question that had no answer.

"Here he is!" said Bob Lawless, as he slipped off his horse in front of the Red Dog saloon.

Injun Dick was leaning on the rail, his old blanket round him, apparently half-asleep.

His copper face glistened in the afternoon sun.

He was basking in the warm rays, a good deal like a cat, and perhaps dreaming of the warmer climate he had left so many years ago for ever.

Half-asleep as he seemed, his eyes opened sharply at the sound of footsteps.

The three schoolboys stopped, and he blinked at them.

"Injun thirsty!" he said.

That was the old Apache's greeting to anyone who stopped to speak to him.

Injun Dick had an insatiable thirst. Water could not quench it. Not that he ever tried water.

"Still thirsty?" smiled Bob Lawless.

"Fire-water!" said the noble Red man.

"Never mind the fire-water now," answered Bob. "I want you to do something for me, Dick. There's a dollar at the end of it."

The Red man held out a coppers hand.

"Dollar first!" he said briefly.

"No fear!" answered Bob promptly. "I know where your dollar will go, Dicky, and you may be in the calaboose to-morrow. Will you come along to Cedar Creek to-morrow and do something for me?"

Injun Dick looked disappointed, but he nodded.

Evidently he considered that a dollar in hand was worth two in the bush; but a dollar in the bush was better than nothing.

"Well, listen to me," said Bob. "You used to be a great chief, Dick. No end big gun Injun—eh?"

The Apache's eyes gleamed for a moment. "Ka-nook-ka great brave!" he said. "Hundred scalps in wigwam. Long ago."

"Just as well that it's long ago," murmured Frank Richards.

There was no doubt that Ka-nook-ka—all as Injun Dick—had lifted a good many scalps in the old days before his tribe was broken and scattered.

"Well, I want you to play at it to-morrow," said Bob. "Rub up your warpaint a bit, you know, and come along to Cedar Creek as a great warrior. Savvy?"

"You want Injun kill?"

"Oh, great Scott, no!" yelled Bob Lawless. "You get hanged if you kill anybody in Canada!"

The Red man grinned.

"No kill," he said. "Great white chief Henderson come with rope. Wah! I have spoken."

Mr. Henderson, the sheriff of Thompson, had evidently impressed the noble Red man with a respect for law and order.

"I don't want you to kill anybody!" exclaimed Bob. "I want you to scare a tenderfoot—make him believe that you're a regular rip-snorter of a red brave, after his scalp, and scare him out of his seven senses. But don't hurt him. Injun savvy?"

"Me savvy."

"It's a new master at our school," said Bob. "I'll point him out to you—a Mr. Shepherd."

"Injun know."

"You've seen him?" asked Frank.

"You bet! See him at store," explained Injun Dick. "Hear talk. Injun know. Wah!"

"Good!" said Bob. "Well, that's the antelope. He generally trots out for a walk along the creek after morning lessons in school. That's when you'll jump on him to-morrow. Give a yell, same as you used to on the warpath, and chase him. But mind you don't hurt him. It's only a joke."

Injun Dick grinned.

"Injun savvy."

"Then it's a trade?" said Bob.

"All O.K.!" said Injun Dick, holding out a coppers paw again. "Injun work rifle, you bet. Two dollar!"

"I said one dollar."

"Injun say two!" answered the Red man calmly.

"Well, it's worth it," said Bob. "Two dollars, if you give him a jolly good scare."

"You bet! One dollar to-day, one dollar to-morrow."

Bob looked doubtful.

"Well, here you are!" he said, handing over the dollar. "Mind, about half-past one to-morrow outside the school."

"Injun savvy."

Bob Lawless added a few more instructions, to which Injun Dick listened, with a longing eye fastened on the doorway of the saloon.

The moment the schoolboys mounted their horses the Red man made a dive for the doorway, and disappeared into the Red Dog.

The chums of Cedar Creek rode homeward in a merry humour. They were looking forward very keenly to the morrow.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Injun Dick on the Warpath.

S MILES broke out involuntarily on several faces in the school-room at Cedar Creek during lessons the next morning.

Bob Lawless had confided his little scheme to some of his friends, and there was a happy anticipation of Injun Dick's visit.

Mr. Shepherd had no suspicion of the surprise that awaited him after lessons.

But a chortle ran round among the schoolboys when they were dismissed.

Miss Meadows glanced along the table at the school dinner with a somewhat suspicious eye.

She could discern that there was something, half-suppressed, going on, though she could not guess what it was.

After dinner, Mr. Shepherd strolled away from the schoolhouse.

He was accustomed to take a stroll after the meal, before lessons were resumed, a habit that Bob Lawless had noticed.

When the Red Raider Comes to CEDAR CREEK There's Some Great Fun!

As he walked gracefully out of the gates the schoolboys exchanged blissful glances.

If Injun Dick was keeping his compact, he was already lurking in the wood by the creek, on the watch for the new master.

And there was no doubt that he was keeping it. He was after the other dollar.

Bob Lawless chuckled softly.

"Now look out for the circus!" he murmured.

"It's almost too bad!" said Beauclerc, laughing.

"Rats! He was born to be made fun of."

"Suppose he tumbles to it that Injun Dick's only a tame Injun, though," said Tom Lawrence.

Bob sniffed.

"That galoot wouldn't tumble to anything. You watch!"

"I tumbled fast enough when Todgers tried to play that game on me, and scare me with Injuns," said Hopkins.

"My dear man, you're not a genius, but you've got more brains in your boots than the Gentle Shepherd has in his head!" answered Bob.

The schoolboys gathered in a crowd round the gateway, to watch, in great anticipation.

Through the openings of the timber they could see Mr. Shepherd sauntering along the bank of the creek, twirling a cane and smoking a cheroot.

Suddenly the sauntering man stopped.

The twirling cane dropped from his hand, and the cheroot slanted down as his teeth lost their grip of it.

Mr. Shepherd's eyes were fixed upon a horrid sight that had just dawned upon him.

The bushes near the creek had parted, with a slight rustle, and from the opening a fierce, red face glared out.

It was the face of a Red Indian, but not the "tame" Indian of the kind Mr. Shepherd had seen on the Canadian railways and ranches.

The face was aquiline and strongly marked in features, the eyes black and deep-set and glittering.

The coppery hue of the face was half-hidden by stripes of black and white war-paint, daubed on thickly.

Feathers were stuck in the matted hair.

The master of Cedar Creek stared, frozen, at the terrible vision.

The Redskin stared out at him, motionless, with eyes that glittered like a snake's.

A coppery hand came into view, grasping a tomahawk.

Slowly the bushes parted, and the Indian crept forth, directly towards the horrified man on the bank of the creek.

His motion was slow and stealthy, noiseless as that of an animal creeping on its prey.

Mr. Shepherd stood rooted to the ground. His limbs failed him.

Like a bird fascinated by a serpent, he stared, without motion, at the terrible figure creeping on him.

His face was deadly white, and he scarcely breathed.

Suddenly the Indian made a spring, at the same time giving utterance to a fearful whoop, and brandishing his tomahawk.

Then Mr. Shepherd woke to life, as it were.

He made a frantic bound backwards.

"Oh! Ah! Keep off!" he panted.

Whoop!

Brandishing his tomahawk furiously, the Redskin rushed at him.

Mr. Shepherd was unarmed, and believing, as he did, that this was a savage Redskin on the warpath, it was no wonder that he turned and fled frantically for the lumber school.

Like a deer he ran up the rugged path to the school.

His hat flew off, his hair blew out as he raced along towards the crowd of schoolboys at the gates.

Fast on his track, whooping wildly, came Injun Dick, with brandished tomahawk.

Whoop!

It was a blood-curdling yell, such as Ka-noon-ka had often uttered in the old days, when he was on the warpath against Comanches, or Piutes, or white soldiers.

In fact, it probably seemed like old times to the Apache to be howling on the track of a fleeing paleface.

Mr. Shepherd had not hitherto displayed any athletic proclivities at the lumber school, but now he showed the Cedar Creek fellows that he was, at least, a first-class man in a foot-race.

He waved his hands wildly to the boys as he came tearing on.

"Run!" he shouted.

"What? How? What's the row?" called back Bob Lawless.

"Red Indians! Run for your lives!"

"Run!" yelled Bob Lawless, choking back his laughter. "Indians, you chaps—scalp-hunters you know! Bolt for it!"

The whole crowd joined in the joke.

With a yell expressive of terror the schoolboys turned and bolted in at the gates, Mr. Shepherd tearing in after them.

They fully expected to see him bolt for the schoolhouse like a rabbit for its burrow.

But instead of that, Mr. Shepherd seized the big, heavy gate and swung it shut.

With hurried hands he jammed the bars into place.

Crash!

Injun Dick arrived only a second too late, and fairly hurled himself upon the gate, which shook and rattled under the impact.

Whoop!

Mr. Shepherd reeled back from the gate, panting.

"Into the house, quick!" he shouted.

"What are we to go into the house for?" exclaimed Molly Lawrence.

"Quick, quick! Indians!"

The girl stared at him blankly.

"Indians!" she repeated. "What stuff?"

"Come on, Molly!" yelled Bob. "Do you want to be scalped?"

"Scalped! Nonsense!"

Whoop!

Over the gate rose a terrifying face into view—the war-painted face of the Apache.

Bob caught Molly by the arm and rushed her into the porch.

"Who is it, Bob?" she panted. "Is it a joke?"

"You've hit it!" grinned Bob. "But slush!"

Boys and girls had crowded into the schoolhouse. Mr. Shepherd followed them in, and slammed the door and bolted it.

Then he stood panting.

It was with difficulty that the practical jokers suppressed their mirth.

But, as a matter of fact, Mr. Shepherd had risen in their estimation a little.

He certainly was an ass, but he had shown courage. Instead of bolting for safety, as they had expected, he had seen to the safety of the boys and girls first.

It was true that they were not in any danger, but the Gentle Shepherd was not aware of that trifling detail.

Bang!

The Apache's tomahawk smote the door with a crash that made the splinters fly.

Injun Dick had climbed over the gate, and he was raging outside the house itself now.

"Good heavens!" panted Mr. Shepherd.

"A gun—a gun! Is there a gun? For



ACCIDENT OR DESIGN? The noose of the lasso settled over Mr. Shepherd's shoulders, and the next moment he was jerked off his feet. He came down with a bump to the ground, and was whirled along in the dust at the end of the rope. "What—yah! Great heavens! Yaroooh!" yelled the new master. (See Chapter 2.)

mercy's sake, find a gun! Courage, you youngsters. I will defend you!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Frank Richards.

"A gun—a gun!" shouted Mr. Shepherd, as the Redskin, whooped outside again. "A gun a gun!"

"What is the matter?"

Cool and calm, Miss Meadows arrived on the scene.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Heroic!

INDIANS!" Mr. Shepherd panted out that word in explanation.

He expected to see Miss Meadows turn pale and shriek—perhaps faint. Miss Meadows would not have fainted if it had been a real Redskin raid, and certainly she was not likely to faint now.

She only looked astounded.

"Indians?" she repeated.

"Yes," panted the new master, "a Redskin raid, Miss Meadows! Good heavens! I was under the impression that this part of the country was quite settled. I have seen only one, so far, but doubtless they are numerous. Bless my soul!"

Whoop!

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bob Lawless to his chums, in dismay. "The silly ass is carrying it too far. I didn't mean all this."

Crash!

"Have you a gun, Miss Meadows? I can use a rifle. For Heaven's sake find me a weapon before they break in, or all our lives may be sacrificed."

"What can this mean?" exclaimed the amazed schoolmistress. "Calm yourself, Mr. Shepherd! There are no wild Indians in this section, or within a hundred miles."

"Madam, I have been attacked by a savage brave in warpaint. I have barely eluded him with my life!"

"Impossible!"

"Can you not hear him?"

Whoop!

Miss Meadows went to the window. She pulled back the shutter and looked out.

Outside, Injun Dick was executing a kind of war-dance in front of the house, and giving utterance to a succession of terrific whoops.

Probably the noble Red man had primed himself for the adventure with some deep draughts of the Red Dog fire-water; certainly he was in a state of great excitement.

In his warpaint Miss Meadows did not immediately recognise him, though she had often seen the old Apache in the streets of Thompson.

She stared at the wild figure in astonishment.

"What—who can it be?" she exclaimed.

"Miss Meadows, pray stand back! If there is a rifle in the house I can bring him down from the window!" exclaimed Mr. Shepherd.

"You will certainly do nothing of the kind, sir!" said Miss Meadows tartly. "The man appears to be intoxicated; but that is no reason for shooting him, and I should certainly not allow it."

"Miss Meadows, the man as you call him, is a savage Indian, and I barely escaped from his hands with my life!"

"Nonsense!"

"Wha-a-at!"

Miss Meadows threw open the lattice.

The Redskin heard the sound, and turned to the window at once, whooping and flourishing his tomahawk.

Through the window Bob Lawless watched him in dismay.

He had never intended this.

His scheme had been to scare the new master, and send him bolting for safety, and there he had expected the joke to end.

Injun Dick was overdoing it with a vengeance.

Probably the fire-water accounted for that, or perhaps the Apache was bent on fully earning the promised dollar.

He came up to the window, raging.

"Whoop!"

Miss Meadows looked at him sternly.

"What are you doing here?" she exclaimed.

"Whoop!"

Mr. Shepherd rushed into Miss Meadows' study, where he remembered to have seen a gun hanging on the wall.

He grabbed down the gun, and dashed back into the hall with it.

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In his excitement he did not pause to think whether it was loaded or not.

"Stand aside, Miss Meadows!" he shouted.

"I can get him from here!"

He threw the gun to his shoulder.

"Stop!" shrieked Miss Meadows, in great alarm. "Are you insane? Put down that gun at once!"

Bob Lawless rushed at the new master, grasped the barrel, and forced the gun downwards to the floor.

Click!

If the firearm had been loaded the bullet would have found a billet in the pine-plank floor.

As it happened, it was not loaded. Miss Meadows was not careless enough to keep loaded firearms within the reach of school-boys.

Only a click resulted as the trigger was pulled.

But the sight of the gun had been enough for Injun Dick, who jumped back from the window with a yell as he saw it levelled.

Injun Dick had faced loaded firearms in his time, and he knew that they were dangerous, especially in foolish and reckless hands.

"Where are the cartridges?" shouted Mr. Shepherd.

The cartridges are locked up, and will remain so!" snapped Miss Meadows. "For goodness' sake, sir, listen to reason!"

But Mr. Shepherd was not in a state of mind to listen to reason.

"Madam, you do not understand your danger!" he exclaimed. "But I will deal with this Indian. He seems to be alone here. Will you find me some cartridges at once?"

"Certainly not! I—"

"Madam, do you not understand that he may scalp the stableman or Mr. Slimmey while we are talking here?" exclaimed Mr. Shepherd. "I cannot leave them to their fate!"

He tore down the bar from the door.

"Bar the door after me!" he shouted.

And, with that, he rushed out of the porch, the unloaded gun in his hands.

"Bless my soul!" she exclaimed dazedly.

"Fortunately, the gun is not loaded!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the school crowd. They could restrain it no longer.

"Boys! Lawless! Richards!"

"Come on!" shouted Bob. "Injun Dick may hurt him if he goes for him with that gun!"

"Injun Dick!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"Is that Indian Injun Dick?"

"I—I suspect so, ma'am," said Bob.

The schoolboys did not bar the door after Mr. Shepherd, as he had so heroically bidden them.

They swarmed out into the playground, shouting with merriment.

Quite an exciting scene was being enacted there.

Injun Dick did not like the gun. He did not know that it was unloaded.

As Mr. Shepherd headed for him the Apache fled.

The sight of the Redskin running greatly encouraged the young man, and naturally he determined that the bloodthirsty savage should not escape.

He rushed fiercely in pursuit.

"Stop!" he thundered. "Surrender, or you are a dead man!"

In a moment of less excitement the tender-foot master would not have expected a savage Red brave to understand English.

But, as a matter of fact, the Apache did understand, and he stopped at once.

"No shoot Injun Dick!" he yelled, throwing up his hands as Mr. Shepherd levelled the gun.

"Keep your hands up!" rapped out Mr. Shepherd victoriously. "Oh dear! Mind! I'll shoot if you offer to resist!"

"Injun Dick good Injun!" howled the Apache. "No shoot Injun Dick! Great white chief Henderson come along with rope, you bet!"

Even Mr. Shepherd realised that that was extraordinary language for an Indian on the warpath to use. He did not know that Injun Dick had picked up his English in the saloons and on the ranches.

"You are my prisoner!" he rapped out.

"You bet!" answered the noble Red man cheerfully.

"Get along in front of me, and keep your hands up!"

"Injun savvy."

The Redskin marched towards the school-house at Mr. Shepherd's order, followed by the master with the levelled gun.

Had the Redskin been really a savage on the warpath, the sight would have been quite impressive. As it was, it made all Cedar Creek shriek with laughter.

Mr. Shepherd was too excited and triumphant even to notice the general merriment.

Miss Meadows hurried out of the house. Her face was crimson. She was keenly conscious of the utterly ridiculous scene.

"Mr. Shepherd, please put down that gun at once!" she exclaimed. "How can you be so absurd?"

"Absurd, madam!" ejaculated the new master. "I have taken this savage Indian prisoner!"

"The man is not a savage Indian!" almost shouted Miss Meadows. "He is a disreputable person from the neighbouring town, and is apparently intoxicated. He is perfectly well known here."

"Wha-a-at!"

Mr. Shepherd lowered the gun. The howls of laughter on all sides made some impression at last.

Injun Dick was grinning like a hyena. The comic side of the matter appealed even to the stolid Red man.

Miss Meadows gave the Red man a stern look.

"Why are you playing this foolish trick here?" she exclaimed.

"Scare fool white man," answered Injun Dick innocently. "Young white chief ask Injun Dick scare fool white man. Wah!"

"What!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Then it is a foolish joke of some boy here! I suspected as much!"

Bob Lawless gave a groan, and shook his fist at Injun Dick from behind Miss Meadows.

The unsuspecting Indian had given the game away with a vengeance.

But Injun Dick did not understand the shaking of the fist. He looked at Bob with an expression of injured inquiry.

"All O.K., bully rook!" he exclaimed.

"One dollar for Injun. You pay!" And he held out his coppery hand.

"So it was you, Lawless, who induced the Indian to come here and play this absurd prank?" said Miss Meadows very quietly.

"Only a little joke ma'am!" groaned Bob. "I—I didn't mean the silly chump to carry it so far!"

"Go away at once!" said Miss Meadows to the Indian. "At once! Do you hear?"

"Young white chief pay dollar first!" said Injun Dick. "Injun thirsty! Want fire-water! Wah! I have spoken!"

Bob Lawless pitched the dollar at him.

Injun Dick picked it up, grinned, and then, draping his tattered blanket round him, stalked away with great dignity.

He left the whole school yelling.

Mr. Shepherd, with a very red face, hurried into the house, trying to keep the gun as much out of sight as possible as he went.

"Silence!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "There is nothing to laugh at! Lawless, I shall come you! Follow me!"

Bob Lawless came out a few minutes later, rubbing his hands ruefully.

Mr. Shepherd did not take his class that afternoon. He hid his blushes in his own quarters. And quite a number of boys and girls were called over the coals that afternoon for laughing in class!

THE END.

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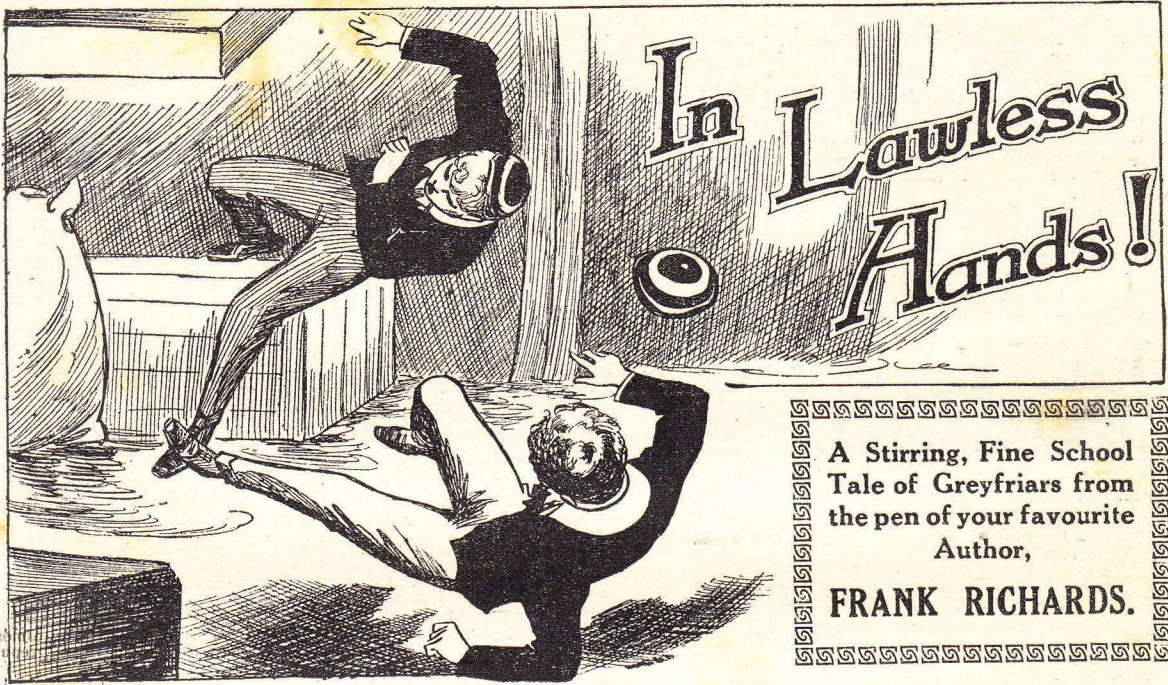
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Goal!

"ONE!" said Bob Cherry. The crowd of juniors stood round expectantly. They were just opposite the doorway of the gymnasium at Greyfriars, at a distance of ten yards. Frank Nugent had placed a footer carefully in position. Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, was preparing to kick.

It was certainly not usual for the Remove fellows to practise shooting for goal, with the doorway of the gym as an object. It was due to Skinner. The chums of the Remove had been punting the ball about in the Close while waiting for the dinner-bell, when Skinner had made the suggestion. He made it in the form of a remark that Wharton couldn't possibly bring off the kick. And as Wharton felt that he could, he intended to prove that fact to all and sundry.

Quite a crowd of Removites stood round, curious to see whether the goal would come off. Skinner was grinning in a peculiar manner. He had one eye on Harry Wharton and one on the doorway of the gym.

"Two!" said Bob Cherry. Wharton calculated the distance. It was not an easy kick, but he thought he could bring it off; and he wondered a little at the grin on Skinner's face. It was a matter of no great moment to Harry Wharton, but Skinner seemed to be tremendously interested in that kick. Skinner of the Remove was a humorist, with somewhat peculiar ideas of humour; but Wharton did not see where the joke came in, in challenging him to bring off that kick.

Bob Cherry held up his hand. **"Three!"** Wharton kicked for goal. Just as his toe smote the leather there was a sudden yell of warning from Frank Nugent:

"Hold on! Look out!"
But the warning came too late!

The footer was whizzing through the air.

Wharton gave a gasp. Right in the doorway of the gym appeared the form of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove. He was chatting with Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, and both were coming out of the gym.

Mr. Quelch heard the shout, and glanced round towards the juniors, and as he did so the whizzing leather reached him.

Wharton had intended it to whiz right through the doorway of the gym. But Mr. Quelch's portly form was filling up the doorway just then. The footer caught Mr. Quelch full upon the chest, and there was a startled cry from the Remove master. He was utterly unprepared for the shock. He staggered backwards, and sat down in the doorway with a gasp like air escaping from a puncture.

"Oh!" stammered all the juniors at once.

Mr. Quelch sat in the doorway, dazed, his gown and his face splashed with mud. That footer had been punted about the Close for some time, where there were puddles left by the late rain. It was not clean. Mr. Quelch's mortar-board fell off, and he sat, bare-headed, panting for breath.

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Bob Cherry. **"You've been and gone and done it now."**

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tain't a laughing matter, you asses!"

"I—I didn't know Quelch was there!" gasped Wharton. Then he swung round furiously on Skinner. **"But you did, you rotter! You knew Quelch was there. You knew he was just coming out. You wanted me to catch him with the footer!"**

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Skinner. He was doubled up with merriment. His little joke had come off even better than he could have hoped.

But his yell of laughter had changed suddenly to a yell of anguish. Wharton

rushed at him, and got his head into chancery, and pommelled away furiously. He knew what he had to expect for bowling his Form master over with a muddy football, and his idea was to make the humorist of the Remove pay for it in advance.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Skinner. **"Leggo! It was only a j-j-joke! Yaroooh!"**

Thump, thump, thump!

"Wharton!"
"Ye-e-e-s, sir!"

Harry Wharton released Skinner at Mr. Quelch's sharp voice. The Form master was on his feet again now, striding towards the juniors, bare-headed, mud-splashed, and furious.

Skinner staggered away, dabbing his nose with his handkerchief. It needed it.

"Wharton, was it you kicked that football at me?"

"I—I kicked it, sir. I didn't mean it for you."

"What!"

"I—I was only trying to get a goal in the gym doorway, sir."

Mr. Quelch's brow was like thunder. His dignity as a Form master had been very much upset, and the bump on the ground had jarred him. The Removites had seldom seen him so angry.

"Whether you knew I was there or not makes no difference, Wharton!" he rapped out. **"Anybody might have been coming out of the gymnasium—the Head himself."**

"I—I didn't think, sir—"

"You are old enough to think. You must learn to think, Wharton!" thundered the Remove master.

"Ye-es, sir," said Wharton meekly. **"I—I'll try, sir."**

It was an attempt at the soft answer which turneth away wrath. But Mr. Quelch's wrath was not to be turned away.

"Follow me to my study, Wharton."
"Ye-e-es, sir."

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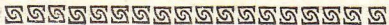
In the Hands of Reckless, Daring Crooks—What Chance Have the Greyfriars Chums?

Wingate picked up Mr. Quelch's mortar-board and handed it to him. The Remove master strode away rustling towards the School House, and Harry followed him reluctantly. He knew what was going to happen in Mr. Quelch's study, and he wetted his palms in anticipation. Mr. Quelch had great muscular powers with the cane.

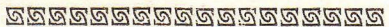
Wharton followed him into his study. Mr. Quelch wiped the mud from his face before the looking-glass, the junior waiting with unenviable feelings.

Then the Remove master turned to Wharton.

"I think that a severe punishment may teach you to think before acting on another occasion, Wharton!" he rapped out. "Hold out your hand!"



TAKE MY TIP AND



He picked up a cane. Thwack, thwack, thwack, thwack! Two on each hand—and they were "twisters"! Harry Wharton bore the infliction like a hero. He set his lips hard together, and made no sound.

"You will be detained until four o'clock this afternoon," said Mr. Quelch. "The loss of your half-holiday will give you an ample opportunity for thinking."

Wharton's face lengthened. The caning had been severe enough, but he would rather have had it doubled than have had his half-holiday confiscated. The Famous Five had planned a little excursion for that afternoon, and Wharton did not want to be left out. The Cliff House girls were expecting them, and—

"If you please, sir—"
 "You may go, Wharton!"
 "If—if you wouldn't mind caning me again, sir, and letting me off for this afternoon—" ventured Harry.

Mr. Quelch pointed to the door with his cane.

"If you do not go at once, Wharton, and without another word, I shall certainly cane you again. But under no circumstances shall I let you off for this afternoon! Go!"

There was no more to be said. Mr. Quelch was not a gentleman to be argued with. Harry Wharton left the study in silence.

The dinner-bell was ringing, and Wharton's face was very glum as he took his place at the Remove table with his comrades.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Companions in Misfortune!

"WELL, this is rotten!"
 Bob Cherry offered that opinion with a lugubrious expression. And the other members of the Co. echoed his remark. It was indeed rotten.

As it was a half-holiday that afternoon, the chums of the Remove had planned a little outing, which, of course, would not be complete without their leader. They were to call at Cliff House School for Marjorie Hazeldene and Miss Clara, and, after a ramble along the cliffs, they were to have tea in the smuggler's cave. The supplies had been purchased, and Johnny Bull had his cooking apparatus

all ready packed. And the afternoon was to have been most enjoyable—but for that unlucky goal in the doorway of the gym.

In the Remove footer matches Wharton had sometimes saved the situation by a goal in the nick of time; but on the present occasion that goal was a goal too many.

Wharton was detained until four o'clock—that is, till the early wintry dusk was setting in. The afternoon was simply "mucked up" for him, as Bob Cherry expressed it with more emphasis than elegance.

"And for us, too," added Bob dolefully. "We sha'n't enjoy the afternoon, knowing that you are stuck here writing out verbs!"

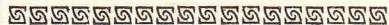
"Well, it can't be helped," said Harry, with a forced cheerfulness. "After all, it was my own fault. I ought to have guessed that Skinner was up to something. Confound him!"

"I'll look for him and punch his nose, if you like," offered Johnny Bull. Wharton laughed.

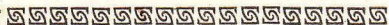
"I've done that once, and it wouldn't improve matters, anyway—to say nothing of Skinner's nose. You fellows get off at the time arranged—I can stand it. I've got to, anyway!"

"Good mind not to go!" said Nugent. "Must! Marjorie and Clara are expecting us. You can tell them I can't come, that's all. But I'll give you a look in later," added Wharton. "I can get out at four, and get to the cave by half-past, so I can walk back to Cliff House with you."

"Good egg!"
 The party was to have consisted of six juniors—Wharton, Nugent, Bob, Johnny Bull, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, and Hazeldene—Marjorie's brother. The five who were at liberty made their prepara-



DON'T MISS



tions for starting, and Harry Wharton went into the Form-room. He was feeling a little downhearted, but really he realised that he could not expect Mr. Quelch to overlook that goal. As he sat in the Form-room and opened his Latin grammar, Skinner looked in. Skinner's nose was swollen, but he was grinning. "I hear you can't go with the little party," he remarked.

"No," growled Wharton.
 "Sorry! Shall I go in your place?"
 "No!" snapped Harry.
 "Well, I only wanted to be obliging," grinned Skinner; "and I'm really sorry you caught Quelch with the footer. I had a bet with Smithy whether you'd catch Quelch or Wingate, and it turned out to be Quelch, so I won a bob!"

"Rotter!" said Wharton.
 "Rats!" said Skinner.

And he walked away chuckling. A few minutes later Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, glanced into the big, desolate Form-room, empty save for the detained junior sitting at his desk.

Wharton gave him a cold glance. He remembered Skinner's statement about the bet, and he was not feeling amiable towards the Bounder just then.

"Sorry you're detained!" said Vernon-Smith politely. "I suppose you can't get off?"

"No, I can't!"
 "Pity to spoil the party, though," the

Bounder suggested. "I'll tell you what—I'll go with the fellows instead of you, Wharton. I should like to."

"You can go and eat coke!" said Harry crossly. "I shouldn't be detained here if you hadn't made a silly, idiotic bet with Skinner!"

"Well, I'd like to join the party in your place—"
 "Ask the other fellows, then, and be blowed!"

The Bounder sniffed and walked away. As a matter of fact, he had already given Bob Cherry & Co. a hint on the subject, and he had not found them at all anxious for his company in their excursion.

Wharton settled down to his verbs again, but his interruptions were not yet over. There were other fellows who liked the idea of joining the party with Marjorie Hazeldene in its number.

Coker, of the Fifth came into the Remove-room, and gave the detained junior a nod of unusual affability.

"I hear you can't go on a little excursion you were planning," Coker remarked. "I'll tell you what, Wharton—I'll go in your place, and—and look after Miss Hazeldene."

"Go and eat coke!" was Wharton's reply.

"Now, look here, Wharton," said Coker persuasively. "I've spoken to Cherry, and he was cheeky about it. You just say that you want me to go in your place—"

"But I don't!"
 "If you are looking for a thick ear—" began Horace Coker wrathfully.

Wharton disengaged the inkpot from its receptacle in his desk, and waited for Coker.

Coker was striding towards him. But he seemed to change his mind then; and, with a frown, he stalked out of the Form-room.

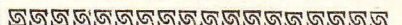
Wharton grinned, and went on with his verbs. He wondered who would be the next substitute to offer himself.

It turned out to be Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove. Bunter rolled in, his fat face very red, and his little round eyes blinking with indignation behind his big spectacles.

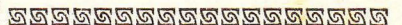
"I say, Wharton— Look here—I'm going with that party! As you're left out, of course, somebody will be wanted in your place. I'm going!"

"Shurrup!"
 "You know jolly well that Marjorie Hazeldene would like me to come!" howled Bunter. "Bob Cherry knows it, and that's why the beast kicked me when I said I was coming!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "There's nothing to cackle at. I'm jolly well going," said Bunter. "Marjorie won't enjoy the afternoon if I'm not there. You know that—you all know it! I despise this personal jealousy you fellows are always showing. A chap can't help being good-looking,



THIS YEAR'S "HOLIDAY ANNUAL"



and if the girls run after him a bit—why—Yah! Oh!"

Biff!
 Wharton's Latin grammar caught Billy Bunter upon his ample chest, and the Owl of the Remove gave a sudden yelp

(Continued on page 16.)

An Amazing Plot to Rob Greyfriars! A Tale with a Thrill in Every Line!

BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

Greyfriars.

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. 98.

Week Ending November 25th, 1922.

ON THE TRACK OF THE TREZZURE!

A Tail of Fierce Adventure in the Congo, specially written for "Billy Bunter's Weekly" by **DICKY NUGENT.**

"We sail the ocean blew!" chanted Dick Dauntless.

"And our saucy ship's a bewty!" chimed in Frank Fearless.

The two chums, who figger as the heroes of our story, had set sail in a small rowing-boat for the Congo, where they intended to hunt for berried trezzure.

They were now passing through the Bay of Biscay, that dreadful seething cauldron, in which so many gallent ships have gone to their doom.

The little rowing-boat was tost about like a cockleshell. Grate waves came crashing over its quarter-deck. Heavy seas rushed into its port-holes.

But Dauntless was dauntless. And Fearless was fearless. They had been in worse predikermments than this, in the corse of their career. They strapped themselves to their seats for fear of being washed overboard, and they 'arfed and joaked as if they were thoroughly enjoying themselves.

"When do you think we shall strike Africa?" inkwired Frank Fearless.

"In about two month's time, with luck," was the reply.

"But we've only got enuff provisions on board to last us three days!"

"That duzzent matter. We can stop one of the big liners, and ask them to shy us some dog-biskits!"

"If this sea gets much ruffer," said Frank Fearless, "we shall capsize."

"In that case, we shall have to cling to the wreckage until help comes," said Dick Dauntless. "The water is rather chilly at this time of the year, but it can't be helped!"

Even as Dick spoke a giant braker caught the rowing-boat amidsthips, and it ceased to be a rowing-boat. It turned turtle!

The two chums were plunged into that seething cauldron of boiling, icy water. They clutched at the overturned boat, and hung on for dear life.

"Are you all right, Frank?" panted Dick Dauntless.

"Yes, rather! I feel a trifle damp, but I'm quite safe. Have you still got the wooden image safe and sound, Dick?"



The Dauntless Adventurers in Deadly Peril.

"You bet!"

The little wooden image, by the way, was the clue to the berried trezzure in the Congo. A diagram had been scratched on it, showing eggactly where the trezzure was hidden.

If Dick and Frank were to lose that idol, it would be fatal. It wouldn't matter if they lost their lives in that trecherous sea, so long as they retained possession of the image.

For hours and hours they clung to the reckage, until they were cramped in every lim.

Darkness fell over the land.
"We are in a dreadful plight, Dick!" said Frank Fearless. "Alone on the wide, wide sea!"

"Hang on!" ansered Dick Dauntless. "I've a feeling in my boans that help will come soon."

Even as he spoke, a huge liner came bouncing over the waves. It was lighted with bicycle-lamps four and aft.

"Ship ahoy!" yelled Dick Dauntless.
"Save us, or we perrih!" shrieked Frank Fearless.

The grate liner rumbled to a standstill. A swarthy face peered over the handbars of the vessel.

"Ahoy, there! Who are you?" came a harsh voice.

"Two brave British boys, shiprecked in the Bay of Biscay!" ansered Dick Dauntless. Instantly a rope was sent wirling through the air. The two chums clutched at it, and were hauled up on to the mane deck of the liner.

It was the kaptin of the vessel who had rescued them. Kaptin Krook was his name. "Where are you bound for?" asked Dick Dauntless.

"Africa," was the reply.
"Oh, good! You might put us down at the Congo, will you? We shall be pleased to work our passidge."

"Eye, eye!" said the kaptin.
The two chums were taken to a nice, cosy cabin, where they were given a good round meal, to which they did fool justiss.

"This is top-hole!" said Frank Fearless. "We shall get to the Congo about six weeks sooner than we antispipated."

"Yes, rather!"
"Mind you guard the wooden image carefully, Dick! I have an idear that Kaptin Krook may try to pinch it."
"He'll be unlucky if he does!" was Dick's comment.

Sure enuff, an attempt was made to steel the idol that very night.

Our heroes were asleep in their bunks during the midnight watch, when a stelthy figger came crawling on all fours into their cabin. It was the figger of Kaptin Krook!

The skoundrel was aware that Dick Dauntless had the wooden image in his possession.
"Belay me, but I shall be a loser if it isn't under the kid's pillow!" muttered the kaptin.

With stelthy fingers he groped underneeth Dick's head.

Now, Dick was a very light sleeper. The slightest wisper awoke him. He opened his eyes, and, although it was pitch-dark, he took in the situation at a glance.

Klenshing his fist, Dick drove it fool into the kaptin's face.

"Take that, you theeving rotter!" he cried. The kaptin spat out a fierce imprecation. At the same instant, Frank Fearless awoke.

"What's wrong, Dick?" he cried.
"I caught this skoundrel trying to steel the image!" ansered Dick. "Give me a hand—quick!"

The kaptin fought with the strength of an oeks, but he was no match for our heroes. They overpowered him, and trust him up with rope, and took him along in his own cabin, and locked him in.

"You can stay there for the rest of the voyage!" shouted Dick Dauntless through the keyhole.

"Let me out, you young welps!" hist the kaptin.

But there was nothing doing.
Dick Dauntless took command of the ship, and the rest of the voyage passed without insident.

When the liner reached the west coast of Africa, Dick ran her ashore, and the two chums started off on their quest for the berried trezzure, which consisted of tusks of ivory.

Their reseption at the hands of the natives was distinctly hostile. They had a fight on

their hands before they had been in the Congo five minnits.

The natives were armed with sticks and clubs and cudgels and bows and arrows. But our heroes did not falter. They rushed into the fray, hitting out right and left, and the savvidge hoards were scattered like chaff before the reaper.

Dick and Frank pushed on through villidge after villidge. They had to fairly fight their way through the Congo. But they were skilled in the art of fisticuffs, and a sudden attack by a few duzen savvidges didn't worry them in the leest.

By night, they slept in the jungle, where they were frekwently attacked by wild elephants, wild bores, lions, tigers, and other domestick animals which infest the Congo.

It was not always easy to ward off the attacks of these savvidge broots, but our heroes used their peashooters and catterpults to good advantage, and they always won the day.

The narrowest squeak they had was when they were swimming across a river.

A tremenduss crockerdile suddenly rose to the surfis, and bore down upon them.

"Oh crumbs!" panted Dick Dauntless.

"We're fairly up against it now!"
But Frank Fearless was ready for the emergency. He whipped his jack-knife out of his belt, and dived under the water, until

YOU SIMPLY MUST NOT MISS NEXT WEEK'S Special Golf Number

he found himself underneeth the crockerdile. Then he proseded to puncture the monster in several places.

The water was stained a rich red purple, and the grate broot, barking with augwish, sank to the bottom.

"Well played, Frank!" cried Dick Dauntless, when his chum bobbed to the surfis. "That was a grate wheeze of yours! But for your presence of mind, we should now be inside the crockerdile."

Our heroes swam ashore, and continued their jerney. They had many feerce fights and hundreds of wild adventures before they discovered the hidden trezzure. But at last they came across the ivory tusks, and bore them back in triumph to England.

The affair made a grate stir in the newspapers, and Dick Dauntless and Frank Fearless became rich beyond the dreems of avarris.

"Here endeth the merry adventure!" said Dick. "What shall we do now, Frank? Take a cottage in the country, and live a quiet, restful life?"

"No jolly fear!" was the reply. "We'll take a brief rest, and then set fourth on some fresh adventures!"

And these fourthcoming adventures, dear readers, will be duly chronicied by that brainy and talented young orther, Dicky Nugent!

THE END.

EXTRACTS FROM THE St. Jim's School Magazine of a Hundred Years Ago. (Reprinted by kind permission of the Head.)

FOOTBALL. School versus Village.

"A thrilling game of football took place on Saturday last between teams representing St. Jim's and Rhyllcombe. The gateway of St. Jim's formed one of the goals, and the entrance to the village street formed the other. The ball, which was a large one, could be either pushed or kicked. The match commenced after dinner, and was due to finish at dusk. St. Jim's started very well, and at four o'clock in the afternoon a report came through that they had scored a goal. The Headmaster went down to the village on his tricycle to verify the report, and he found that a goal had indeed been scored, and that the villagers had taken the reverse badly, with the result that a free fight was in progress. The Headmaster

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By BAGGY TRIMBLE.

My dear Readers,—Here we are again, as large as life and twice as natcherall!

I have quite settled down to the editorial duties, and I feel as if I had been running this WEEKLY from the commencement. I sha'n't feel like handing over the reins to Billy Bunter when he gets back from the Congo.

Bunter, by the way, has written me a long letter, which I am printing in another kolum. The silly chump seems to think I am making a hash of things. He suffers from the deloosion that the WEEKLY can't get along without him. Which is stuff and nonsense!

I tried to stop my jellus rival, Fatty Wynn, from kontributing to this issew; but I beleave he intends to smuggle a sports article into the paper without my nollidge. He is a cunning porpuss, and no mistake!

I have had an awfully busy week, with the rezult that I am suffering from brain-fag, lassie-chewed, eye-strane, writer's cramp, and nervus tremmers. But I'm not going to throw up the sponge. A Trimble always sticks to his post. (You'd agree with this if you saw me collar my letters every morning!)

I have replied to Billy Bunter's letter, telling him there's no cause for him to get panick-stricken. "The weals are revolving quite smoothly, Billy," I wrote. "In fact, the WEEKLY has never been so prosperus. This is entirely dew to my editorship." I don't suppose Bunter will like this letter, in which case he will have to do the other thing!

From my studdy window I can see the aged and decreppit postman staggering across the quad with a sackful of letters. More work for my already overtaxed brain! But there! What's the use of worrying? I must put my nose to the grindstone once more, and carry on!

Bong swore, dear readers, as our French friends say.

Yours sinseerly,

BAGGY TRIMBLE.

thereupon ordered the game to cease, and his pupils to return to the school. The aid of the village constable had to be solicited before the disturbance could be quelled.

"The village has now been placed out of bounds to St. Jim's boys, and no further matches will take place against the Rhyllcombe team, by order of the Headmaster."

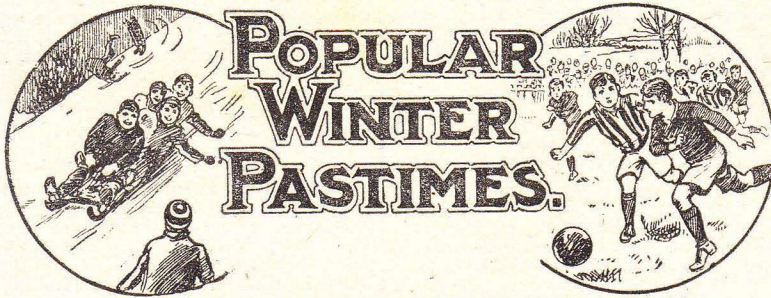
Serious Riot at St. Jim's.

"In consequence of the Headmaster having forbidden further football matches with Rhyllcombe, a rebellion was organised by a number of Sixth-Formers. The malcontents called meetings of protest, and afterwards barred themselves out from the rest of the school. They were given an opportunity to surrender without punishment, but they refused to avail themselves of it. Finally, they were forcibly ejected from their stronghold by various members of the school staff; and the Headmaster found it necessary to expel the ringleaders, Stanning and Dudley major.

"The Headmaster wishes it to be clearly understood that any further rebellions of this nature will be summarily dealt with."

[Supplement II.]

If You Want a Real Good Laugh, read "Billy Bunter's Weekly"!



Several Rookwood Celebrities state their views on this important Subject.

JIMMY SILVER.

For a really glorious winter pastime, I don't think one need look further than football. Who shall describe the joys of each thrilling tussle on muddy or on frost-bitten grounds? Football is a grand game, and a healthy game, and an essentially British game. It has its detractors like every other sport; but the people who decry football because they consider it too rough are either nabby-pabby folks or killjoys. Anyway, precious little notice is taken of them. Some people say that football, having been commercialised, is now merely a money-grabbing affair. There is, unfortunately, an element of truth in this, but the remark does not apply to amateur and schoolboy football. There are dozens of winter sports and pastimes, but none is so completely satisfying as football. That's my opinion, anyway, and others are entitled to their own. Long live footer!

TOMMY DODD:

Heigh-ho for the joys of tobogganing! I only wish the clerk of the weather would give us some snow, and plenty of it, so that we could enjoy this fascinating pastime to the full! I know of no sensation so glorious as to shoot down a snow-covered hillside, whizzing at breakneck speed, and hoping to alight on something soft at the bottom! The great drawback to tobogganing is that the weather conditions are seldom favourable for it. When this delightful sport is not available, I prefer football, either Rigger or Association. I can get nearly a hundred per cent. of enjoyment out of either code.

KIT ERROLL:

Cross-country running is my favourite winter pastime. It is a strenuous business, and calls for plenty of stamina and endurance. It is for this very reason that it appeals to me so much. I love racing across fields, and jumping ditches, and vaulting gates, and toiling uphill and speeding down. I don't suppose many fellows will agree with my choice. The majority will plump for football. But one can have too much of a good thing, and I have often thought that far too much time is devoted to football by comparison with other sports. I think that cross-country runs, which only take place once in a blue moon, should be indulged in more often. Anyway, whenever a cross-country run is announced, trust me to be there!

VAL MORNINGTON:

I am inclined to think that the best winter pastime is going to sleep on a study couch, with a roaring fire in the offing, so to speak. I shall probably be dubbed a hopeless slacker by my indignant schoolfellows, but I still adhere to my opinion that a pleasant "forty winks" in a cosy study takes a deal of beating. Football is a ripping game, but it takes too much toll of a fellow's energy, by Jove!

ADOLPHUS SMYTHE:

What's wrong with dancing, begad? Give me the merry atmosphere of the ball-room every time! "On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined!" as old Byron says. I object to footer, because it ruffles the parting of a fellow's hair. I object to tobogganing, because you're a mass of bumps and bruises after whizzing from the top of a hill to the bottom. I object, in fact, to any game which gets one's togs in a mess. You can

dance, and remain immaculate from top to toe. Besides, it gives you a chance to exhibit your gracefulness before the members of the other sex. Therefore, again I say, what's wrong with dancing?

ALGY SILVER:

My favorite pastime in winter is a jolly old snowfight, with snowballs whizzing through the air like cannonballs! I hope we get plenty of snow this winter, then this child will be happy. As soon as we get the first snowfall, the noble army of fags, under my leadership, will challenge the Fourth Form to a snowfight. Oh, what lark!

TUBBY MUFFIN:

I have one pet pastime for winter, spring, summer, and autumn—and that's eating! All other pastimes pall into insignificance before this. Football, snowfights, tobogganing—bah! None of these sports is worth while, unless you've laid a solid foundation beforehand at the school tuckshop! I am more in my element at a studdy bankwett than I am on the football-field, which, after all, is perfectly natcheral. Our feet weren't fashioned to kick footballs with; on the other hand, our teeth were certainly made to eat with! What have you got to say to that, you scraggy scarecrows who don't believe in stuffing?

DICK OSWALD:

I am uncertain whether to give the palm to football or boxing. I am tremendously keen on both. A gruelling tussle on the football-field or a fast, fierce bout with the boxing-gloves appeal to me with equal force.

SERGEANT KETTLE:

Which I don't hold with these here winter pursoots, so I ain't got nothink to say on the subject! In my young days I was fond of a good stand-up fight with bare fists, but I'm too old and decrepit for that sort of thing now. Am I going to challenge Battling Siki, did I hear you ask? No, I ain't!

BUNTER'S LETTER TO TRIMBLE.

"Sumwhere on the Congo.
"Sumtime in November.

"My dear Baggie,—Ever since I came on this eggspedition I have not been able to get a wink of sleep at night through thinking about my 'Weekly' and how it is being conducted in my absence.

"Are you keeping the contributors up to skratz? Are you keeping a firm hand and a stern eye on Fatty Wynn, Tubby Muffin, and my miner? Or have there been strikes and rebellions, and wars or roomers of wars?

"When I think of my wonderful 'Weekly' being at your tender mercies, I can't help shuddering! I know what an awful ass you are—no offense meant—and I am so afraid you'll make a hash of things. Do you send the stuff regularly to the printers on press day? Do you consign all the dud kontributions to the waistpaper-basket, and publish all the good ones? Do you write reilly ripping editorials each week, just like mine?

ODE TO SERGEANT KETTLE!
By TEDDY GRACE.
(Of Rookwood.)

Sergeant, who fought at Waterloo
(At Charing Cross and Euston, too!)
Who led the boys at Bunker's Hill,
And, but for age, would lead them still.

On your behalf, I tune my lyre
(Don't throw these verses on the fire!),
But guard them like a precious treasure,
And read 'em, sergeant, at your leisure.

O! guardian of the Rookwood shop,
Stacked full of tarts and ginger-pop,
With rage and chagrin I could choke
(I happen to be stony-broke!)

Lend me, good sergeant, from your till
A humble tanner, if you will;
That I may buy a cod, or plaice,
To fill my inner Teddy Grace.

Or, if you'll give me goods on tick,
With dog-like joy your hands I'll lick
No brekker have I had to-day,
I overslept, I blush to say.

Pray lend an ear to this my plaint,
And be a sportsman and a saint.
Man wants but little here below,
Give me one tart, and then I'll go.

If you are deaf to my desire,
My furious eyes will flash with fire.
I'll never spend another cent.
Within your shop, my innocent!

But, no! You will not let me down,
And send me packing, with a frown.
You'll rescue me from slow starvation
And earn my lasting admiration.

Sergeant, who fought at Inkermann,
Take pity on me, if you can!
And give some grub, or else some
"ready"
To this faint, famished, feeble Teddy!

But, of course, it is stupid to ask such a thing. How can I eggspect you to have the brains of a Bunter? The fact is, my dear Baggie, you haven't the brains of a feed-mouse! (Again no offense meant.)

"We are having a wonderful time out in the Congo. I wish I had been born a savvidge! They have plenty to eat and drink, and don't have to worry about things like Latin and Greek, and histery and joggrophy. If it wasn't for the fact that my 'Weekly' demands my attention, I shouldn't come back. I should take the law into my own hands, and stay out here!"

"I will now give you a word of warning. If anything goes wrong with the 'Weekly' in my absence, look out for skwalls! I'll give you such a walloping that you'll imagine Joe Beckett and Battling Siki are attacking you at the same moment!"

"Duzzent it make you jellus to think that I'm having such a good time out here? I have had some first-rate feeds, all to myself, and I can picture your mouth watering."

"Tell the sub-editors that if they show any signs of slacking, I'll nock their heads together on my return!"

"Supper is now being prepared for our party, so I must give my pen a rest, and get busy with my jaws!"

"I remain,
"Your editor and employer,
"BILLY BUNTER."
THE POPULAR.—No. 20L.

IN LAWLESS HANDS.

(Continued from page 12.)

like a dog whose tail is trodden upon, and disappeared from the open doorway. There was the sound of a bump as he sat down in the passage.

"Ow! Ow! Beast!"
"Come in again!" said Wharton invitingly. "I've got the dictionary ready!"

But Billy Bunter did not accept that kind invitation. He didn't want the dictionary; the grammar was quite enough.

A quarter of an hour later there was a tramp of feet in the passage, and the little party came to say good-bye to Wharton. Bob Cherry was carrying a basket, and Johnny Bull a cricket-bag packed full of supplies.

"Well, we're just off," said Bob Cherry. "It's beastly leaving you here, Harry!"

"The beastfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, it's all right!" said Wharton, as cheerfully as he could. "I'll look in in time to walk back to Cliff House with you. So-long!"

"I was wondering if we could speak to Quelch," said Bob meditatively. "He is really an old sport, you know, at bottom, and if he knew he was spoiling a nice afternoon—"

"He might see reason," suggested Nugent.

Harry Wharton shook his head. "No go; he's too ratty! Better get off, and I'll join you as soon as I can."

"Oh, it's really beastly!" said Bob. "I really think old Quelch might have chosen some other time for bringing his hoof down. He's a troublesome old bounder, and— Why, what are you making that face for, Wharton?"

Wharton's face had become suddenly transfixed.

Bob knew the reason the next moment. "Cherry!"

Bob swung round in dismay. Framed in the doorway was the majestic figure of the Remove master, his eyes scintillating with anger.

Bob's jaw dropped. It was only too evident that Mr. Quelch had overheard his incautious words, and equally clear that there was trouble to come.

"I—I—I didn't—didn't see you, sir!" stammered Bob.

Mr. Quelch smiled sarcastically. "Probably not!" he agreed. "You would hardly have referred to me in such exceedingly disrespectful terms, Cherry, if you had known that I was within hearing!"

"N-n-n-unno, sir!"

"I came here," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "to see whether you were usefully occupied, Wharton. I find Cherry speaking of his Form master in exceedingly disrespectful terms. Cherry, you will kindly take your place at your desk! You will write out Latin conjugations for the remainder of the afternoon! You are detained for the same length of time as Wharton!"

"O-o-oh, sir!"

"You others may go! You are not allowed to speak to boys under detention, as you know very well."

"I—I say, sir—" stammered Bob.

"Not a word!"

Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree

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Singh and Hazel left the Form-room in silence. Bob Cherry, with a lugubrious look, sat down at his desk. And Mr. Quelch, with a final frown at the two companions in misfortune, left them to their uncongenial tasks.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Tea-Party!

MARJORIE HAZELDENE and Clara Trevelyn were waiting at the gate of Cliff House garden when the four juniors arrived there. Nugent was carrying the cricket-bag and Johnny Bull the basket.

"Where is Harry?" asked Marjorie.

"And Bob?" asked Miss Clara.

"Detained!" said Nugent lugubriously. "Rotten, isn't it? They're coming to the cave later—as soon as they can get away."

"Oh, I'm sorry!" said Marjorie.

And Miss Clara, who was more emphatic in her expressions, said:

"Rotten!"

And they started.

It was a clear, sunshiny winter's afternoon. Pegg Bay lay stretched, a great sheet of blue, at the bottom of the cliffs, and beyond were the broad, rolling waters of the German Ocean. On the shore, backed by big grey cliffs, clustered the little fishing village of Pegg. Out on the bay several boats with brown patched sails were to be seen, and a small steamer lay at anchor.

As they rambled along the cliff-path, the party paused to look down on the bright scene spread beneath their feet.

"Ripping, ain't it?" said Johnny Bull.

Frank Nugent's eyes were upon the steamer. The vessel looked a common cargo tramp, not at all cleanly or handsome to the view. There were half a dozen men lounging on her deck, smoking. They were very small in the distance, but Frank could make out that they were foreigners.

"That ship came in yesterday," said Marjorie, following Nugent's glance. "We can see it from the windows of Cliff House. Someone said they have had an accident to their engines, and have put in here for repair before going on to the Thames."

"They don't seem very busy, though," Nugent remarked.

Marjorie shook her head.



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"No; nothing seems to have been done whilst she has been here. I saw the captain come ashore when we were out with Miss Primrose this morning. I think he is a Russian."

Nugent whistled.

"She looks like a cargo tramp," he remarked. "I wonder what a Russian cargo tramp is doing in these parts? Hallo, they're lowering a boat!"

A boat dropped from the steamer, with two men at the oars, and a man who looked like a mate sitting in the stern. The boat pulled shoreward, but not towards the village. A jutting cliff hid it from the sight of the party on the high path.

They pursued their way along the cliff path, and the steamer was blotted from their sight by the rugged cliffs. It passed from their minds also, and they forgot the rough-looking vessel and the dark-faced seamen clustering on her deck. Little did they think at that moment what the visit of that cargo tramp to Pegg Bay meant for them.

The smuggler's cave was amid the great rocks of the Shoulder. In olden time the great cave had been used by smugglers running contraband cargoes; and there were stories told by old fishermen in Pegg of fierce fights in those dark recesses between Revenue men and desperate smugglers. But the cave was lonely and deserted now, save when it was explored by schoolboys, or by the "trippers" who came down to Pegg in the summer months.

Cool and shady was the interior of the great cave, as the party reached it. It had been a long and rugged walk from Cliff House, and they had taken their time, so they were ready for a rest when they reached the cave.

"We'll get tea ready, and have it all ready for Harry and Bob when they come," Marjorie suggested.

"Good egg!" said Nugent. "We've got a couple of bike lanterns here, in case it's dark in the cave. Outside it's light enough to get home."

And the bag and the basket were unpacked.

They expected Wharton and Bob Cherry to arrive by half-past four, and it was nearly four o'clock already. And getting tea in the cave was likely to take some time. Johnny Bull set up the spirit-stove, and filled the kettle from the bottle of water, and then looked round in rather a dubious way.

"Did you bring the methylated, Nugent?" he asked.

Nugent shook his head.

"No; you put it in the bag."

"Ahem! I can't see it in the bag."

"Perhaps it's in the basket?" suggested Hazel hopefully.

They searched through the basket, but the methylated spirit was not to be found.

"It must be there somewhere," growled Johnny Bull. "How on earth are we going to make tea or cook eggs without it?"

"Well, you must be an ass, Johnny! I thought you put it in the bag."

Johnny Bull grunted.

"I thought you put it in the basket."

Marjorie smiled.

"Then we sha'n't be able to make tea," she remarked. "Never mind; there is the milk. We can do without the tea."

"Well, Nugent is an ass, all the same!"

"You mean you are a duffer!" said Nugent warmly.

"Now, look here—"

"Look here—"

The argument was getting warm; but

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it was stopped by an exclamation from Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who was unfastening a packet of sandwiches.

"The smellfulness of these sandwiches is somewhat terrific," he ejaculated. "My worthy chums, you have been spilling methylated spirit over them."

"I haven't!" growled Johnny Bull. "And I haven't," said Hazel. "Must be that ass Nugent!"

"Look here—"
"Why, here's the methylated spirit!" howled Johnny Bull, dragging a shiny tin can from amid the smelly sandwiches. "Some silly chump wrapped it up in the newspaper along with the sandwiches. Oh, my hat! No wonder they smell!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"It was Bob, of course," grinned Nugent. "He wrapped up the sandwiches. Better chuck them into the sea. They niff!"

"Lucky we've got something else to eat!" growled Johnny Bull. "Lucky we've found the spirit, too, or we shouldn't have been able to cook the tea and make the eggs—I mean, make the tea and cook the eggs. Where's the frying-pan?"

"The—the what?"
"Now, you remember my telling you to put the frying-pan in—"

"Did you?" said Nugent vaguely. Another snort from Johnny Bull.

"Well, of all the asses—"
"Of all the chumps—" said Nugent.

"The assfulness and the chumpfulness are equally terrific," grinned Hurree Singh. "The fryfulness of the esteemed eggs will now be impossible."

"Well, I can poach them," grunted Johnny Bull. "Lucky we've got a sauce-pan, and lucky I'm a good cook. I hope you haven't broken the eggs, Nugent."

"Only four," grinned Hazeldene. "There are eight left."
"Oh, my hat!"

"Never mind; there's a loaf and lots of butter," smiled Marjorie; "and there is the cheese."

"Lucky Bob didn't put that in with the methylated spirit, too."
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The preparations for tea went on. Accidents will happen, and did happen. But tea was ready at last, and it was well past half-past four by that time. Frank Nugent looked from the mouth of the cave in search of Wharton and Bob Cherry. But they were not in sight. The great rugged cliffs, rising in wild confusion from the sea, shut off the view for more than a very short distance. Frank knew that the juniors would come over the cliffs from Greyfriars, and he scanned the great rocks for them, but in vain. He shouted, but only the echo of his voice from the hollow rocks answered him. He turned back into the cave. Tea was quite ready, and all the party were hungry.

"They're not in sight," said Frank. "It's nearly five now. I think we'd better have tea. No good waiting any longer."

"Just what I was thinking," said Johnny Bull.

"We must be back at Cliff House by a quarter to six," said Marjorie, with a glance at her little watch. "I suppose we cannot wait any longer."

And they had tea.

But by the time tea was finished there was no sign of Wharton or Bob. It was very dusky in the cave now, and the bike lanterns were lighted. The juniors looked out over the rocky shore and shouted; but still there was no sign of the two they expected.

"They must have been detained

longer," said Johnny Bull at last. "They can't be coming. Better pack up the things. Quelchy may have come down on them again, and forbidden them to come out."

"Rotten!" said Miss Clara. The things were packed up, and they left the cave. Dusk was thickening along the shore. Marjorie and Clara were looking a little anxious. It was necessary to hurry if they were not to be late at Cliff House, and they did not want to displease Miss Primrose. Once more the juniors scanned the lonely shore.

"They can't be coming," said Johnny Bull at last. "Let's clear."

"I—I suppose nothing can have happened to them?" said Marjorie uneasily.

"Why, what could happen?" said Nugent. "They know the way over the cliffs well enough. I suppose it's some more trouble with Quelch, that's all. Let's buck up, or you'll get a ragging from Miss Primrose."

And the picnickers hurried along the cliff path. The two girls were late in at Cliff House, but Miss Penelope Primrose

Bob groaned.
"I suppose it's no good. What's the time?"

"Half-past three."
"Another half hour!" grunted Bob. "Oh, blow! I wish Cicero and Horace and all the rest of them had been drowned at birth! Br-r-r-r!"

And the pens scratched on again. But an end comes to everything, and the period of detention was over at last. The moment four sounded from the clock-tower of Greyfriars, the two juniors jumped up as if moved by electric shocks. They shoved away their books, and hurried out of the Form-room, free at last.

"Now for a run over the cliffs," said Bob, as he snatched his cap, and stuck it on the back of his curly head.

"I say, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter ran after the chums of the Remove as they made for the gates. Bunter had not quite given up his hope of joining the party, and taking the lion's share of the feed. But the juniors did not stop for him; and though Billy Bunter's little fat legs went like clock-work, they were out of sight down the lane by the time he reached the gates.

"Beasts!" growled Bunter. Wharton and Bob Cherry lost no time.

They sprinted down the lane at a good speed and turned into the path to the shore, and were soon scrambling over the rocks.

The sea, lit by the setting sun, burst upon their view—the broad bay, with the little steamer lying at anchor. They slackened down, gasping for breath. Their way lay now along the beach, backed by great cliffs—and ten minutes more of scrambling would have brought them to the smugglers' cave.

Bob Cherry glanced at his watch. "Just twenty past! We shall be in right time."

"Good egg!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! I wonder what those chaps want!" Bob exclaimed.

The path at this point narrowed down to a mere strip between the sea and the cliffs.

A boat lay on the beach, and three men were lounging near her. All three of them looked like foreigners, and one wore a mate's cap. At sight of the two juniors, the seamen had moved across the narrow path as if to intercept them.

Their intention was so evident that the juniors halted.

They were surprised, and a little alarmed. The seamen looked like pretty rough customers. It was possible that they had been drinking at the Anchor, and were ripe for a row.

As the juniors stopped, the three men came towards them.

The man in the mate's cap, who had a cigar sticking out of the corner of his mouth, eyed the juniors scrutinisingly.

"Excuse me," he said, speaking in good English, with some trace of an accent. "I think you young gentlemen belong to Greyfriars School?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Will you come with me?"
"What! Why?"

"We have picked up a boy belonging to your school, who was overturned in a boat," said the man, speaking slowly and distinctly, as if he had some difficulty with the language. "He was taken on our ship. Will you come to see him?"

"By Jove!" said Harry Wharton. "What is his name?"

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listened to their explanation amiably. And then the four juniors tramped away towards Greyfriars in the deep dusk, wondering what had happened to keep Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry from joining the party.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
A Sudden Attack!**

IN the Remove Form-room at Greyfriars two lugubrious juniors had slugged at Latin verbs while the sunny afternoon passed.

Wharton and his chum could not help feeling a little downhearted.

Outside they could hear the shouts on the football-ground. The Greyfriars first eleven was playing a visiting team from Redclyffe School. It was a fine afternoon, and all the fellows were out of doors, with the exception of the two detained juniors. They wrote out Latin conjugations, and grunted and growled.

"Jolly good mind to dodge out and chance Quelchy!" Bob Cherry exclaimed at last desperately.

"No good!" said Wharton. "Quelchy's gone out, I believe."

"Then he's told off a beastly prefect to keep an eye on us," said Harry. "Loder or Walker would like that."

The mate shook his head. "I do not know. He is in a serious condition. Captain Markoff wishes to send word to the headmaster so that he may be removed."

The juniors exchanged doubtful glances.

There was no reason to doubt the man's story—they could not guess why he should lie to them. He could have no conceivable motive for getting them aboard his ship, so far as they could see, unless his tale was true. And yet there was something in his look and manner that made them distrust him. The two seamen, too, seemed to have posted themselves to cut off the escape of the juniors if they refused. One was standing behind the mate, and the other had dropped behind the juniors, interposing between them and the way they had come.

"I—I don't know," said Wharton hesitatingly. "Why can't your captain send word up to the school?"

"He cannot spare a man to take a message."

"But any of the longshoremen would take a message," said Bob Cherry. "Besides, we're going to keep an appointment."

"I'm sorry—we can't come," said Harry.

He did not believe the man's tale—and he thought that his refusal would prove whether it was the truth or not. It did!

But it was in a manner somewhat surprising to the two juniors. The mate made a sudden sign with his hand, and then the three men rushed upon them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "What's the little game? Buck up, Harry!"

The two juniors struggled fiercely in the grasp of the seamen and the mate. But they were two boys against three grown men and the mate, and they had no chance at all. Heavy hands were clapped over their mouths as they strove to shout for help, and they were lifted bodily and dragged into the boat.

"You—you scoundrels!" gasped Wharton, as he was tossed in. "You—you—"

"Silence!" said the mate.

He threw a sheet of canvas over the two juniors, as they lay, gasping, in the bottom of the boat. The two seamen pushed off with the oars. Wharton and Bob Cherry struggled under the enveloping canvas. They knew that the boat would be pulling out to the anchored steamer, in full sight of the shore, and if they could attract attention from the beach their rescue would not take long.

But Wharton, as he struggled, felt a cold metal rim pressed to his neck. And Bob Cherry suddenly ceased to struggle as a keen edge touched his face.

"Keep quiet!" said the mate grimly. "You are prisoners. You are coming aboard our ship. Do not be afraid—no one is going to hurt you. But if you make a noise, you will be silenced."

Wharton stared up at the man in blank amazement. The mate held a pistol in his hand, and his face was dark and threatening.

"What does this mean?" Wharton panted. "Are you kidnappers?"

"Kidnappers! No!"

"Then what do you want with us?"

"You will see as soon as you are on board the steamer."

"Look here——" growled Bob Cherry.

"Silence! If you move again under

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the canvas, a knife will be plunged through. Take warning!"

The canvas was thrown over the juniors again. The mate spoke to the seamen in some foreign tongue, which the juniors did not recognise. They knew that it was not French or German, that was all.

They lay under the canvas, breathless from their straggle, and overwhelmed with amazement. They were not kidnapped—then what were they wanted on the tramp-steamer for? What did it mean? The dark, savage threatening of the mate's face had told them that he was in earnest—their lives were in danger if they resisted. They heard the regular splash of the oars as the seamen pulled for the steamer.

"My hat!" Bob Cherry murmured.

"This is a go, Harry!"

"I can't understand it."

The boat pulled round the steamer to the seaward side, and then the canvas was pulled off the juniors. A dark-faced, heavily-bearded man looked down on them from the bridge, and gave a rapid order in that strange tongue that was mysterious to the ears of the juniors. Harry Wharton and Bob were passed quickly up the side, and hurried down into the cabin—and the bearded captain followed them down.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In Lawless Hands!

HARRY WHARTON and Bob Cherry stood with flushed faces and sparkling eyes. They were very excited and very angry.

"What does this mean?" Wharton exclaimed, as the captain regarded him. "How dare you bring us on board your ship in this way?"

The bearded man smiled slightly.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "You will not be hurt."

"We're not afraid," said Bob Cherry. "It's rot that. But what's the little game? Our friends are waiting for us along the beach."

"I fear that they will have to wait some little time, young gentlemen," said the foreign captain. "You may sit down."

The juniors remained standing.

Captain Markoff opened a cigar-case, drew out a big, black cigar, and lighted it with a leisurely air. He was very calm and very cool and perfectly civil; but there was a gleam in his black eyes that the juniors did not like. It reminded them of a tiger. It was easy to guess that this was no ordinary tramp-steamer, and Captain Markoff was no ordinary trading skipper. The juniors guessed that he was a Russian from his name, and they therefore concluded that the language they had heard spoken was Russian. But the vessel was probably not from Russia. They had seen the name as they came up the side. It was the Seamew.

"You are surprised, I suppose?" said the captain, with an amused glance at the flushed and excited faces of the juniors.

"Yes, certainly! You have no right to seize us in this way!" exclaimed Wharton hotly. "Besides, what is your motive? What do you want?"

"I will explain what I want, and I assure you that to-morrow you will be set at liberty, unhurt," said the Russian.

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Bob, aghast. "We've got to get back to Greyfriars by half-past six."

"We can't miss calling-over," said Wharton.

The Russian smiled again.

"I think you can," he replied. "I think you must! You are on board my ship, and I have twenty men at my orders."

"Twenty men!" echoed Wharton. "Twenty men on a little steamer like this!"

"Precisely."

"Then you're not a cargo-tramp," said Harry Wharton.

The captain laughed.

"No; I do not deal in cargo—my business is quite different. I hope to have some cargo on board when I leave this bay, but a very small cargo—small, but valuable." He laughed again, and showed his white teeth, glistening through his dark, thick beard. "To-morrow morning I shall be gone, and you will be safe back in your school—if you have sense enough to obey my orders."

"I do not understand you."

"You do not know why you are aboard my steamer?"

"No!"

"It is because you are Greyfriars boys."

The two juniors stared.

"But—but why——"

"I am going to visit Greyfriars to-night."

"You are going to visit Greyfriars!" stammered Wharton. "To-night! Why? I don't understand you!"

"You have not guessed my business yet?"

"N-no!"

A strange and dark suspicion had come into the startled minds of the juniors. The rough-looking steamer, that looked like a cargo-tramp, but was not of the kind, the swarming crew for so small a vessel, the weapons they had seen displayed—all pointed to one conclusion. But it was impossible—wildly impossible. In the twentieth century, it was outside the realms of possibility. And yet——

"Ah, you are beginning to guess!" said the captain, with an agreeable smile. "Yes, you are right. I am going to rob Greyfriars."

"Rob Greyfriars?"

"Exactly."

"Then you are a—a—a——"

Wharton hesitated.

"A burglar—a cracksman—you would call me, if I were on land," assented the captain. "But on the sea I hardly know what I should be called. But that is my business. Cheap and ugly as my steamer looks, I have first-class engines and a good speed. Within a few hours of clearing out a mansion on the coast I can be safe beyond the reach of pursuit. My plans are carefully laid. A week ago I landed and cleared out a mansion on the French coast. To-day I am here. Next week perhaps on the coast of America—who knows? I am a cosmopolitan—all countries are the same to me, since I was chased from my own for plotting against the Tsar. In your school there is a rich prize. I have agents on shore, and my information is accurate. The school silver is worth three thousand pounds or more, and there are other valuables. Altogether, it will be a great haul, and easy—quite easy. But instead of robbing by stealth, as cracksmen do, I shall rob by force, if necessary. That is the difference. Within an hour I shall be speeding over the North Sea. Now you understand what I want!"

"You want ten years in Portland Prison!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Perhaps in time!" smiled the captain. "Now I want your assistance."

"Our assistance?" echoed Wharton.

"Exactly!"

"Our assistance—in what?"

Wharton could scarcely believe that even this unscrupulous rascal meant to demand his assistance in robbing the school. But that was evidently the intention of the Russian adventurer; and the reason why the juniors had been seized was now clear. It was not for their own sakes specially; any Greyfriars fellows who had come along the beach that afternoon would have served Markoff's purpose equally well. It was chance that had thrown Wharton and Bob Cherry into the hands of the sea-thief.

"I have told you that I have information," said Mr. Markoff coolly. "That is, I knew that there is valuable loot in Greyfriars, an old and rich school with many valuables. But I do not know how or where they are kept. The school silver, for example—where is that? I cannot waste time searching for it, and other things. But you would be able to tell me, *ma foi*."

"I shouldn't do anything of the sort."
"But you could?"

The juniors were silent.
"The school, I suppose, is on the telephone—with more than one receiver, naturally," said the captain. "Is it not so?"

"That is true."
"As I thought. While we are busy in one place, someone may be telephoning to the police from another room where we cannot see him, and the alarm will be given."

"Most likely."
"Therefore, there will be no time to waste. The school will be surrounded—entered by armed men—and the matter must be over in ten minutes. For that I must have accurate information. You have, at least, a rough idea where the valuables are kept. You are to tell me what you know."

"Never!"
"I repeat, you must!"
"You can repeat it till you're pink in the chivvy, but we won't!" said Bob Cherry. "Do you think we're going to help you rob our own school?"

"That is why you are here."
"Then you may as well set us ashore again!" said Wharton savagely. "You'll get nothing out of us."

The cool, smiling face of the adventurer changed its expression. His heavy brows contracted over his eyes. The gleam in his eyes now was savage and threatening.

"Listen!" he said. "I shall not bandy words with you. You are in my power, and must do as I demand. I shall not be resisted by a pair of schoolboys. You are now to take pencil and paper, and draw me, as well as you can, a plan of the school, with the passages marked, the rooms of the masters, and so on, and indicate where the valuables are kept."

Wharton gritted his teeth.
"I will not!"
"Same here!" said Bob Cherry.
The adventurer's eyes glittered at



TAKEN UNAWARES! The mate made a sudden sign with his hand, and then the three men rushed upon the schoolboys. "Hallo! What's the little game?" roared Bob Cherry. The two juniors struggled fiercely, but they were no match to the three grown men. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were soon captured. (See *Chapter 4*.)

them savagely. His hand went into his pocket, and for a moment the juniors thought that he was about to produce a weapon. If so, he changed his mind, and, turning to the open door, called out something in his own language, incomprehensible to the ears of the juniors.

Two seamen entered the cabin, and grasped the schoolboys by the arms.

"What are you going to do?" said Wharton, between his teeth.

"You have some time to consider," said the captain coolly. "I shall not require your services for some hours. When I want you I will send for you. Meanwhile, you will be thrown into the hold, amid the bilge-water and the rats; and perhaps it will help you to change your minds. When you have changed your minds, and decided to obey my orders, you may call out!"

"You villain!" shouted Bob Cherry, struggling in the grasp of the man who had seized him. "I—"

"You will be punished for this, you scoundrel!" panted Wharton.

Another word or two in Russian, and the two juniors were dragged struggling from the cabin, and a minute later they were flung panting, into the foul and noisome hold of the tramp steamer. The hatch closed down, and they were in darkness. And in the dark, little glittering points of light appeared, and moved, and there was a sound of stealthy scampering.

"There are rats here!" gasped Bob Cherry, almost sick with disgust as something slimy slid over his wrist in the dark.

"Oh, the scoundrel!"
"We're in for it, Harry!"
"We'll never do what that villain has asked, though."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob.
But his voice sounded very grim and lugubrious in the noisome depths of the hold.

They would be missed at Greyfriars; that was their only hope. But much was to happen before they saw Greyfriars again.

What will happen to the Shanghaied Schoolboys now they have refused to help the Russian Sea Bandit? Will they be freed or —? Read next week's Breathlessly Exciting Tale,

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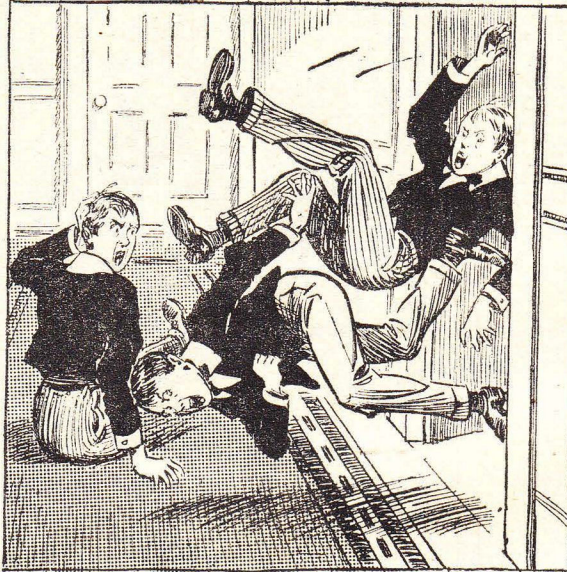
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THE FIRST CHAPTER. Making Himself at Home.

"QUEER sort of beggar, isn't he?" murmured Monty Lowther. "Meaning the new chap, Barker?" said Tom Merry. Lowther nodded assent.

"This fellow Barker has fairly taken the school by storm," he said. "He rushed upon us like a giddy whirlwind!"

"Grundy told us that his cousin was a weedy specimen," said Manners; "but there's nothing weedy about Barker. The fellow's as strong as a horse. He gave his cousin Grundy a jolly good licking, anyway — and Grundy's no duffer with his fists."

Tom Merry nodded thoughtfully.

Things had been rather quiet in the Shell for a long time; and the boisterous arrival of Bill Barker, Grundy's cousin from Borneo, had broken the monotony.

Although he had not been a couple of hours at the school, cousin Bill had already made things hum. He had given what he chose to call "a good walloping" to Racke, Crooke, and Mellish, who had endeavoured to practise a jape on him. He had also "walloped" his cousin Grundy for refusing to obey his commands.

There could be no doubt that Bill Barker was a powerful personality. And Tom Merry felt a little dubious as to what was going to happen next.

Cousin Bill had shown no respect whatever for the captain of the Shell. He had addressed him in much the same way as he would have addressed Toby the page.

Bill Barker not only had no respect for Tom Merry, but he was no THE POPULAR.—No. 201.

respector of persons in general. Only one individual filled his horizon, and that individual was William Barker. He was hefty, he was domineering, he was self-assertive. And this being so, Tom Merry had good reason to be dubious as to what would happen next. "There's going to be trouble in the family," said Monty Lowther sagely. "St. Jim's isn't big enough for Bill Barker. Did you notice the way he spoke to you, Tommy—as if you were an insignificant puppy that didn't count."

"Yes, I noticed it," said Tom Merry grimly. "Friend Barker will have to be put in his place. Meanwhile, let's get on with our prep."

The Terrible Three settled down to work.

Three heads were bent over three Latin Primers, and a profound silence reigned in the study. Cousin Bill was temporarily forgotten.

The new boy soon forced himself on the Terrible Three's notice, however.

There was a heavy footstep in the passage. The door of the study, which was slightly ajar, was violently opened wide by a hefty shoulder-charge. And Bill Barker stood on the threshold.

"Tom Merry & Co. looked up. "You might knock before you come into this study, Barker," said Tom Merry.

"I might," agreed cousin Bill; "but I don't choose to."

"What do you want?"

The new boy made no reply. He stood staring, not at the Terrible Three, but around the apartment — taking stock of it, as it were.

"Not good enough," he said at length.

"Eh? What isn't good enough?" asked Manners.

"This study."

"Not good enough for whom?" inquired Tom Merry, in wonder.

"For me, of course! I was thinking of making this my home—"

"What!"

"But it doesn't come up to the description I was given. I don't like the colour scheme, for one thing. Also, the ceiling's too low, and there aren't enough armchairs. There's a fearful draught, too, coming from somewhere. I want a study that's warm and cosy. This one won't suit, so, instead of chucking you fellows out, and taking immediate possession, I'll go and look elsewhere."

The Terrible Three fairly gasped. "Ch-ch-chucking us out?" stammered Tom Merry.

"T-taking immediate possession?" stammered Manners.

Cousin Bill nodded coolly. "If this study had been to my liking, I should have ejected you, and taken up my quarters here," he said.

"You—you cheeky ass!" roared Tom Merry. "For two pins, we'd give you a jolly good bumping!"

"Chuck us out of our study, indeed!" said Manners. "I like that!"

"I don't know why you're chasing round after a study, Barker," said Monty Lowther. "You've already got one, you know. Railton put you in No. 4, with Buck Finn and Lennox."

Cousin Bill made a grimace. "It's a hateful hole!" he said. "It's even inferior to this, and that's saying a good deal. A fellow like me wants plenty of elbow-room. I'm not going to be cribbed, cabined, and confined to a cupboard."

"Why not chuck the Head out of his study and take possession?" chuckled Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if I can't find a decent study

What, Don't You Know BORNEO BILL? Oh, He's Some Burly Boy!

in the Shell passage, I shall certainly go elsewhere," said cousin Bill. "One of the seniors will have to clear out of his study, and let me go in."

"I can see Kildare or Darrel or Knox doing that—I don't think!" said Manners. "Barker, old chap, you're potty! I think you ought to see a doctor."

"Don't jest with me," said cousin Bill grimly, "or I'll punch your nose and make it resemble a squashed strawberry!"

"My hat!" "As I've already said, I'm not a fellow to be trifled with. Bear that in mind, all of you, or there will be trouble!"

Having delivered himself of this threat, cousin Bill quitted the study as violently as he had entered it, leaving the Terrible Three gasping.

The new boy continued his tour of inspection of the Shell studies. And presently he came to one which suited him down to the ground.

It was rather unfortunate that this particular study happened to belong to his cousin Grundy, who shared it with Wilkins and Gunn.

The trio glared at cousin Bill as he calmly made a survey of the apartment.

"Buzz off!" growled Grundy. "We don't want you nosing about in here!"

"I rather think," said cousin Bill, "that the buzzing off will be done by you three—not by this child!"

"What do you mean?" "What I say. I've been looking round for a study to suit me, and my quest is now ended. I shall be quite happy here."

"You—you—"
Cousin Bill jerked his thumb in the direction of the door.

"Out you go!" he said briskly. "I'm sorry to have to treat a cousin of mine thus. But the fact is, I shall want this study to myself. I don't want any study-mates, and, in any case, four in one study would be a crowd. Hop it, you three!"

Grundy, Wilkins, and Gunn could only stand and stare. Cousin Bill's cool command fairly took their breath away. To be turned out of their own study was unheard of. It must not—it should not happen!

For a moment there was a stupefied silence. Then Grundy found his voice, and it resembled the bellow of a bull.

"Collar the cheeky bounder!"

The trio advanced upon cousin Bill with one accord. The new boy threw himself into a fighting attitude, and awaited the onslaught.

Grundy sprang at him first, and they clinched and fought for a few seconds only. At the end of this brief period George Alfred Grundy went spinning through the doorway, as if he had been discharged from the mouth of a cannon.

Exactly how it had happened Grundy didn't know. All he knew was that he had come into heavy and painful contact with the far wall of the passage, and that he didn't feel like further fighting.

Grundy was just beginning to sort himself out, when another human form came hurtling through the doorway. It was Wilkins, and he cannoned violently into Grundy.

"Ow!" "Yow!"

After the briefest of intervals, Gunn followed Wilkins. He crashed into his two study-mates, and then, before the trio could recover themselves, the study

door was slammed in their faces, and a key grated in the lock.

Cousin Bill had taken possession!

By the exertion of his prodigious strength, the new boy had cleared the study of its occupants.

"I rather hoped it could be done without violence," he muttered. "But they asked for it—and they got it! Think I'll explore the cupboard, and see if there's anything worth eating. I'm jolly peckish!"

Having discovered a plum-cake, the new tenant of Grundy's study started to consume it, making himself comfortable in the armchair.

Meanwhile, the news had spread through the Shell that Grundy & Co. had been thrown out of their study to make way for the new boy.

This startling information was received with much amazement. For Grundy and Wilkins and Gunn were sturdy fellows, and it seemed incredible that they should have been ejected from their study by one person.

But however incredible it seemed, the thing had happened.

Grundy & Co. had been banished from their own study. And everybody was now asking what was going to happen next.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Cool Bargain!

"THE—the cheek of it!" gasped George Alfred Grundy.

"The awful nerve of it!" exclaimed Wilkins.

"Pitching us neck and crop out of our own study!" ejaculated Gunn, in dazed tones.

"We'll go back and force our way in!" declared Grundy. "And we'll wallop that cousin of mine until he howls for mercy!"

Wilkins and Gunn looked rather doubtful. It was highly improbable that the three juniors, who had been pitched out by cousin Bill would be successful in turning the tables. Possession was nine points of the law; and now that cousin Bill was in possession of Grundy's study, it would be no easy matter to get him out of it. As for "walloping" the new boy, the trio might just as well have attacked Samson or Goliath.

Still, they could not take this lying down. They must make some sort of an effort to regain possession of their study.

Followed by a crowd of grinning juniors, Grundy & Co. marched along the Shell passage.

On reaching their study, they found that cousin Bill had calmly pitched their belongings into the passage, and then locked himself in the study again.

Books and papers and pictures and other paraphernalia were scattered in profusion outside the door.

"Well, if this isn't the absolute limit!" yelled Grundy. "Just look what that cheeky bounder has done!"

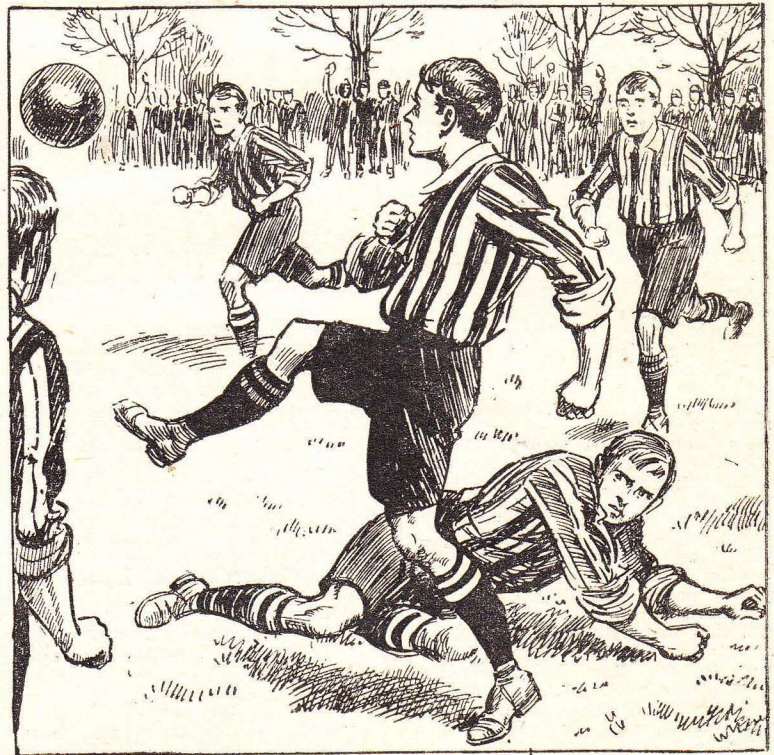
"What are you going to do about it, Grundy?" inquired several voices.

"Do?" spluttered Grundy. "I'll show you what I'll do! Watch me!"

So saying, George Alfred dashed his boot against the door of the study.

"Barker!" he hooted.

There was a drowsy reply from within. "Buzz off, cousin George! I'm just going to take forty winks on the sofa."



COUSIN BILL PLAYS FOOTER! Barker charged Jimmy Silver, and the Rookwood captain went sprawling. Just in time cousin Bill retrieved the ball and sent it well up the field. "Well cleared, sir!" (See Chapter 3.)

"Come out of it!" roared Grundy.
 "Eh?"
 "Give us back our study!"
 "It's no longer yours," came the reply. "It's mine now, and the sooner you reconcile yourself to that fact the better."

Grundy's brow grew blacker and blacker.

"We'll bash the door in!" he shouted. "You're welcome to try."

Grundy made a signal to Wilkins and Gunn, and the trio hurled themselves with one accord at the door. It quivered and shook before the onslaught, but it refused to burst open.

It soon became apparent to those who were storming cousin Bill's stronghold that they were simply wasting their energy, for the door had been effectively barricaded by the study sofa.

Grundy & Co. at last desisted from their efforts.

George Alfred mopped his heated brow.

"We shall have to give it up now, and try some other time," he said.

The crowd, which had expected to see some fun, melted away, looking rather disappointed.

There was a good deal of sympathy for the three studyless juniors. Everybody agreed that cousin Bill had acted in a very high-handed manner.

"If Grundy doesn't get his study back within a reasonable time," said Tom Merry, "we'll visit Barker in force, and eject him."

"Hear, hear!"

"Can't have this sort of thing going on in a civilised school," said Monty Lowther. "We shall have Bill Barker holding us up next, at the point of the revolver! He comes from Borneo, and do you know, I believe he is the celebrated wild man of that country!"

"He'll have to be tamed," said Manners. "Anyway, if Grundy & Co. can't get their study back, we'll take a hand ourselves."

During the days that followed, Grundy & Co. certainly made every endeavour to regain possession of their study. But they found cousin Bill more than a match for them.

When bed-time came, Grundy & Co. made several attempts to oust cousin Bill from the study. But there was nothing doing. Cousin Bill was always careful to barricade the door.

On one occasion, Grundy and his chums had a shot at getting through the window. For this purpose they borrowed a pair of steps from the woodshed, the window being about a dozen feet from the ground.

But cousin Bill was not to be caught napping.

As Grundy & Co. mounted the steps, one after the other, the new boy walked to the window and repulsed the invaders with a powerful water-pistol.

A jet of water smote George Alfred Grundy under the chin. With a wild yell of anguish, he toppled backwards, bearing Wilkins and Gunn to the ground in his precipitate descent.

The trio were badly dazed and bruised, and after that they left cousin Bill alone for a while.

In the meantime, Talbot generously offered to accommodate Grundy in his study, while Harry Noble found room for Wilkins, and Bernard Glyn for Gunn.

Tom Merry & Co. were discussing the affair in their study over tea, when cousin Bill came in, in his usual hurricane fashion.

"I want to speak to you, Merry," he said.

THE POPULAR.—No. 201.

"And by that same token I want to speak to you, Barker," said Tom. "You've cleared your cousin and his pals out of their study."

"Well?"

"As captain of the Form, I can't allow this sort of thing. There's such a thing as law and order, and the right of the citizen, you know. We'll give you till Saturday night to get out of the study, and if you're not out by then, we'll do unto you as you did unto Grundy."

Cousin Bill laughed loudly.

"My dear kid," he said, "it would be easier to remove the foundations of the school than to remove me! I've found my ideal study, and I'm sticking to it. Of course, if Railton orders me to quit—"

"Railton sha'n't hear of it," said Tom Merry curtly. "What do you take us for—a set of tale-bearers?"

"Don't get huffy," said cousin Bill. "I dropped in to see you about the football."

"The—the football!" echoed Tom Merry blankly.

"Yes. You're skipper of the junior team here, I understand."

"That's so."

"Well, you can hand over the job to me. I'm just the right man for it."

YES!

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WEEK!

The Terrible Three looked quite dumb-founded. There seemed to be no limit to the "cheek" of cousin Bill.

"What about it, Merry?" said the boy from Borneo.

Tom Merry found his voice at last.

"Why, you frabjous chump, I shouldn't dream of handing over the footer captaincy to anybody, least of all you! To begin with, we've no proof that you can play footer."

"I'm hot stuff!" said cousin Bill.

"We've only your word for it."

"Then you refuse to hand over the captaincy?"

"Absolutely, flatly, and finally!"

Cousin Bill looked thoughtful.

"Would you be prepared to hand it over under certain conditions?" he asked.

"Name the conditions."

"Well, if I were to get up a team of my own, outside the regular eleven, and challenge, say, Rookwood, to a match, and lick them, would you agree to my being skipper then?"

Tom Merry grinned.

"Yes, if you worked a miracle of that sort, I'd hand over the captaincy with pleasure!" he said.

"Good enough! That's a bargain!"

Manners and Lowther were also grinning. Rookwood had a very fine team. It was a team that the regular St. Jim's junior eleven had all their work out to beat. The idea of a second eleven, skipped by the boy from Borneo, meeting and defeating the dashing Rookwood side, was enough to make a cat laugh.

Tom Merry felt that he was quite safe in offering the football captaincy to Barker, under those conditions. He believed that Barker's style of football was on a par with Grundy's.

Grundy was a fellow who floundered about the field like a rhinoceros, with no idea of passing, shooting, or ball-control.

"You're quite serious about this, Merry?" questioned the new boy.

"Oh, quite!"

"Then why are you grinning?"

"I can see your eleven being licked to a frazzle," said the captain of the Shell.

"If Rookwood have their shooting-boots on, the score will be about twenty to nil," chuckled Monty Lowther. "Even if they play far beneath their true form, they'll get into double figures!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Cousin Bill moved to the door.

"You're laughing now, but you'll pipe to another tune on Saturday afternoon," he said.

"Bow-wow!"

"I'm going round now to collect recruits for my eleven," said cousin Bill. "And I'll telephone to that fellow Nickel—"

"Ha, ha! You mean Silver," said Tom Merry.

"I'll telephone to Silver, and ask him to bring his team over to St. Jim's on Saturday afternoon."

So saying cousin Bill withdrew, leaving the Terrible Three almost in hysterics.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Team that Barker Built!

COUSIN BILL was in earnest. And it was his very earnestness which caused several fellows to rally round him.

He had undertaken not to approach any members of the regular eleven. But he still had plenty of talent to draw upon.

Lawrence, of the New House, gallantly offered to keep goal. Next to Fatty Wynn, Lawrence was probably the finest junior goalie at St. Jim's.

"Of course, I shall be bombarded with shots all through the game," he said. "But I'll keep out as many as I can."

"That's the spirit!" said Barker approvingly. And he resumed his quest for recruits.

Koumi Rao, the Indian junior, agreed to play. So did French, and Lumley-Lumley, and Clive, and Kerruish.

These fellows regarded it as rather an adventure. That it would prove a disastrous adventure they did not doubt. For how could a second eleven hope to conquer Rookwood? Still, it would be a game, and the Saturday afternoon would not be wasted.

The team was completed by Digby, Herries, Lennox, and Clifton Dane. It was quite a useful side. Even Tom Merry admitted that. But a side had to be something more than useful to hope to defeat Rookwood. It had to be brilliant.

Having got his team together, cousin Bill's next action was to telephone to Jimmy Silver.

"Me for the Captaincy!" says the Borneo Boy—and He Gets It!

"I'm Barker of St. Jim's," he explained, when he had got through.

"Never heard of you," said Jimmy Silver.

"You'll hear of me on Saturday afternoon," was the grim reply. "I want you to bring your team over to St. Jim's, to play an eleven skippered by me."

"Oh, certainly!" said Jimmy Silver, with a chuckle.

"Bring your best team, mind," said cousin Bill, "and don't regard it as a joke. I'm dead serious."

"Your team is composed of juniors, I take it—not of hulking louts in the Sixth?"

"Of course!"

"Very well. We'll come over to St. Jim's and pulverise you!"

"I rather fancy the boot will be on the other foot!" muttered cousin Bill, as he hung up the receiver.

Saturday afternoon came, and with it the Rookwood team.

Bill Barker's eleven was at a great disadvantage, inasmuch as they had not had time to put in any practice.

A tremendous crowd thronged the touchline. Not for whole hemispheres, as Monty Lowther expressed it, would they have missed that match.

"Where will Barker play, I wonder?" mused Tom Merry.

"Not in the forward line, surely?" said Manners. "He's too hefty for that."

Cousin Bill, having won the toss, placed his men in their allotted positions. He took up his own position at right back.

Darrel of the Sixth was the referee. He blew his whistle for the game to start, and all eyes were glued upon the playing-pitch.

The Rookwood forwards went off with a rush. They made a bee-line for the St. Jim's goal, and there seemed to be no stopping them.

Lovell swung the ball across to Jimmy Silver, and Jimmy was about to send in a terrific left-foot drive, when he found himself hustled unceremoniously

off the ball. The burly Barker had intercepted him just in the nick of time.

Jimmy Silver went sprawling, and cousin Bill punted the ball well up the field.

"Well cleared, sir!"

It became speedily apparent that Grundy's cousin was no duffer at football. His shoulder-charging was rather heavy, but perfectly fair. His tackling was of a high order. But the most remarkable feature of his play was his hefty kicking. When he punted the ball, it went three-parts of the length of the field.

Cousin Bill's form was truly an eye-opener. It astonished the natives. The other members of the team were as pigmies by comparison with cousin Bill. He was a team in himself.

The Rookwood forwards made repeated attempts to get through, but they found Bill Barker a great stumbling-block. Always, when they came to within shooting distance, he chipped in and robbed them of the ball.

For the most part, the St. Jim's players were penned in their own half. But Rookwood, though they employed every art and artifice at their command, could not break down the stonewall defence of cousin Bill.

Half-time arrived with no score.

Tom Merry was looking quite startled. And so were his chums.

"I don't like the look of this a bit," said Manners. "That fellow Barker can play football, and no error!"

"If St. Jim's were to score in the second half," said Monty Lowther, "bang would go the captaincy! You'd have to keep your compact with Barker, Tommy."

Tom Merry nodded.

"All I can say is that if Barker succeeds in licking Rookwood, then he deserves the captaincy," he remarked.

After a brief interval, the ball was set in motion again.

Jimmy Silver & Co. threw themselves into the fray with renewed zest. They had quite made up their minds to get a goodly bag of goals in the second half

Unfortunately, Bill Barker had made up his mind that they shouldn't.

The game which cousin Bill played in the second half was one that would go down to history. He was always on the spot when danger threatened.

On only two occasions did the Rookwood forwards succeed in getting the ball past Barker. On each occasion they shot hard and true for goal, but Lawrence was equal to the emergency. He brought off a couple of saves which were worthy of Fatty Wynn at his best.

And so the game went on, Rookwood attacking and St. Jim's defending, until only ten minutes remained for play.

"Looks as if it will be a goalless draw," remarked Manners.

"In which case, your captaincy will be safe, Tommy," said Monty Lowther. "But you've had a narrow squeak."

"I'm not so sure that I sha'n't lose it, after all," said Tom Merry. "Just look at that fellow Barker!"

Cousin Bill had evidently come to the conclusion that if any goals were to be scored, he would have to score them himself. He had given his forwards plenty of chances to get going, but the Rookwood half-backs had broken up their attacks.

Cousin Bill now made a great solo effort to win the game. He took the ball from the toes of Jimmy Silver, and proceeded to run it up the field.

Opponents dashed up to intercept him, only to be scattered like chaff before cousin Bill's onrush.

Excitement ran high among the crowd.

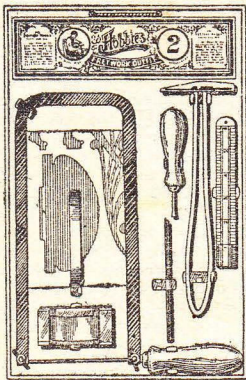
"Go it, Barker!"

"Take it through on your own!"

Cousin Bill cleverly "drew" the Rookwood defence, and then he wound up his merry antics with a shot which the Rookwood goalie could scarcely see, much less save.

The ball came whizzing in with such velocity that it broke the netting.

"Goal!"



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That was the first, the last, and the only goal of that memorable match.

During the remaining moments Jimmy Silver & Co. made heroic efforts to get on terms. But Bill Barker, a veritable tower of strength, pulled them up every time.

The Rookwooders were still attacking desperately when the final whistle sounded.

A deafening roar from the crowd greeted the amazing victory of Bill Barker's eleven.

Tom Merry's face was a study.

He had made that compact with cousin Bill, believing it to be humanly impossible that the new boy's team could defeat Rookwood. But the miracle had happened, and, being an honourable fellow, Tom Merry had no alternative but to hand over the football captaincy to Barker forthwith.

"Well played, Barker!" he said heartily, as the burly Shell fellow came off. "I didn't dream you'd put up such a good show. The captaincy's yours."

"Thanks!" said cousin Bill breathlessly. He appreciated the sportsmanlike way in which Tom Merry had taken the matter. "Now that I'm skipper, Merry, you needn't think I shall bundle you and your pals out of the team. The eleven will be practically the same as it was before. One fellow will have to drop out, that's all, to make room for me."

Cousin Bill, covered with mud and glory, proceeded to the school building

for a bath, after which he entertained a few select members of his victorious eleven to tea in his study—or, rather, in the study which rightly belonged to his cousin Grundy.

Tom Merry & Co. had given Barker until Saturday evening to give up possession of that study. But in the light of what had just happened on the football-field, they felt that they could not go along and eject cousin Bill "on his neck."

"What are you fellows going to do about chucking my cousin out?" asked Grundy.

"Nothing!" said Tom Merry. "We can't commit assault and battery on a fellow who played like he played this afternoon," said Tom. "We're not exactly in love with this cousin of yours, and we don't approve of his methods. But, dash it all, we can't kick him out after what he's done!"

"Perhaps you're afraid?" suggested Grundy scornfully.

"Nothing of the sort!" was Tom Merry's heated reply. "But we're not going to lay hands on your cousin after the fine show he put up against Rookwood. That's it, and all about it. If you want to get your study back, you'll have to tackle cousin Bill yourself."

Grundy scowled. Without the assistance of Tom Merry & Co., he had little prospect of being able to eject his burly cousin. He could, of course, have appealed to the Housemaster, but that

was not Grundy's way. He was a fellow with many failings, but sneaking was not one of them.

So cousin Bill remained in proud possession of Grundy's study. And, by virtue of his great game against Rookwood, he had become captain of football.

Seldom in the history of St. Jim's had a new boy succeeded in making such a stir.

Tom Merry realised that cousin Bill was a force to be reckoned with. He was a fellow of push and go, who had by no means realised all his ambitions as yet. Tom Merry's position of leader of the Shell was now in grave danger. Tom, who had ruled the roost for so many terms, was tottering on his throne, so to speak. And he wondered rather uneasily, and so did his chums, what cousin Bill's next move would be.

"This fellow Barker's going to be a big thorn in our side," remarked Tom Merry to his study-mates.

"These are stirring times!" said Monty Lowther, stirring his tea as he spoke. "We shall have to watch cousin Bill carefully, and see what he's up to next. Then we must put a spoke in his wheel—if we can!"

And on that point the Terrible Three were unanimously agreed.

THE END.

(You will read about Cousin Bill from Borneo in "The Best Man Wins!" next week.)

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

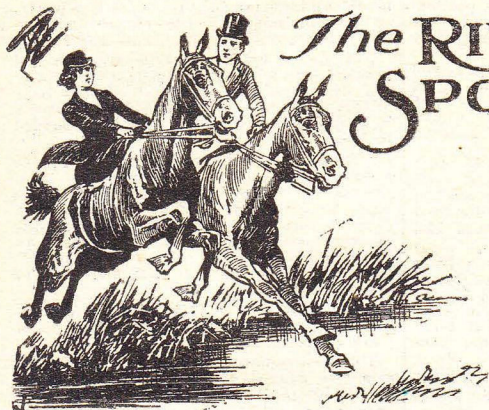
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THE FINEST SPORTING STORY OF THE YEAR! A vast fortune hangs in the balance, and two young sportsmen fight for its possession! Who will win the great struggle? Take an interest!



The RIVAL SPORTSMEN!

A Gripping New Sporting Serial, dealing with an amazing sporting struggle for a great fortune.

By VICTOR NELSON.

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 the 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." Several other sporting events, in which both the consins compete, are won by young Harry Lestrade. Furious at his non-

success, Courtney tries underhand methods of getting Harry out of the struggle. A famous motor-cycle race on the Isle of Man is the next event in which the two rival sportsmen have entered. To prevent Harry winning the race, Courtney hires a man to block the road with a felled tree as Lestrade is about to pass. The plot is successfully carried out. Harry, unable to stop his cycle, crashes into the obstacle across the road. In an unconscious state he is carried to a nearby cottage. (Now read on.)

By this time the race was over, and away at the inn near Douglas the timekeepers and judges were going through the various times in which the numerous competitors had completed the course.

As Tony Wagg reached the fallen tree, stooped over it, and began to examine the trunk at the spot where it had been severed, these gentlemen finished their task, and the chairman of the motor company, who was present, made his appearance on the balcony of the hostelry to address the some fifty cyclists gathered below to await the result.

His appearance was greeted with an expectant silence, and, after bowing and smiling, he cleared his throat.

"The race resulted, gentlemen, in a very close finish between two competitors. One, Mr. Austin Courtney, of Lestrade Castle, in Wessex, finished the hundred miles in two hours, three minutes, and fourteen seconds. The other, a Mr. Jones, of Glasgow, was home in two hours, three minutes, and twenty-three seconds; whilst Mr. Tom Doyle, of London, was only half a minute behind him. Considering the stiff climbs that had to be negotiated, these times do credit to both our machines, and to the competitors riding them. These three gentlemen take the first, second, and third prize, Mr. Austin Courtney, of course, winning the first prize of a thousand guineas. If the three gentlemen I have named will step on to the balcony, I shall have pleasure in handing them their cheques."

A thrill of pleasure momentarily gripped Austin Courtney, as he listened, and then moved towards the steps leading up to the balcony, where the chairman of the motor company, the judges and timekeepers were standing.

But it did not last. His success was as ashes in his mouth. He was thinking of the crumpled figure he had seen lying on the bank at the roadside, twenty to twenty-five miles distant on the route.

He had won and achieved an important step in the contest set him and his cousin Harry by the late Sir Charles Lestrade's will. But at what a cost, perhaps!

Naturally, knowing nothing of the wonderful escape Harry had experienced by reason of his fall being broken by the branches of the felled tree, Courtney had ugly visions of arrest, and of perhaps being stood on trial for his life.

How he smiled when, later, he was posing for a camera-man of an important film company, he scarcely knew, and it was in a fit of black depression and uneasiness that he rode back to Douglas, and prepared to leave the island.

The boat he was determined to catch from Douglas to Liverpool, en route for home, was leaving almost at once, and he had no time to attempt to glean information as to whether or no his cousin had been killed.

It was a huge relief to him, much as he hated Harry, when on the quay, after having seen his motor-cycle taken on board the steamer, he chanced to turn his head, and saw his cousin limping towards the gangway between Specs and Tony Wagg. But the meeting, if a relief, was to have unpleasant results for Austin Courtney.

Leaving Specs to support Harry, the stalwart football trainer strode up to Courtney as he glimpsed him.

The latter made a hurried move for the gangway, but Tony was too quick for him.

Grabbing him with no particular gentleness by the shoulder, the ex-boxer swung him round.

"You dirty assassin!" Tony said, between his teeth, his eyes blazing with a very real contempt and anger. "So you won the race! Well, you can use the thousand guineas to pay whoever it was sawed through that tree for you!"

"What the mischief do you mean?" Austin Courtney demanded, trying to free himself, and putting the best face he could upon matters, though he had turned deathly pale.

"You know what I mean, you skunk!" Tony flashed. "The tree did not fall by accident. It was sawn through, and let fall into the road by some accomplice of yours just as your cousin was coming along on his motor-cycle. I suppose you hoped to kill him; but the plot failed!"

"It's a lie—a dastardly lie!" Austin Courtney protested hoarsely. "I know

THE POPULAR.—No. 201.

The End of the Race—Punishing a Rascal!

IT was whilst the doctor was on his way to the cottage that a competitor, who had had to abandon the race just before starting round for the second time through engine trouble reported to the timekeepers what had happened to No. 14. Tony Wagg and Specs, two chums of Harry Lestrade, who had come with the latter, overheard the cyclist's remark.

"No. 14! That's a friend of ours!" said Tony Wagg, as he strode forward and, in his agitation, gripped the cyclist by the arm. "How badly is he injured? He's not killed?"

"I couldn't say," answered the leathern-clad competitor, shaking his head. "I had ideas of trying to win the race at the time, and did not stop. He looked pretty bad as he lay on the bank at the side of the road, with the men who were with him stopping over him."

A groan broke from Specs, and he sprang into their two-seater.

"Poor old Harry! We must go to him at once!" he cried; but the timekeepers intervened.

It was impossible to allow the car on the route until all the cycles had proceeded on the second lap, they pointed out; and, having to realise that they were justified in this demand, Specs and the football trainer had to contain themselves with the best patience they could muster.

Austin Courtney had come thundering past them some time before, starting on the final stage of the race, and others had followed and were still following. But those who went by now were the last of the competitors, and at length the timekeepers signed to Specs and Tony that they might be off.

Harry's chums lost no time in getting away in their two-seater. Rather more than an hour later they reached the spot where the tree and Harry's wrecked motor-cycle lay at the roadside. Then, next moment, they came in sight of the cottage a few yards farther on, outside which a brougham was standing.

"That's where he is, Tony, I'll be bound!" said Specs, who was white and wracked with suspense. "That carriage belongs to a

doctor, I'll bet! I say, I do hope he isn't killed!"

"Heaven forbid!" agreed the trainer solemnly, for he had conceived a keen liking for Harry Lestrade since coming into close contact with him in the football club.

They had brought their car to a standstill, and Tony, who had been at the wheel, sprang down into the road. Specs followed, and was at his heels as the trainer flung open the gate of the tiny garden before the little dwelling, and rushed up a path leading to the front door.

It opened at that moment, and a grave-faced man, with a neat white beard and moustache, who somehow had "doctor" written all over him, emerged. Tony laid his hand impulsively upon his sleeve.

"The injured lad, doctor—he's a friend of ours," Tony said. "What's the news?"

And he hung anxiously upon the medico's reply.

To his relief, and also that of Specs, the doctor gave a reassuring smile.

"He's had a miraculous escape," was his reply. "He was only stunned, and there's not a bone broken, though he sprained his wrist and wrenched an ankle rather badly. Go in and see him. He's been conscious for some time now."

The two friends were shown into the room where Harry had been taken by the woman of the house. They found the boy sitting on the edge of the bed, his wrist damaged, as also was his right foot and ankle. Another bandage was about his head, which had received rather a severe cut, and about his face was more than one cross of sticking-plaster.

He was still very pale and looked shaken, but otherwise seemed little the worse for his crash.

"I fell in the branches of the tree," he said, as, with his uninjured left hand, he gave them both a welcoming grip. "I remember that happening before I hit the road and everything was blotted out. I came an awful cropper. I was going at full speed when it happened."

"But how in the name of thunder did that tree come to fall into the road, old chap?" Tony Wagg asked, frowning in puzzlement. "We can get you back to Douglas in our car, but wait for a bit. I am going to have a squint at that tree," he added suspiciously.

You Watch Harry Lestrade—He's a True-Blue Sportsman!

nothing about the tree being tampered with, if it was so, and—

"Don't you? Then sue me in a court of law for what I'm going to do!" Tony snapped; and, getting a sudden fresh grip upon the terrified Courtney, he deliberately dropped him over the quay into the water.

With a mighty splash Austin Courtney disappeared beneath the surface. As he came up, gasping, and dashing the water from his eyes, with his face livid with mingled fright and rage, a quay-hand flung him a lifebelt which he grabbed, so that he was kept afloat.

Dripping from head to foot, Austin Courtney was dragged back on to the quay, and this was just as a couple of police-constables came pushing their way through the crowd.

"What's all this?" one of them asked, in the quaint dialect of the island. "Do you want to charge this man?" he demanded of the wet and dishevelled Courtney, pointing to the now grinning Tony.

"No!" Austin Courtney snapped, though he glared murderous things at the football trainer as he turned towards the gangway.

"And I didn't think he would," Tony commented to the delighted Harry and Specs, as they followed the young man aboard. "In fact, quite on the contrary, I expect he would be willing to pay away every guinea of the thousand he has won to keep the law from going into details about what happened out on the Knockaloe Road this afternoon."

Specs, Harry Lestrade's chum, emerged from his bed-room at Lestrade Castle, his great black-rimmed spectacles perched upon his nose and his slender figure arrayed in a wonderful thing in dressing-gowns that reminded one of a rainbow.

With his usual short-sighted manner, Specs dawdled along the gloomy, oak-panelled corridor towards a room at the far end that Harry had had fitted up as a gymnasium.

From it came a steady thud, thud, thud! that told Specs that Harry, who was always up early and doing something or other to keep himself fit, was having a bout with his punching-ball.

Specs reached the door, and pushed it open. He stood on the threshold peering at his chum, who was attired in singlet and a pair of shorts, and punching at the ball with a vigour that threatened to drag out its supporting screws.

Specs advanced. "The top of the morning to you, old bean!" he said cheerily. "I am glad to see such energy and—Ow!"

Specs' short-sightedness often got him

into trouble, and he had approached far nearer to the ball and its assailant than he had intended. Unfortunately for him, Harry Lestrade side-stepped the inflated leather as it was returning after a particularly hefty punch, and, striking Specs full upon the nose, it knocked him completely head over heels.

"Ha, ha, ha! What on earth are you trying to do, Specs?" roared Harry, as he swung round and stood looking down at his fallen friend, who was blindly groping for his glasses, which had been knocked from their perch.

Harry Lestrade was now quite fit once more. Over a fortnight had elapsed since the despicable conspiracy that had crooked him in the Isle of Man, and his damaged wrist and ankle had ceased to cause him any inconvenience.

"I say, you know, you might be a little more careful!" grumbled Specs, as Harry found his glasses for him and helped him to his feet. "What the dickens did you want to let the thing come back like that for?"

"My dear chap, I had no idea you were so near!"

"Nor had I," returned Specs ruefully. "You ought to biff it less heftily, old thing. Bother! My nose is bleeding!"

"Gently mop at it and come and see Tearing Haste, Specs," suggested Harry, somewhat unsympathetically, as he made for an adjoining bath-room. "I'll not be a brace of shakes having a plunge and a towelling and getting into my riding togs."

"Are you going to put him over the jumps again this morning?" Specs asked, as he followed his friend to the bath-room door and stood waiting for him.

"Yes—and every morning now until he is sent up to Aintree in March," was Harry's reply. "He's lost all signs of his lameness, and is developing into one of the best jumpers I was ever astride. Old Williams is absolutely keen on his chance, and vows I'll win on him."

Harry Lestrade had his riding clothes already laid out in the bath-room. In rather less than a quarter of an hour he re-appeared attired in them, and after Specs had paused at his bed-room to change his dressing-gown for coat, vest, and overcoat, the two boys made their way out to the training-stables.

There were less horses by half in the charge of Trainer Williams now. For, after his attempt in the Isle of Man to put Harry out of the running in the big sporting contest between them, Austin Courtney had left the castle, and taken his share of the racers with him.

These were now stabled and trained at an establishment at Newmarket, and when discussing the Grand National, the important and most terrible jumping race that has made Aintree famous, the sporting papers spoke promisingly of the chance held by the young man's candidate, Fast and Free.

But, in the opinion of Williams, who had previously trained both animals, good though the five-year-old might be, he would have all his work cut out to beat Harry's horse, Tearing Haste II., as the boy had confided to Specs.

"Morning, young gentlemen!" Williams greeted them, as they entered the yard, where, as it was still quite early, the stable-boys were leading out the horses and clothing them ready to take them for their exercise spins. "Here's the old chap all ready for you, Master Harry—and 'pon my word every morning sees him more full of pep and fit!"

Harry walked over to the heavily clothed Tearing Haste, towards whom the trainer had waved his hand.

The thoroughbred pushed his nose affectionately against the boy's shoulder as he patted his nose and whispered to him. The two understood each other perfectly, which is a great asset when it comes to racing.

With Harry leading Tearing Haste, a move was made out on to the large open space where the schooling hurdles and fences were erected, the racers walking with the sedate tread always noticeable in a well-bred horse and sniffing the keen morning air almost suspiciously.

All were fighting-fit, and more than one was inclined to bolt as it felt the spring of the turf under its heels, and would have done so but for the lads in charge.

Marjorie Randall was waiting on the fringe of the exercise ground, seated on her superb black horse, and she waved her hand to the two boys as she espied them with the racehorses.

Tearing Haste was stripped, and Harry given a leg-up. Whilst Specs, Marjorie, and Williams watched admiringly, the boy took the horse for a two-mile spin over the obstacles, and, as well as showing a fine speed, he leapt with a sure, clean grace that even the inexperienced Specs felt must put him in the foremost ranks of horses of his type.

(There will be another long, gripping instalment of our amazing sporting serial included in next week's fine batch of stories. Look out for it!)

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.

GREAT NEWS.

THERE is plenty of stirring interest in next week's magnificent programme of stories in the POPULAR, but first of all let me tell my chums that they can look with confidence for a splendid addition to the new Portrait Gallery.

A FREE PHOTO OF A FAMOUS SPORTSMAN.

That's what you will find in next week's POPULAR, and I do most strongly advise everybody to make a point of ordering the paper well in advance. It would be a thousand pities to miss one of these beautiful photos. They will make a superb collection: one that will provide heaps of interest for any length of time.

I am going to make a point here of reminding you all that our Companion Papers are offering something unique in the photographic line.

THE POPULAR.—No. 201.

SPECIAL AUTOGRAPHED PORTRAITS.

You will find these in the greatly enlarged "Gem," which paper, with its brilliant coloured cover, is making enormous strides towards even greater popularity than it ever enjoyed.

Don't miss any of the Companion Papers if you can help it. The "Magnet" has a record programme, and its exquisite photos are getting talked about everywhere, while the new Greyfriars series is simply booming.

Then as regards the enlarged "Boys' Friend"—well, the old Green Un has something it can well afford to be proud about, in its grand new series of coloured portraits of footballers. You never saw finer finish. These likenesses are a positive triumph of the photographer's art, and the chance of getting the players in their club colours is unique.

NOW ABOUT THE STORIES.

Without a doubt the present fiction programme in the POPULAR is the most representative we have ever had. I feel that there is some reason to dwell on its stupendous variety and all-round attractiveness. There is Mr. Martin Clifford, with a ripping yarn of St. Jim's. You cannot beat these tales of the famous school for wit and liveliness. Then, as to Greyfriars, it is no exaggeration to say that the POPULAR

worthily carries on the story of the celebrated establishment presided over by Dr. Locke, and where Mr. Quelch exercises such useful sway over the Remove.

The POPULAR stands alone as a complete story paper. I have added a host more fine things to the list of features, and for the moment I am more than satisfied, though I may as well tell you right away that there are heaps of novelties coming along.

But we are going ahead like the traditional house afire as things are. We have Victor Nelson's trenchant serial. There is the ever-appreciated Backwoods story, and there is Rookwood, to name only a few of the fine treats which you can find in the POPULAR.

Keep your eye on next week's number. It will surprise you. What's more, it will prove to you that the fame of "Bunter's Weekly" is not going to be dimmed—don't think it—by any Congo stunts on the part of the editor. "Bunter's Weekly" remains as ever the most amusing, the brightest, and raciest supplement which ever issued from a printing press.

Your Editor.

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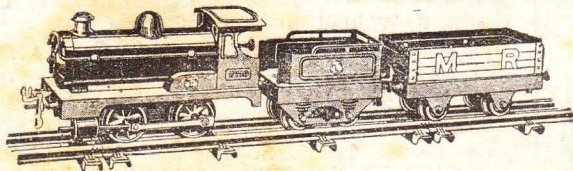
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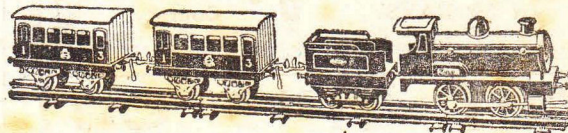
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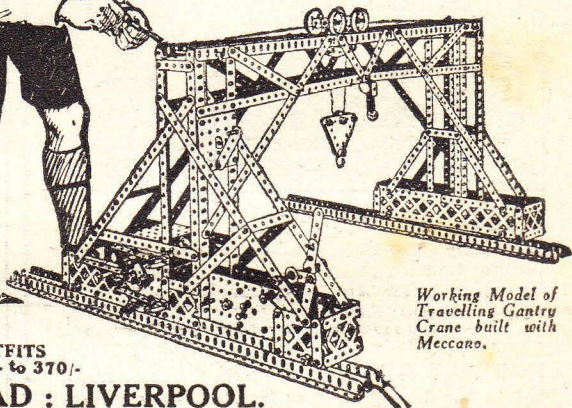
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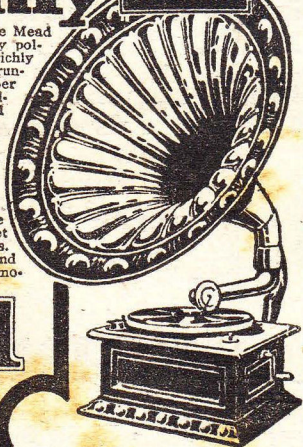
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