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THE UNCLE SNOOP WANTED TO HIDE!

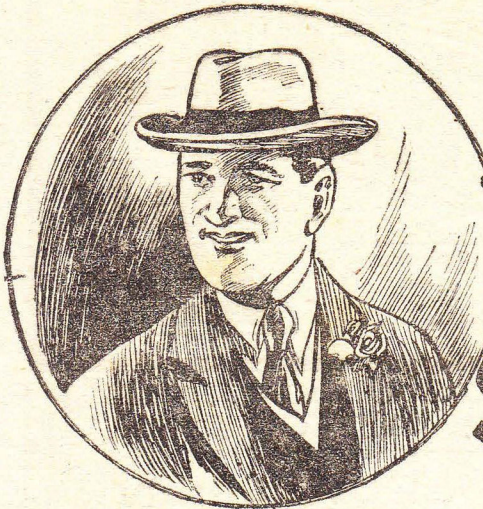
"I bought these 'ere new clothes specially to do me nevvv credit!" said Uncle Uggins affably.

BIG MONEY PRIZES MUST BE WON THIS WEEK!

(See our Simple Football Competition inside.)

2 This is the story-paper you have been looking for—read it regularly!

ASHAMED OF HIS UNCLE! Mr. Huggins, from Canada, plans to give his nephew, Sidney Snoop, the snob of the Remove, a richly-deserved lesson!



A Lesson for Snoop!



A Stirring Long Complete Story, dealing with the adventures of the famous Chums of Greyfriars, and the sneak and snob of the Remove. Penned by a world-famous author,

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Snoop's Uncle!

SIDNEY JAMES SNOOP, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, was probably the biggest cad in the famous old school. He was a sneak, and he was something of a rascal. Now there was another trait in his character coming to light. He was a snob.

He had heard that his uncle, Joshua Huggins, was coming to visit him at Greyfriars, and fearing that his Form fellows would sneer at him because his uncle dropped his aspirates, and dressed himself in loud check suits, Snoop felt that he had to do something to stop that visit.

To that end, he had persuaded Vernon-Smith, better known as the Bounder of Greyfriars, to proceed to the station to inform Uncle Joshua that he—Snoop—had been compelled to stay in bed owing to an accident on the football field.

Now Snoop was anxious to see Smithy again to hear that he had sent the dreaded uncle back to London. There was a possibility that Uncle Joshua might come by motor car, for he was by no means a poor man. Snoop nearly fainted as he thought of that possibility.

He waited just outside the gates of Greyfriars in fear and trembling.

No motor-car appeared in sight, however, and Snoop began to feel more and more relieved. If his uncle arrived by train, he felt sure that the cunning Bounder would be able to deal with him.

His feelings may be imagined when he suddenly caught sight of Vernon-Smith coming up the road with a fearsome figure in loud checks walking beside him.

Snoop stood rooted to the ground. This was evidently his uncle—the benefactor of whom he was ashamed. This dreadful-looking person—this awful outsider—this vision of vulgarity and bad taste and everything that was objectionable—this was his Uncle Huggins!

The Bounder had failed him! Snoop did not know that the Bounder had more or less been dragged by the scruff of his neck.

Mr. Huggins caught sight of Snoop, and waved his stick to him. Snoop could only stare blankly, with fury in his heart.

"Ere we are!" said Mr. Huggins, as he came up. "Are you Sid?"

Snoop wondered for a moment how his uncle knew him by sight, as they had never met before. But he had no time to think about that.

"Ye-es," he stuttered.

"My neevy—hey?"

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"I'm Sidney Snoop."
"And I'm your Uncle Josh!" said Mr. Huggins. "Your old uncle, Josh 'Uggins, my boy, wot's come to see you!"

"Will you let me go now, Mr. Huggins?" said Vernon-Smith, in a low, concentrated voice, his face pale with rage.

"Cert'nly!" said Mr. Huggins, releasing the Bounder's arm. "Thanky kindly for 'aving showed me the wye to Greyfriars, young gent!"

The Bounder did not reply. He hurried in at the school gates, without a glance at Snoop. Snoop had given him a look that was almost homicidal. The Bounder had failed him, and Snoop suspected that Smithy had tricked him, and deliberately brought his dreadful uncle to the school. Such a trick would have been quite in keeping with Vernon-Smith's peculiar nature.

"Well, 'ere we are, Sid, my boy!" said Mr. Huggins heartily. "Give us your 'and!"

Snoop mechanically held out his hand. Mr. Huggins took it in a grip that made Snoop jump almost clear of the ground, and utter an exclamation of pain.

"Ow!"
"Glad to sec yer, Sidney!" went on the hearty Mr. Huggins. "But 'ow is it you are up? I 'eard that you was laid up from a football accident."

"I've got well," muttered Snoop.

"Well, that's all right. Now we'll go into the school, and you shall show me round the place, and introduce me to your friends—wot?"

Snoop shuddered.
"I—I—I'm sorry, uncle," he said huskily.

"I—I've had a telegram from—from a friend at Lantham—he's ill. I think I ought to go over there. Will you come along with me, and—"

"Oh, never mind your friend in Lantham!" said Mr. Huggins. "You can't go a-visitin' sick friends on the houly day your uncle comes to see yer!"

"But I—"
"Nuff said!" exclaimed Mr. Huggins decidedly. "You ain't goin', Sid!"

"Uncle, I—"
"I sha'n't 'ave time to come down agin," explained Mr. Huggins. "I got to git back to Kenedy. I done my business in London, you see. I got to git back."

Snoop was glad to hear it. He would have given whole terms of pocket-money if his uncle had had to get back to Canada before that dreadful day.

"So kim on!" said Mr. Huggins affectionately. "You're glad to see your old uncle, ain't you, Sid—wot?"

"Ye-es, of course!" stammered Snoop.

"Rather rough-and-ready, but you'll find

my 'eart's in the right place," said Mr. Huggins. "You know that, Sid?"

"Oh, yes, uncle!"
"I bought these noo clothes to do you credit, Sid," said Mr. Huggins, with a pleased glance down at his new attire. "I ain't orlways so well dressed as this 'ere. But, of course, I wanted to do you credit at your school."

"That was very k-k-kind, uncle!"
"I'm a kind man," said Mr. Huggins.

"When your father was shoved into quod—"
Snoop bit his lip hard.

His father's transactions in the City had been expected to lead to great wealth, and instead of that they had led to the gates of prison, and Mr. Snoop had retired from the world for a space of several years.

Snoop found it difficult to live down a thing like that, and it had made him all the more anxious to keep his dreadful uncle away from the school.

"In quod still, ain't he?" said Mr. Huggins innocently.

"Yes," said Snoop between his teeth.

"Ard on 'im!" said Mr. Huggins. "We was never great friends, but I felt sorry for 'im when the crash came, and I made up me mind to look arter you, Sid."

Sidney James ought to have expressed gratitude at that point, but he could not. His feelings were very far from grateful just then.

"Well, kim on!" said Mr. Huggins.

"Don't—don't say anything about father in the school, uncle!" gasped Snoop. "It isn't known to everybody there, and—of course, I keep it as dark as I can!"

"Natterally!" agreed Mr. Huggins. "But don't you be ashamed of your father, Sid. He done wrong, and he paid for it; but it ain't a son's place to be ashamed of his father. It would be as bad as bein' ashamed of your old uncle!"

Mr. Huggins moved towards the school gates, and Snoop had to go with him. He had given up hope now. Somehow or other, the whole scheme had gone awry, and his uncle was fairly planted on him. All his dodges and subterfuges had failed; the very worst had happened—his uncle had arrived at Greyfriars—and upon a half-holiday, when all the fellows were free to see him—in broad daylight—and the horror of the situation almost overcame Snoop.

A better fellow than Snoop might have been dismayed by such a relative visiting him at such a school as Greyfriars; but to the miserable snob it was sheer torture.

Gosling, the porter, stared at Mr. Huggins as he came in with his nephew. Never had Gosling seen such a gentleman enter the gates of Greyfriars before.

Gosling, not unnaturally, failed to guess

that this was a relative of Snoop. He took Mr. Huggins for what he looked like, and he came quickly towards the pair.

"This ain't allowed, Master Snoop!" he exclaimed. "I shall 'ave to report you if you bring this 'ere gent into the school!"

"Wot's that?" exclaimed Mr. Huggins.

"You get out!" said Gosling, pointing to the gates. "Wot I says is this 'ere—book-makers and sich ain't allowed in this 'ere place!"

"Bookmakers!" roared Mr. Huggins.

"Well, wotever you are, then!" said Gosling. "You get out! Master Snoop would get into trouble if you was seen with him!"

"Wot! I'm his uncle!" shouted Mr. Huggins.

Gosling staggered.

"His uncle!"

"Yes; his Uncle 'Ugkins, I guess! Now, wot have you got to say?" demanded the gentleman from the Colonies, fixing a ferocious glare upon the school-porter.

Gosling hadn't anything to say. He could only stare dumbfounded at Mr. Huggins, who snorted, and walked on triumphantly with the miserable Snoop.

Gosling looked after him like a man in a dream.

"Well, this beats it!" he murmured. "Wot I says is this 'ere, this beats it 'ollow! And Gosling retreated into his lodge, quite overcome.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Mr. Huggins Looks Round!

GOAL!"

That shout, from the playing-fields, was wafted across the Close, and Mr. Huggins turned his head towards the football-ground.

"Match goin' on, Sid?" he asked.

"Yes, uncle," murmured Snoop.

"Your friends playing?"

"No; it's the first eleven," said Snoop.

"Will you come up to my study, uncle? We'll have tea in the study, and a talk, and—"

Nearly all the fellows who were not out of gates were gathered round the senior ground, where the first eleven were playing the Fifth Form. The Close was almost deserted.

Snoop had a faint hope of piloting his uncle into the House unseen, keeping him to his study undiscovered, and getting rid of him afterwards somehow or other. But Joshua Huggins was not to be disposed of in that way.

"We'll 'ave a look on at the match, Sid," he said.

Snoop groaned aloud. His dreadful relative was determined to let himself be seen by all Greyfriars. Mr. Huggins looked at him sharply.

"Anything the matter with yer, Sid?" he asked.

"No, uncle."

"You ain't lookin' very 'appy."

"I—I'm feeling happy, uncle. It—it's such a pleasure to see you!" stammered Snoop.

"That's ori' right, then. Come and let's look on at the footer. I was glad to 'ear that you was a footballer, Sid. It's many a year since I've played the game, but I allers like to see a match. Somebody can take my bag into the 'Ouse, and we'll watch the footer for a bit."

"Yes, uncle."

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, was lounging across the Close. Mr. Huggins called to him:

"Ere, young shaver!"

Lord Mauleverer jumped. His eyes grew very wide as they fell upon Mr. Huggins.

"Begad! Did you address me, sir?" gasped his lordship.

Mr. Huggins held out his bag.

"Yes. Take this 'ere!"

"What!"

"Take this 'ere bag into the 'Ouse for me, and I'll give you tuppence!"

Lord Mauleverer almost fell down. He was a very obliging fellow, and he would have carried the bag in. But to be offered twopence for doing so—it rather took his breath away. Snoop gritted his teeth. His uncle was not only fearful to look at, but his manners matched his appearance. The idea of offering Greyfriars fellows a tip of twopence to carry a bag—it was really the limit. The dreadful uncle seemed to have no sense of propriety at all.

"I—I beg your pardon!" gasped the astounded Mauleverer.

"Nothin' to beg my pardon for, fur as I kin see," said Mr. Huggins. "Carry this 'er grip into the 'ouse for me, and I'll give you tuppence, and 'ere it is!"

And Mr. Huggins' dirty hand extracted two dirty coppers from a pocket, and extended them to Lord Mauleverer.

The schoolboy earl gazed at him.

"Who is this person, Snoop?" he asked.

"I'm Sid's uncle," said Mr. Huggins.

"Oh, begad!"

"Do you want this 'ere tuppence, or don't you, young shaver?"

"Thank you—no! But I will carry your bag into the house with pleasure, my dear sir," said Lord Mauleverer politely.

"Oh, take the tuppence!" said Mr. Huggins, as Lord Mauleverer relieved him of the bag. "You're earning it!"

"Thank you—the honour of being of service to you, sir is quite sufficient reward," said Lord Mauleverer, with the most elaborate politeness.

Mr. Huggins returned the coppers to his pocket.

"Werry perlitte, I must say," he remarked. "Well, cut orf with it. Who's that young shaver, Sid?" he added, as Lord Mauleverer walked away with the bag.

"That's Lord Mauleverer!" groaned Snoop.

"Lord, eh?" said Mr. Huggins. "Why, you're quite 'igh-class 'ere, Sid! Fancy you, with a father in quod, mixing with lords and sich! And with a rough old uncle like me! You've got on in the world, Sid! Now, I s'pose that young gent would think jest

stared at Mr. Huggins as he came up with Snoop, and they gasped. In their wildest imaginings, they had never imagined anything like this.

"Snoop's uncle!" murmured Bulstrode. "Oh, my hat!"

"Faith, and it's a broth of a boy he is!" said Micky Desmond, grinning. "Doesn't Snoop looked pleased intirely?"

"My word, what a remarkable old codger!" said Stott.

"The remarkablefulness of the esteemed old codger is terrific!"

"Shurrup!" murmured Bob. "Where are your blessed manners? Don't let him hear you say anything, you duffers! Be civil."

But most of the fellows could not help grinning—as much at the sight of Snoop's suffering face as at that of his remarkable uncle.

Wingate of the Sixth was just kicking for goal, and the ball went home and there was a cheer. Mr. Huggins joined in it, clapping his powerful hands with reports like pistol-shots.

"Urray, 'urrray!" he roared. "Well kicked, by thunder! Bravo!"

"You're a footballer, sir?" asked Bolsover major, with a wink at his companion, addressing himself very politely to Mr. Huggins.

"Yes, I was in me young days," said Mr. Huggins. "Like to see a game still. That there young feller did that well."

"That's Wingate, our skipper," said Bob Cherry. "So you are Snoop's uncle, sir? Glad to see you at Greyfriars."

"Werry kind, I'm sure," said Huggins. "Interdooce me to your friends, Sid."

Snoop suppressed a groan, and performed the introductions. The Remove fellows gathered round joyfully, all clamouring to be introduced to the celebrated uncle. They were enjoying the scene immensely, and especially Snoop's face.

"Ow do you do?" said Mr. Huggins, shaking hands in turn with the grinning Removites. "Werry glad to find meself 'ere! Yes, rather! I've bought these 'ere noo clothes to do my nephew credit!"

"Have you really, sir?" gasped Bob Cherry, making manful efforts not to burst into a roar of laughter. Mr. Huggins' simplicity tickled him immensely.

"I guess so. I ain't always goin' about in style like this 'ere," said Mr. Huggins. "I'm a self-made man, I am, and a plain man. I worked my passage across, when I went out to Kenedy, and I bin a cowboy and a ranch-and, you know—worked with me 'ands all me life. Some nevvies would be ashamed of a rough old galoot like me, but not my Sid. Sid's as proud of me as I am of 'im."

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as much of you if he knew your father 'ad started in life by sweepin' out a hoffice?"

"They don't know that here," said Snoop, quite livid.

"Keeping it dark—eh? Well, I won't let on," said Mr. Huggins. "Not that there's anything to be ashamed of in startin' low down on the ladder, Sid. I worked my passage across the sea to Kenedy, and worked on a farm as a labourer, and I ain't ashamed of it."

Snoop was, but he could not venture to say so. He was writhing with inward anguish. Mr. Huggins' loud voice had drawn several fellows towards him, and Snoop saw Mr. Quelch looking out of his study window. Billy Bunter was blinking at Mr. Huggins from the School House doorway with eyes that had grown almost as large and round as his spectacles.

Bunter rolled towards them with a grinning face.

"Your uncle, Snoopey?" he asked.

Snoop gave him a fierce look, but did not speak. But Mr. Huggins answered.

"Yes; I'm Sid's Uncle 'Ugkins!" he said.

"Oh, crumbs!" said Bunter.

And he started for the footer ground as fast as his fat little legs could carry him, to spread the interesting news that Snoop's famous uncle had arrived.

"Kim on!" said Mr. Huggins.

The wretched Snoop followed him to Big Side. Bunter was before them, and the news had spread like wildfire that Snoop's uncle had come at last. All the Remove fellows who were there were keenly interested. They

Sidney James was not looking proud at that moment.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. Then he said "Ow, ow!" as Bob Cherry stamped on his foot.

"Another friend of yours, Sid?" said Mr. Huggins, looking sharply at Billy Bunter.

"That's Bunter, sir—"

"Ow do you do, Bunter?" said Mr. Huggins, taking Bunter's fat hand in a grasp that seemed to close on the fat fingers like a vice.

Bunter gasped.

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Glad to see you," said Mr. Huggins affably, compressing his iron grip on Bunter's hand till the fat junior yelled with pain, and danced before him. "Wy, wot's the matter with the young gent?"

"Ow! Leggo my hand!" yelled Bunter.

"You're smashing my fingers! Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Urtin' you?" said Mr. Huggins, still without relaxing his terrible grip. "Well, now, I swow! You youngsters are mighty soft in these 'ere days, I guess. Wy, I—"

"Yaroo! Leggo! Help!"

Bob Cherry chuckled gleefully. He caught a humorous gleam in Mr. Huggins' eye and he divined that the rough old gentleman was not quite so simple as he appeared. He had not given anybody but Bunter that terrible grip.

"Make him let go!" wailed Bunter. "Ow! You beast! You're crushing my beastly fingers! Ow! Help! Yaroo!"

Mr. Huggins released him at last, and Billy Bunter, scowling furiously, beat a retreat, sucking his fingers, which were almost

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numbed. And Mr. Huggins, with a cheerful grin, turned his attention to the game, clapping his heavy hands and applauding in a voice that could be heard from one end of the playing-fields to the other.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Celebrating the Occasion!

MR. HUGGINS was the cynosure of all eyes by this time. Fellows came round from all sides to get a good look at him, and he was soon the centre of a crowd. Interested as the spectators were in the senior match, they were soon much more keenly interested in Joshua Huggins.

And Mr. Huggins was affable to everybody. Ranch life in Canada seemed to have developed his voice as well as his muscles, for it could be heard above all others, even when the crowd were cheering.

Even the footballers turned their eyes towards the spot where Mr. Huggins was standing, the centre of a crowd.

"Ye gods!" said Loder of the Sixth. "Who's that merchant?"
"And Walker giggled."
"It's Snoop's uncle!"

The match was very near its close. When the game was finished, and the players trooped off, the crowd broke up, but they did not seem to want to leave Mr. Huggins. And Mr. Huggins seemed pleased by the attention that was bestowed upon him. Perhaps it gratified him to make something like a sensation in the school. Sidney James Snoop was not at all gratified; indeed, by this time he was entertaining wild thoughts of bolting, and leaving his uncle alone, at all costs. But he could not quite make up his mind to that.

"Well, that was a good game," commented Mr. Huggins. "I'm glad you are a footballer, Sid. It's good for you young fellows."

"Snoop a footballer!" murmured Bob Cherry. "He's been piling it on."

"Now we'll have a look round the school after it gets dark," said Mr. Huggins. "After that, we'll 'ave tea in the study, Sid."

"Yes, uncle."
"And 'ark all your friends," said the generous Mr. Huggins. "It's my treat. Gents, you'll honour Josh 'Uggins by feeding with 'im?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney of the Fourth. "We'll all come!"
"I guess so!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Depend upon us, sir. We'll roll up in our giddy thousands!"

"Begad, yaas!" said Lord Maulverer. "Hurrah!"

"Three cheers for Snoop's uncle!" shouted Bolsover major.

"Hip, hip, hurray!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

And as Mr. Huggins started to explore Greyfriars, the whole crowd went with him, in a state of great enjoyment. Snoop would gladly have escaped, but his uncle kept him by his side. He did not seem to want to part with his affectionate nephew for a moment.

The tour of inspection was a long-drawn-out anguish to Snoop. But everybody else enjoyed it, including Mr. Huggins.

That gentleman seemed, in fact, overflowing with high spirits.

As they came back towards the School House, Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, met them. The Form master's look was puzzled and severe. He had inquired who the stranger was, and a grinning junior had explained that it was Snoop's uncle—but it seemed somewhat incredible, and Mr. Quelch decided to satisfy himself upon the point.

"Pray excuse me," said Mr. Quelch. "I understand—ahem!—you are a relation of Snoop's?"

Mr. Huggins nodded.
"I'm his Uncle 'Uggins," he said.
"This is your uncle, Snoop?"
"Yes, sir!" muttered Snoop.
"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch.

He looked after Mr. Huggins very curiously, as the Colonial gentleman accompanied Snoop & Co. into the House. Wingate met his eyes, and smiled.

"Rather a remarkable man, sir," the captain of Greyfriars remarked.

"It is very odd," said Mr. Quelch: "very odd indeed! I have seen the letters Mr.

Huggins has written to the Head—they were well-written letters—I certainly expected to see quite a different person. This is—ahem!—somewhat unfortunate for Snoop."

"He doesn't look as if he were enjoying himself, sir."

"No; I am sorry for him. But his uncle seems very kind and—and well-disposed," said the Remove master. "After all, the inward nature is of far more importance than the outward man."

Mr. Huggins had gone up to Snoop's study with his dutiful nephew. The Remove passage was simply crammed with the army of fellows that followed.

"There ain't room 'ere for all your friends to come to tea, Sid," said Mr. Huggins.
"Wouldn't you rather have a quiet tea, just by ourselves, uncle?" pleaded the wretched Snoop.

Mr. Huggins shook his head decidedly.
"I guess not—we're goin' to 'ave your friends."

"Let's have tea in the Rag, sir," said Skinner, in the doorway. "Plenty of room there for all the Lower School, sir."

"Good idea!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "It's a big room, sir—room for everybody. Let's have it in the Rag."

"Good!" said Mr. Huggins. "Show me the way."

They led him down to the Rag—a large room on the ground floor, with windows overlooking the Close. Mr. Huggins nodded with satisfaction.

"This 'ere is all right," he said. "Now for the grub. I reckon I'll smoke a pipe, while you're gettin' tea with your friends, Sid."

"Yes, uncle."
"Ere's a tenner, and if there's any more wanted, you jest tell me," said Mr. Huggins, extracting a ten-pound note from a fat pocket-book. "Some of you go with Sid and 'elp 'im carry in the prog."

"Hurrah!"
"Jolly good old chap, if he has got his funny ways!" said Bob Cherry, as a crowd of the fellows made their way to the school shop. "Too good for Snoop, anyway."

"I say, Snoop, where did your uncle get his clothes?" chirruped Ogilvy.

"Ask him to tell us the name of his tailor, Snoop."

"And the name of his jeweller."
"And the address of his hatter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Snoop did not speak—he was white and desperate. He would willingly have thrown the banknote to the winds; but he had to carry out his uncle's instructions. Mrs. Mimble opened her eyes wide at the sight of the banknote, and handed out her best things in endless quantities in exchange. A dozen fellows were loaded with the supplies for the feed in the Rag.

They marched back loaded, and found Mr. Huggins sitting on the table in the Rag, smoking his short black pipe, and making the room reek with the smell of rank tobacco.

Some of the fellows in the room were coughing, and Russell had slyly opened the window to allow the fumes to escape.

"May we lay the table, sir, if you wouldn't mind sitting on a chair?" asked Bolsover major politely.

"Cert'nly!" said Huggins, sliding off the table. "Where are me manners, now? But we're rather rough and ready out West, you know."

"Yes, I suppose so, sir!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"P'raps you young gents don't like smoke," said Mr. Huggins, with thoughtful consideration. "I 'ope you don't smoke, any of you—it's werry bad for the inside when you're young. But I got in the 'abit when I was working my passage across the ocean. I've been tellin' your friends, Sid, 'ow I worked my passage hout when I was a kid not many years older than wot you are now."

"Have you?" said Snoop, between his teeth.

"I worked in the stoke-'old," said Mr. Huggins. "Werry rough it was, I guess—"

"Here's a chair, uncle," said Snoop, anxious to interrupt the flow of Mr. Huggins' low-class reminiscences.

"Thank you, Sid! Allers look after your old uncle, and your old uncle'll look after you," said Mr. Huggins affectionately.

"We've got a ripping feed, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"Glad to 'ear it! I'm rather peckish myself. I can 'andle a good knife and fork," said Mr. Huggins. "I fust got a good appetite when I was workin' in a stoke-'old—"

"Will you sit here, uncle?"
"I guess so."

Mr. Huggins sat down at the table. Dusk was falling in the Close, and the juniors had turned on the light in the Rag. The big table, with two smaller tables added to it, was simply covered with the array of good things. Seldom had a spread equal to that been seen in the Rag—though a good many feeds had taken place there.

Most of the fellows did not care whether Snoop's uncle was a hooligan or a Hottentot, so long as the feed was good. And it was decidedly good. Chairs and forms were dragged in from all quarters—and large as the Rag was, it was well crowded. Even Coker & Co., of the Fifth, condescended to come in—partly for the feed, and partly to enjoy the sight of Snoop's uncle. The Fourth and the Second, all sent numerous contingents. Pretty nearly all the Lower School, in fact, had gathered for that joyful occasion. It was past tea-time—and that magnificent spread was certainly better than tea in the studies.

"My hat! I wish Wharton and the others were here," said Bob Cherry, as he sat down. "They're missing all the fun."

"They will soonfully return," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, "and this gorgeous and esteemed banquet will not be finished quickly!"

That was quite true; the banquet was likely to last as long as the viands. All the fellows had determined to do it justice. Even Vernon-Smith had come in, though he kept at a good distance from Mr. Huggins—and Billy Butler had recovered from the terrific handshake sufficiently to roll in and distinguish himself as a trencherman.

"Wire in, young gents!" said Mr. Huggins hospitably.

And the young gents wired in with a hearty good will.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. A Surprising Recognition!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. jumped off their bicycles at the gates of Greyfriars, and wheeled them in. They had been to tea at Cliff House, and ridden back to school in great spirits—quite unconscious of what they had missed. But as they wheeled their machines towards the bike-shed, they saw the lights in the windows of the Rag, and guessed that something was "on."

"Looks like a celebration," said Wharton. "Perhaps Maully standing another feed," said Johnny Bull. "Well, if it is, I dare say we can manage a little."

They put their machines up, and came into the House, and hurried to the Rag. Harry Wharton opened the door, and uttered an exclamation of astonishment. He had been prepared for a scene of conviviality; but he was not quite prepared for what now burst upon his eyes.

It was a feed, certainly—but a feed of unusual dimensions, with an extraordinary number of guests—and the gentleman who was evidently presiding was so remarkable a gentleman that the three newly-arrived juniors stared blankly at him.

"Who on earth's that?" gasped Nugent. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob Cherry, catching sight of his chums in the doorway. "Here you are again! Come in, you chaps!"

"But what—who—?"
"It's Snoop's uncle!" called out Vernon-Smith. "Snoop's Uncle 'Uggins!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Huggins waved a dirty hand to the newcomers.

"Kim in, young gents—the more the merrier! More friends of yours, Sid, eh?"
"Yes, uncle!" murmured Snoop.

"Make room for the young gents," said the founder of the feast. "I'm Sid's Uncle 'Uggins, young gents. Pleased to meet you. Sit dahn!"

"Thank you, Mr. Huggins!"
"You are very kind, sir."

Mr. Huggins beamed with affability. But as he saw the three juniors more closely, in

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

Further Adventures of Harry Wharton & Co.—in the "Magnet" Every Week 1

the light, his expression suddenly changed. He turned his face a little away.

Harry Wharton was staring at him in bewilderment.

In spite of the mottled chin, the red nose, and the dirty skin, he felt certain that he had seen that face before—when the nose was not red, the chin not mottled, and the skin not dirty!

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed involuntarily. "I—I've seen you before, sir."

"My only hat!" murmured Nugent. "So have I! What a giddy change! What's the little joke, I wonder?"

"What does it mean?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. He, too, was convinced that he knew Mr. Huggins' face, changed as it was in its aspect.

Mr. Huggins turned to them quickly. "We've met before, I think, young gents, ain't we? But mum's the word."

"Oh, certainly, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the little joke?" asked Bob Cherry. "I didn't know you knew Snoopey's uncle, Harry."

"I didn't, either," said Wharton, laughing; "but I do!"

"Yes, rather!" grinned Johnny Bull. "It's all right, sir—mum's the word! I never guessed you were a giddy humorist, sir."

Snoop looked at them in amazement, and then looked at his uncle. He did not understand in the least what they were talking about.

"I didn't know you knew any Greyfriars fellows, uncle," he said.

"I met them there young gents to-day," said Mr. Huggins. "But I'll tell you about it afterwards. Never mind that now."

"But I say—" "I am very much obliged to you young gents," added Mr. Huggins. "But for you I should never have found out something that I was very glad to know before it was too late."

"Getting jolly mysterious!" murmured Bob Cherry. "What's he found out, I wonder?"

But Mr. Huggins changed the topic by rising to his feet.

"Gents—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Ear, ear!" said the Bounder sarcastically.

"Gents, I rises to propose a toast!"

"Bravo!"

"I ventures to propose the 'ealth of my nevy, Sidney James Snoop, 'ere present. You all know my nevy Sid."

"We do!" grinned Bolsover. "We does!"

"You know what a splendid chap 'e is," said Mr. Huggins. "You know that he's the right sort. Bless your little 'earts, there are some blokes that would be ashamed of a rough old uncle like me, from the backwoods, but that ain't Sid's sort. I bet you 'e's been dancin' with joy ever since 'e 'eard that I was coming to the school to see 'im. He welcomed me with open arms, 'e did—like the good little chap 'e is. Nothing snobbish about my nevy Sid."

"Ha, ha ha!"

Snoop became crimson and writhed in his seat. He wondered whether that dreadful old man would ever hold his tongue.

"He ain't ashamed of me, and the fact that I worked my passage out to Kenedy, and worked with me 'ands all me life!" continued Mr. Huggins enthusiastically. "Not Sid! 'E's the right sort, 'e is! 'E knows that I worked on a ranch as a common cowboy, but he knowed I'd try to do 'im credit when I kim 'ere, and I may tell you young gents that I bought these 'ere noo clothes a-purpose!"

"Hear, hear!"

"So I proposes the 'ealth of Sid, and long may he be a good, manly fellow, and never become a snob!"

The juniors yelled with laughter. They could not help it. Mr. Huggins' description of his nephew was so out of accordance with the facts they knew so well. Everybody but Mr. Huggins could see that Snoop was writhing with shame and rage.

But the toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

"Now, Snoopey!" shouted Bob Cherry.

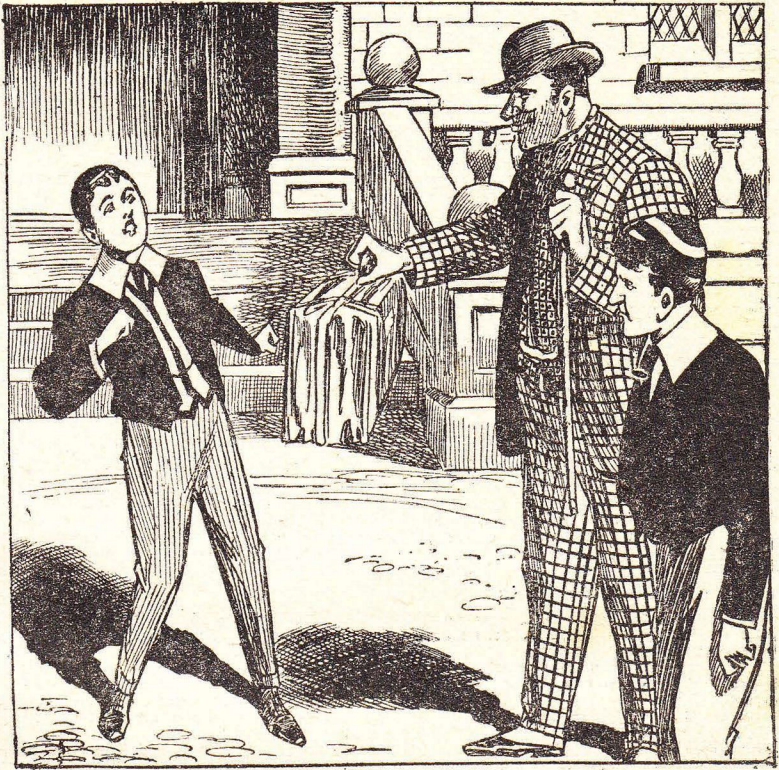
"Give us a toast—the founder of the feast, you know!"

Snoop gave him a glance of hatred instead. "Yes, git up, Sid," said Mr. Huggins, jerking his unfortunate nephew out of his chair. "Give the young gents a toast, Sid!"

Sidney James trembled with rage.

"My uncle!" he stuttered. "The—the founder of the feast!"

"Speech!" howled Bolsover major; and the rest took up the cry:



MR. HUGGINS AT GREYFRIARS.—Mr. Huggins held out his bag to Lord Mauleverer. "Take this 'ere bag into the 'ouse for me, and I'll give you tuppence!" Mauleverer almost fell down. "I—I beg your pardon!" he gasped. (See chapter 2.)

"Speech! Speech!" "Go it, Sid! Don't mind your Uncle 'Uggins!" said Mr. Huggins encouragingly.

Trotter, the page, came into the Rag at that moment. With a subdued grin on his face, he made his way through the crowd towards Mr. Huggins.

"If you please, sir—" "Allo! Wot's wanted?" said Mr. Huggins.

"If you please, sir, the 'Ead's heard that you're 'ere, sir, and he would like to speak to you in his study afore you go, sir," said Trotter.

Snoop groaned to himself. Even the Head was to see his dreadful uncle, then. Apparently, nobody at Greyfriars was to miss seeing him, then!

"Right-ho!" said Mr. Huggins. "Tell the 'Ead I'll be glad to drop in, young 'un. Pr'aps I'd better go. You young gents can finish without me."

"I—I—if you'd like a wash and a brush-up before you go to the Head, uncle, I'll take you to the dorm," faltered Snoop. His uncle's clothes could not be helped, but at least the awful old person might be clean, Snoop thought.

"Now, that's werry thoughtful of you, Sid," said Mr. Huggins affectionately. "Allers thinkin' of yer old uncle. But don't you come—you stay and do the honours. This 'ere kid can take me to the dormitory."

"Suttinly, sir!" said Trotter.

"Git my bag, and take it there, too," said Mr. Huggins.

"Yessir!"

"I'll look in agin afore I goes to the 'Ead!" added Mr. Huggins, as he rose from the table. "Aw rewaw, young gents!"

"Au revoir, sir!"

And Mr. Huggins followed Trotter out of the Rag. The door closed behind him, and then there was a yell of laughter.

"So that's your nunky, Snoop!"

"Good old sport!"

"So high-class!" sniggered Billy Bunter.

"Quite a nobleman!" grinned Stott.

"Ducal—more than ducal!" chuckled Bolsover major.

"When did your uncle wash last, Snoop?"

"Does he ever wash, Snoopey?"

"Where did he dig up that watch-chain?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheese it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You've sat down at his spread, and you can't jaw about him. And he's a jolly good sort—miles better than his nephew any day!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

Snoop rose to his feet, his eyes glittering. His hands were tightly clenched. He looked as if he would have liked to run amuck among the grinning juniors, and hit out right and left. The miserable snob of Greyfriars was overwhelmed with shame and humiliation.

"Speech, Snoopey!" chortled Bolsover major. "Tell us about your uncle."

"You rotters!" growled Snoop. "You rotters! You were glad enough to get his feed, anyway, and glad enough to have a whack in his remittances!"

"Quite so!" grinned Bob Cherry. "That's got you, Bolsover. Gentlemen, I think Snoop's uncle is a jolly good sort, and he has a good taste in feeds!"

"Ha ha, ha!"

"Better than he has in clothes, then," grunted Bolsover major.

Snoop sat down again. His uncle had told him to remain, and he did not venture to disobey his terrible relative. But he felt as if he would like to rush away, and hide himself where no Greyfriars fellow could ever see him again. The feast went on, all the fellows excepting Snoop enjoying it hugely.

The door opened at last.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's your uncle, Snoopey!"

All eyes were turned upon the door. Then there was a gasp of amazement from everybody in the Rag!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Huggins Explains!

MR. HUGGINS stood in the doorway, looking in with a good-humoured smile.

But it was a changed Mr. Huggins.

So changed, that for a moment many of the fellows did not recognise him.

A big, sunburnt man, with humorous, twinkling eyes. He was dressed in quiet dark clothes—his nose was not at all red. His chin did not look mottled. He was as clean as a new pin. He looked like what he was—a well-to-do, prosperous merchant, with something of the breeziness of the great West in his manner, and the tau of the western sun on his cheeks.

His smile broadened a little as he caught the amazed looks of the Greyfriars fellows. Snoop jumped up.

He could scarcely believe his eyes. Was this his uncle—this big, handsome fellow, of whom anybody might have been proud? The features were the same, the big, stalwart figure was the same; but everything else was utterly different. Snoop was quite dazed. He remembered the new bag his uncle had brought with him. It must have contained these clothes. Why—why had his uncle played such a ghastly trick on him?

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned at the sight of the metamorphosed Mr. Huggins. Quite easily now they recognised their acquaintance of the motor accident—the sunburnt man who had started to walk to Friardale that afternoon, on the Lantham road.

"Who—who are you?" gasped Vernon Smith.

"I am Sidney Snoop's uncle, Joshua Huggins, I guess," said the big man; and his voice sounded very different now—deep, and clear, and cultivated, only the "I guess" remaining from his former speech.

"But—but—" "The little game is played out now, young gentlemen, but I owe you, and my nephew, an explanation."

"By Jove, I think you do!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You've been spoofing us, Mr. Huggins."

The Canadian gentleman nodded. "Exactly!" he agreed. "It was a little comedy, for the benefit of my nephew. I will explain. I was coming down here this afternoon in my car, to visit my nephew, when a reckless cyclist tried to kill himself under my wheels, and the car was wrecked in getting out of his way."

"Thanks!" grinned Nugent.

"You!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Yes; that's where we met Mr. Huggins first."

"Oh, my hat!" "As my car was disabled, I started to walk to Friardale," resumed Mr. Huggins. "I walked to Courtfield, and took the footpath through the wood to Friardale Lane."

Snoop started, and exchanged a quick apprehensive look with the Bounder. He remembered his talk with Smithy at the stile at the end of that footpath.

"When I came in sight of the stile two boys were talking there, and I could not help hearing what they said as I came up the path," said Mr. Huggins. "I was surprised, shocked, and very angered, to discover, from what they said that one of them was my nephew."

"Oh!" groaned Snoop.

"And that he was persuading the other to help him keep me away from Greyfriars because he had heard that I was a somewhat rough person, and he was ashamed of me."

"Oh, crumbs!" said the Bounder. "The accounts Master Sidney had heard of me must have been somewhat exaggerated," Mr. Huggins went on, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes. "At all events, I had never heard myself described before as an impossible outsider, an awful bounder, or a hooligan. I was angry, but more sorry than angry, that the nephew of whom I was fond—my sister's son—should be so ungrateful and so snobbish. I determined to punish him in the way he deserved."

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton. "I understand now."

"I hurried to Redclyffe, bought the most outrageous clothes I could find in a ready-made shop, and made my appearance as unpleasant and vulgar as I possibly could," the Canadian gentleman went on cheerfully. "I think you will agree that I succeeded pretty well."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You did, sir—you did!"

"Then I came on by the train from Redclyffe as if I had just come from London," said Mr. Huggins. "I arrived here as you saw me. I acted as I did to punish my nephew for his miserable snobbish weakness."

THE POPULAR.—No. 207.

I think I have punished him. During the last few hours every snobbish nerve in his body must have been tingling, I guess."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a ripping wheeze!"

"Begad, it takes the cake!"

"And now," continued Mr. Huggins, turning his eyes sternly upon his quaking nephew—

"now it is finished, I think Sidney has had his lesson."

Snoop was trembling.

His brain almost swam with the horror of his position. He remembered, in fragments, what he had said to the Bounder about his Uncle Huggins, and he knew that Mr. Huggins had heard it all. And he was dependent on the Canadian gentleman for his daily bread! What had he to expect now? What could he expect? Could he suppose for one moment that his uncle would forgive him?

It was too much to expect!

Sidney James Snoop saw ruin before him—utter ruin and desolation. And the knowledge that he deserved it did not make it any more endurable.

The miserable boy covered his face with his hands and burst into tears.

A sudden silence fell upon the crowded room. Mr. Huggins advanced quietly towards his nephew, and laid his hand upon the boy's quivering shoulder.

"Don't be afraid, Sidney," he said quietly and kindly. "I have punished you as you deserved; but my intention was also to give you a lesson. Now that it is given the matter is ended. I forgive you for all that you said of me. I shall forget it all as soon as I can. What has happened will make no difference to my affection for you. You are a wretched snob, Sidney, and you are mean and deceitful. But you are my sister's son. You must try to cure your miserable weaknesses, and I trust that the lesson you have had will help you. Upon my affection you can always depend."

Snoop raised his tear-stained face from his hands.

His face had lighted up. He could scarcely believe in his good luck. At that moment, even in his small, mean heart, there was a glow of gratitude and thankfulness.

"Oh, uncle!" His voice faltered, and almost broke. "I—I—I'm sorry! I'm really sorry! Believe me, uncle! I didn't know you! I was a beast—a beast! I'll try to be more decent—I will really! I don't deserve your kindness! I—I ought to be kicked out of the school!"

And Bob Cherry murmured "Hear, hear!" But he murmured it under his breath out of consideration for Mr. Huggins.

Mr. Huggins' gaze was keenly fixed upon his nephew's face, and he read there, for once, repentance and sincerity. His bronzed features softened.

"I am glad to hear you speak like that, Sidney," he said. "Take care for the future, that is all. Give me your hand, lad."

And Mr. Huggins shook hands with his nephew and walked out of the Rag. And as he went the whole crowd of fellows burst into a shout.

"Three cheers for Snoop's uncle!" shouted Bob Cherry.

And the cheers were given with a will.

"Hip, hip—hurrah!"

And the cheers rang pleasantly enough in the ears of the kind-hearted Colonial, and in those of the boy who had been ashamed of his benefactor.

THE END.

Another Topping, Long, Complete Story, dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars, entitled:—

"MAULY'S TREAT!"

By Frank Richards, in Next Week's Bumper Number!

THE RESULTS OF "SOUTHAMPTON" AND "EVERTON" FOOTBALL COMPETITION.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

WILLIAM SCOTT, 424, Parliamentary Road, Glasgow.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been awarded to the following competitor, whose solution contained one error:

Miss E. Puttock, 87, Walnut Tree Close, Guildford.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been divided among the following seventeen competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

F. Kennedy, 4, Fleshers Vennel, Perth; John Kennedy, 4, Fleshers Vennel, Perth; George Downs, 30, Alm Street, Hebburn-on-Tyne; Harry Morgan, 27, Victoria Road, Folkestone; Ernest Bunyard, 31, Harold Road, Sittingbourne, Kent; R. A. Camp, Baddow Park, near Chelmsford, Essex; John Cutchinckus, 17, Low Albion Street, South Bank, Yorks; R. W. McGuinness, 828, Oldham Road, Bardsley, Ashton-under-Lyne; L. Jackson, 199, Radcliffe Street, Oldham; Louie Pagan, 224, St. George's Road, Holton; P. Broomfield, Rosebery Road, Felixstowe; J. Donetta, 122 St. Mary's Road, Edmonton, N. 9; Clara Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; Samuel Bishop, 45, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge, Staffs; Raymond W. Kernick, 62, Ivor Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; Stanley Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; F. S. W. Wiffen, Bridge End, Bocking, Essex.

SOLUTION.

Southampton Football Club, like numerous other famous clubs, owed its inception to the sportsmanship of a band of youths associated with a religious institution. It began at St. Mary's Church, Southampton, and was naturally called St. Mary's Football Club. The eleven made wonderful progress, and have a brilliant record.

EVERTON.

In this competition no competitor sent in a correct solution. The first prize of £5 has therefore been divided between the following two competitors:

W. BOYD BARRIE, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan;

ROBERT CARPENTER, 5, Strickland Street, Elswick, Newcastle-on-Tyne,

whose solutions contained one error each.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided between the following two competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each:

Leonard Carpenter, 5, Strickland Street, Elswick, Newcastle-on-Tyne; Charles H. Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Howarth Street, Sunderland.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been awarded to the following ten competitors, whose solutions contained three errors each:

John Hudson, 103, Queen's Crescent, Kentish Town, N.W. 5; Frances K. Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Sunderland; Arthur Diver, jun., 55, Rutland Road, South Hackney, E. 9; Mrs. A. Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; Mrs. A. F. Chmie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrossan; Arthur Wm. Diver, 55, Rutland Road, South Hackney, E. 9; James Horn, 119, High Street, Rothesay; J. Pattinson, 17, Clementine Terrace, Carlisle; Alfred Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green; Wordsley, near Stourbridge; Bernard Wallis, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol.

SOLUTION.

The Everton club was formed a long time before it was realised that it was destined to rank as one of the finest football clubs in this country. At one period Everton was the wealthiest club in the League, in which it has generally gained a prominent place.

No Back-Peddling with Harry Wharton & Co. ! They're Always Well to the Fore !

FRANK RICHARDS FINDS HIMSELF IN AN EXTREMELY UNPLEASANT AND DANGEROUS POSITION WHEN HE AGREES TO HELP "MR. SMITH," A STRANGER TO THE THOMPSON VALLEY.

IN DEADLY DANGER!



A Stunning Tale of the schooldays in the Backwoods of Canada of **FRANK RICHARDS** the famous author.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Called Away From School.

"HALLO! Who's that?" murmured Bob Lawless. All Cedar Creek School looked round.

Cedar Creek was at lessons in the big lumber school-room.

Doors and windows were wide open on the warm summer's afternoon to let in the breeze from the forest.

The big school-room door had suddenly been darkened, and a long shadow fell across the floor inside.

Miss Meadows glanced round, not looking very pleased.

The Canadian schoolmistress did not like interruption in the lesson-time.

On that point she differed from her pupils. All the members of her class—boys and girls—were quite willing to give geography a rest.

A man in riding-boots stood in the doorway—a rather tall, sunburnt man, with a thick, dark beard and spectacles.

He was looking into the school-room over his glasses, and he raised his Stetson hat as he met Miss Meadows' inquiring eyes.

"Stranger lost his way, you bet!" grinned Chunky Todgers. "He's dropped in to ask the trail to Thompson. Miss Meadows'll scalp him."

"Let's hope he'll take a long time asking questions," yawned Frank Richards. "If some boy's sent to show him the trail, I'm the man."

"No fear!" murmured Bob Lawless. "I'm the antelope. I'd guide him all the way to Toronto this afternoon with pleasure!"

"Same here!" said Vere Beauclerc, laughing.

"Silence in the class, please!" rapped out Miss Meadows severely.

And Frank Richards & Co. were mute.

The bearded and spectacled stranger advanced into the school-room, hat in hand, his manner very civil and courteous.

"Please excuse this interruption, madam!" he said, addressing Miss Meadows. "I fear that I have interrupted a lesson."

"That is the case!" answered Miss Meadows, a little curtly.

"I beg a thousand pardons. Please allow me to explain. My name is Smith, and I am a stranger in this locality. Some distance from here I came upon a traveller who had been thrown from his horse and hurt. He appears to be a French-Canadian, and speaks only French. I want to convey him to his home, wherever it is, but I cannot understand a word he says. A man on the trail told me that I should find a school here; and I came here, madam, to ask whether any pupil who may be able to speak French would accompany me to where I left the Frenchman, to learn from him where he wishes to be taken."

Miss Meadows' face cleared at once. "No doubt among your pupils, madam, there is one who understands that language, and can tell me what the poor fellow is trying to say?" said Mr. Smith. "Under the circumstances, I hope you will excuse this interruption."

"Most certainly!" said Miss Meadows. "Is the man far from here?"

"About three miles," said Mr. Smith. "I intend to convey him on my horse, if I can discover where he wishes to be taken. I simply need an interpreter."

Miss Meadows' glanced round the class.

"Richards!"

"Yes, ma'am?" said Frank Richards, rising.

"I understand that you studied French in your former school before you came to Canada?"

"Certainly, Miss Meadows!"

"Do you think you could do as Mr. Smith requires?"

"Oh, yes. I think so, Miss Meadows!" answered Frank honestly. "I can speak French quite well enough for that."

"Then you may go with Mr. Smith—if you are willing, of course?" added Miss Meadows considerably.

"Quite willing, ma'am!" answered Frank promptly.

Frank Richards was more than willing. "Very well, Richards, you may go," said Miss Meadows graciously.

Envious glances followed Frank Richards as he left the class.

Chunky Todgers looked quite wrathful. The spectacled stranger, after thanking Miss Meadows warmly, followed Frank Richards into the porch; and in Miss Meadows' class geography was again the order of the day.

Frank Richards took his hat from the peg, and walked out of the lumber school-room with Mr. Smith.

"Just wait a minute while I get my pony, sir," he said.

"Very good, my lad!"

Mr. Smith walked down to the gate, where his horse was tethered.

In a couple of minutes Frank had his pony out of the corral and saddled; and he joined the stranger at the gate.

They rode away together down the trail—a familiar trail to Frank Richards, for it led through the timber towards the Lawless ranch, his home, and was, in fact his customary homeward way.

Until they started together Frank had hardly looked at Mr. Smith; but now, as they rode side by side, he glanced at him rather curiously.

His impression was that Mr. Smith must be a kind-hearted man to be taking so much trouble about a stranger he had found injured on the road.

But as he looked at the bearded man's

face, he could not help thinking that Mr. Smith did not look like a specially kind-hearted man.

His features were very hard, and his eyes very sharp and almost hawkish behind his glasses.

Outside the school, too, Mr. Smith allowed his spectacles to slip farther down his nose, and his glance was over them all the time, so that it did not seem very clear why he wore glasses at all.

Apparently he did not need them to assist his vision.

Mr. Smith rode in silence, without a word on the subject of the distressed Frenchman he had left in the wood.

He assuredly did not seem to be a chatty or very amiable man.

Frank Richards did not mind that, however. He was enjoying the canter along the trail under the great trees; it was a very pleasant change from the school-room.

Three miles had been covered before they left the trail.

Then the spectacled gentleman dismounted, and Frank Richards followed his example.

Mr. Smith led his horse into the wood and Frank followed, leading his pony.

Frank expected at every moment now to come in sight of the distressed traveller, and as they penetrated farther and farther into the wood, his surprise grew.

"Didn't you leave the chap near the trail, Mr. Smith?" he asked at last.

"No," answered Mr. Smith.

"But—"

Frank paused. For the first time a feeling of uneasiness and suspicion came upon him.

If Mr. Smith had come upon a distressed traveller, it must have been upon the trail, not in the heart of the forest, where it was too thick for riding.

It was inconceivable that he had conveyed the injured man so far into the wood as this; there was no motive for having done so.

Yet Mr. Smith was pushing on deeper and deeper into the forest, and they were already nearly half a mile from the trail.

Frank Richards came to a halt.

Mr. Smith looked round, his sharp, searching eyes glinting over his glasses.

"Why are you stopping, my lad?" he asked.

"Where is the man we are looking for?" asked Frank.

Mr. Smith's eyes became sharper and brighter as he read the vague suspicion that had come into Frank's mind.

He stepped back towards the boy. "Come!" he said.

"But—"

"You are to come with me," said Mr. Smith quietly. "Do not be alarmed. You will not be hurt, and I will give you a reward, if you wish, for your services. But

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless Again in Next Week's Issue!

you must come with me some little distance farther."

Frank breathed sharply. "It's not a question of 'must'!" he answered.

"You are mistaken; it is. Come, I tell you!" The man's voice rose. "Lose no time—come at once! I repeat that you will not be hurt, and I don't want to use force, but you've got to come!"

Frank Richards sprang back. A heavy hand caught him by the shoulder as he did so, and the grip of the bearded man was so hard that he almost uttered a cry of pain.

In that muscular grasp the schoolboy was powerless.

"Come!" said Mr. Smith grimly. And he led the boy on into the wood, and Frank Richards, helpless in that grasp of iron, tramped on, with wildly-beating heart.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Cabin in the Forest.

NOT for a moment did the grasp on Frank's shoulder relax.

Mr. Smith did not speak again. His eyes were about him, evidently watching for a sign that marked the route he was following through the forest.

The led horses tramped after them, through bush and bramble.

Frank's heart beat fast. What this strange mystery could possibly mean he had no idea, but he knew that the man's story of an injured traveller on the trail was false.

That he needed an interpreter who could speak French seemed certain enough; otherwise Frank Richards was no use to him.

What it could all mean was a puzzle, but it was pretty clear that the affair was not above-board.

If Mr. Smith had wanted an interpreter for any ordinary reason, he could have found one easily enough at Thompson or at Cedar Camp, where there were plenty of French-Canadians among the lumbermen.

He need not have come to Cedar Creek School to find one—save for one reason, that a schoolboy would be helpless in his hands.

A sense of danger was growing upon Frank.

But he was powerless, and he could only tramp on beside the silent, inscrutable man, with an inward determination that if he fell in with any rascality that afternoon, he would take care to let the sheriff of Thompson know about it at the earliest possible moment.

More than a mile more was covered before the strangely-assorted pair came to a halt at last.

From the thick forest they emerged into a rough clearing, and Frank saw before him a rudely-built log-cabin.

The door of the cabin was closed, and outside it a man sat on a log, smoking a pipe, with a rifle across his knees.

He rose at once as Mr. Smith and Frank Richards emerged from the trees.

"You got him, boss?" he said, with a glance at the schoolboy.

"I reckon!" answered Mr. Smith laconically.

"Kin he talk the lingo?" asked the other, with a rather curious look at Frank.

"So the schoolmistress says."

"All O.K., then, I reckon!"

"Take the horses, Bill, and then follow me in."

"You bet!"

"Bill" led Mr. Smith's horse and Frank's pony away to the rear of the cabin.

Mr. Smith removed his spectacles and slipped them carelessly into his pocket.

As Frank Richards had already guessed, he did not need them, and had worn them only to change his appearance.

Frank was already pretty certain, too, that the man's name was anything but Smith, and he suspected that the thick, dark beard would have become detached from the hard face if pulled.

"Now, my lad," said Mr. Smith quietly, "listen to me. As you know, I've brought you here to interpret between me and a Frenchman. You know now that the Frenchman isn't an injured traveller; that was a yarn, of course, you've guessed."

"A lie, you mean?" said Frank hotly.

Mr. Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Never mind that," he said. "I wanted

an interpreter, and I've got you! You're going to see a man in this cabin. You're going to ask him questions that I shall dictate to you, and tell me his answers. Understand?"

"I understand."

"You're not to tell him anything, or to ask him any questions on your own. Simply translate what I say, and his replies. Savvy?"

"Yes."

"Do as I want, and after you've done the business you shall be set free, to return to your school, or anywhere you like, with twenty dollars in your pocket. I guess that's good pay."

"I don't want your money," answered Frank. "I won't touch it, either! You've got me here on false pretences, and if your business was honest, you wouldn't have needed to do that. If you think I'm going to help you in any rascality, you're making a mistake!"

Mr. Smith gave him a grim look.

"Bocus Bill!" he called out.

"Comin', boss!"

The man came round the cabin, having tethered up the horses.

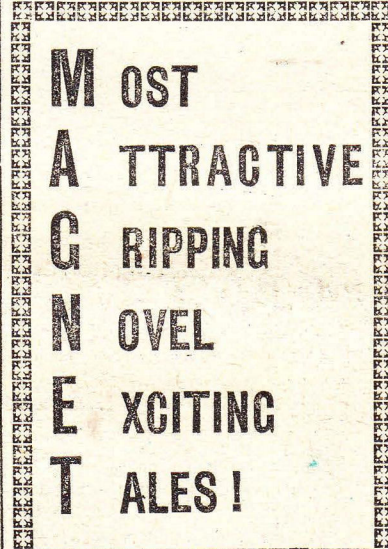
"You've got your gun, Bill?"

"You bet!" grinned Bocus Bill.

A thrill ran through Frank Richards as the ruffian drew the "gun" from his leather belt—a large-sized Colt's revolver.

"You see that, boy?" said Mr. Smith.

"Well, at a word from me this galoot will



let drive a bullet through your head as if you were a prairie rabbit! Get that into your brain, and think over it!"

Frank's heart thumped.

"You're in desperate hands, my boy," said Mr. Smith. "But I tell you, once more, that if you serve me faithfully you shall not suffer. But no more of your chin-music, or you will be sorry for it!"

Frank Richards did not reply.

Mr. Smith unbarred the cabin door—it was barred outside—and threw it open and stepped in.

Frank Richards followed him, and after him came Bocus Bill, with the gun in his hand.

The door was closed again.

Frank Richards looked quickly round him inside the cabin.

It had one occupant.

A man seated on a rough stool, to which he was bound by a strong knotted cord.

His hands were shackled by a rope looped to his wrists, allowing him to move them to some extent, but not to get them free.

A bandage was tied over his head and part of his forehead, and there was a dark stain on the bandage, showing that he had been wounded.

His face was pale and worn, and it had the dark complexion and Gallie features of the French-Canadian.

He looked about twenty-five, a sturdy and rather handsome fellow.

His dark eyes glittered as the three came in.

He did not speak, but the look he cast at Mr. Smith spoke volumes.

"I have returned, you see," said Mr. Smith grimly.

"Je ne comprends pas."

"I think you understand some English, my buck," said Mr. Smith, "whether you can speak it or not."

The French-Canadian wrenched at the bonds on his wrists. But they held fast.

"Coquin—Lache!" he muttered. "Quelque jour, je—"

"That's enough! Now, Richards—your name's Richards, I guess?"

"Yes," said Frank.

"Listen to me, Richards. You will repeat my questions to this man in French. You understand?"

"I understand."

The French-Canadian seemed to observe Frank Richards for the first time, and his glance dwelt on the schoolboy in evident astonishment.

"Mais vous!" he exclaimed. "Vous etes gargon—ecolier, je crois—vous n'etes pas—"

"Silence!"

Bocus Bill thrust his revolver forward till the muzzle jammed on the mouth of the French-Canadian.

"Cut it out!" he snapped.

The man was perforce silent.

Frank Richards clenched his hands hard.

"Monsieur—" he began quickly.

He wanted to tell the prisoner of the log-cabin that he was a friend, and not an enemy.

But the hand of Mr. Smith was thrust across his mouth before he could say more than one word.

"Hold your tongue!" The man's eyes burned at him. "By hokey, if you say a word apart from my orders, I'll lay a trail-rope round you till you can't crawl!"

Frank Richards' eyes gleamed, but he was silent.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

In Merciless Hands.

"SIT down!"

Smith rapped out the words. Frank Richards sat on the log-stool that was pushed forward for him, facing the prisoner.

"Now, repeat my questions to him," growled Smith. "Mind, I know enough of the lingo to tell whether you do it correct or not, and whether you put anything in."

Frank Richards had his own opinion about that.

If the man had had even a smattering of French he would not have been likely to take the trouble and risk of bringing an interpreter to the lonely cabin.

It was, in fact, a falsehood, and it betrayed that Smith was uneasy as to what Frank Richards might say in the tongue unknown to him.

But Frank did not allow his face to express his thoughts; it was more prudent to leave the rascal in the belief that the schoolboy interpreter was quite amenable to his orders.

"First, ask him: Are you willing now to tell me what I want to know?" said Smith.

Frank Richards put the question into French.

"Monsieur, voulez vous dire maintenant ce que monsieur desire savoir?"

"Non!" rapped out the Canadian.

That reply did not need translating.

Smith scowled.

"Tell him he will die here if he does not answer, boy."

"Monsieur dit, reprenez, ou vous mourrez ici."

"Alors, je meurs ici," said the Canadian.

"What does he say, boy?"

"He says he will die here, then."

"Obstinate fool! Tell him that I must have the ten thousand dollars, or his life."

"Monsieur demande les dix mille dollars ou la vie," said Frank.

"Monsieur peut demander," was the answer.

"He says you can ask," translated Frank.

Bocus Bill uttered an oath, and Smith clenched his hands savagely.

The worn, bandaged face of the French-Canadian was quite calm.

His eyes met those of the two rascals with intrepid defiance.

Question and answer had already given Frank Richards an inkling of how matters stood.

Evidently Smith and his companion were planning to rob the French-Canadian, but

had not succeeded, and their interpreter was required to extract the necessary information from him.

Even at the risk of his life, Frank Richards would not have lent himself to such a purpose, but for the present he followed the instructions of the kidnapper.

A plan was already forming in his mind for learning more of the prisoner, with a view to helping him if opportunity came.

"Tell him," said Smith, after a pause, "that he is in the hands of a desperate man, who will not hesitate to kill him if he does not tell us where the dollars are."

By this time Frank was quite satisfied that Smith could not follow the French, and he repeated the question in that language, with an addition of his own.

"Monsieur, vous etes dans les mains d'un sclerats qui n'hesite pas de vous oder la vie—Je suis ami."

The last three words, "I am a friend," added to the rest of the sentence, were lost upon Smith, as Frank expected, but they were not lost on the Frenchman.

His eyes gleamed with intelligence. He understood at once Frank's object in seeking to get into communication with him under cover of question and answer, and he "played up" at once.

"Il peut me tuer—Je vous remercie, mon garcon."

"He says you can kill him," said Frank, without translating the last part of the sentence, which was "Thank you, my boy."

That addition passed quite unnoticed by Smith, who was evidently quite ignorant of French.

It was clear, therefore, that it was safe for Frank to proceed on the same lines.

"Tell him we know that he left the bag of money somewhere in the forest!" snarled Smith.

"Monsieur sait que vous avez laisse le sac d'argent dans le foret—votre nom?" said Frank, the last words being "Your name?"

"Alors, monsieur sait assez—Jules Clement."

"He says you know enough," said Frank. He did not add that the Canadian had told him his name was Jules Clement.

"We want to know more," said Smith savagely. "We want to know all about it."

"On veut tout savoir, said Frank. "Peut-on faire quelquechose pour vous?"

He kept one eye on Smith as he spoke, but it was evident that the kidnapper did not suspect that the second sentence meant "Can I do anything for you?"

Frank Richards felt quite certain of his ground now, and to every question from that moment he added something of his own.

To give only the English, question and answer now ran as follows, the first part of the sentence being dictated by Smith, the second part being added by the schoolboy interpreter.

"They want to know just where you left the bag of money. Where are you from?"

"Let them find it if they can. I am from the Cascade mines."

"They will force you to speak. How did you get here?"

"They cannot force me. I received news that my father was ill in Quebec, and I sold my claim and started home with the money."

"Your life is at stake. Are you wounded?"

"Let them take it. These scoundrels followed me from the mines, and yesterday they attacked me in the forest. I have a cut on the head."

"You are warned that they are in deadly earnest. Have you any friends in this section?"

"I defy them. I am a stranger here, on my way to the railway."

"You are lost if you do not answer. Don't trust them; they will not release you if you give up the money."

"Let it be so. I know that, my boy; I hid the bag safely while they were tracking me in the wood, and they will never find it."

"You will be beaten with a trail-ropo till you tell them where the bag is hidden. Spin them a yarn to keep them busy until to-morrow; if I do not return to-night there will be a search."

At this point the French-Canadian's eyes gleamed, and Frank could see that the suggested idea was working in his mind.

"Tell them I could find the place where I hid the money, but only in the daylight."

Smith's scowling face cleared a little when that reply was translated.

From the looks of the two ruffians, it was easy to see that they believed that the threat of torture had caused the French-Canadian to weaken.

"I guessed the galoot would come to his senses," remarked Hocus Bill.

"I reckoned so," said Smith.

Question and answer in French went on: "They want you to give directions, not to guide them. Don't agree."

"It is impossible to give directions, but I could find the place. This will gain time till to-morrow, at least."

"If you lead them on a wild-goose chase your punishment will be terrible. Until they have found the money I believe both our lives are safe."

"I will guide them to-morrow if they promise me my liberty. Be satisfied that they will never find it."

"You shall have your liberty as soon as they have the bag of money. Don't trust them."

"If they keep their word I am satisfied. I know they would take my life for their safety, if they found the money."

"I guess that's a cinch," said Smith, rising to his feet. "Tell the galoot he shall guide us at sun-up, and if he doesn't take us to the right spot, Heaven help him!"

Frank translated that threat into French, adding:

"There's a good chance that my pals may find me before morning; and you, too."

"This way, yonker!" said Smith roughly.

Frank Richards was led from the cabin. The door closed, and was barred again on the outside.

Boens Bill proceeded to knot the end of a trail-ropo about the schoolboy, with the evident intention of securing him for the night.

"You told me I was to go after we had finished, Mr. Smith!" exclaimed Frank.

The man grinned evilly.

"I guess I can't spare you yet," he answered. "The galoot may be fooling. And,

if he is, you'll be wanted to talk again, sonny. But don't you be afraid. After we've done with you all your troubles will be over."

Frank's face did not betray his feelings as he heard that remark, the hidden meaning of which was not hidden from his quick intelligence.

It was his game to affect the simple and unsuspecting schoolboy; and he did it well.

"You want me to stay here to-night?" he asked.

"Correct!"

"Where can I sleep, then?"

"I guess the airth's good enough for you!" answered Smith. "Fasten him to that tree, Bill."

"You bet, boss!"

"Well, I don't mind camping out on a summer's night," said Frank, with an assumption of cheerfulness. "I've done it before."

The rope was knotted behind Frank's back where he could not reach it, and the other end fastened to a trunk, above the reach of his hands.

He was a secure prisoner.

A blanket was thrown to him, and when the two ruffians prepared their supper a portion was given to the schoolboy, and he ate it with what appetite he could.

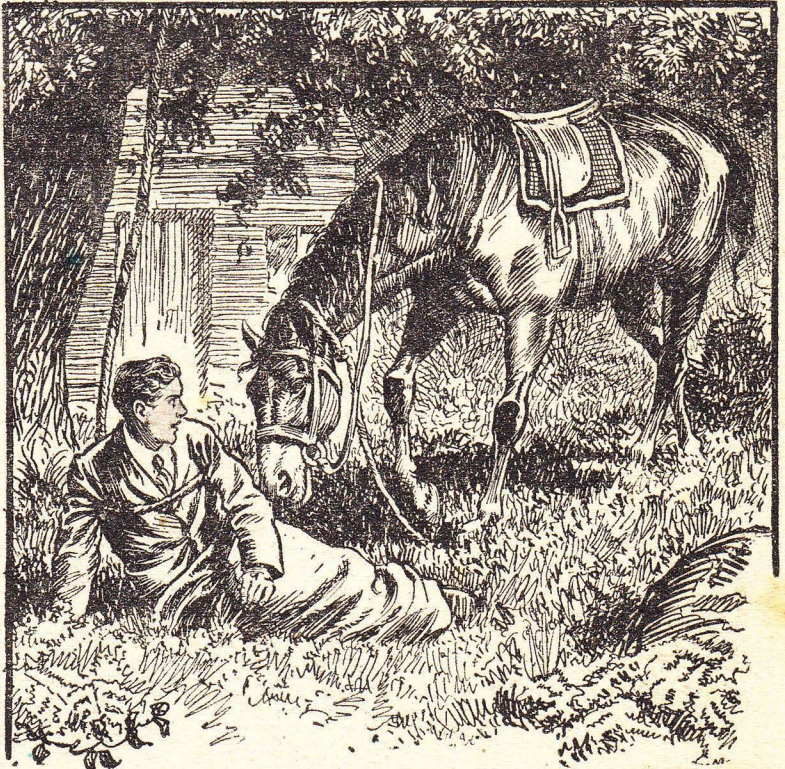
But it needed all his nerve and courage to keep up an appearance of unsuspecting confidence.

For he knew that he was in the hands of utterly desperate and unscrupulous rascals; and that his life and the other prisoner's were not worth a pin's head in comparison with their safety.

If the two rascals who had tracked the unfortunate Canadian from the mines, to rob him on his homeward way, succeeded in getting possession of the bag of money, what would follow?

The returning miner, tracked by the two desperadoes, had hidden the bag in the forest before they ran him down, and thus made it impossible for them to silence him for ever without losing their plunder.

But when the plunder was safe in their



BROWNIE FINDS HIS MASTER!—There was a sound in the grass near Frank Richards, and he turned his head quickly. A soft muzzle was thrust into his hand, and there was a low, affectionate whinny. It was Brownie, his pony! Frank sat up with a beating heart. (See Chapter 5.)

For a Story with a Big Thrill, Next Week's Roaring Wild West Tale Will Take Some Beating!

hands would they leave these two witnesses to bring them to justice?

As he looked at the two evil, brutal faces Frank Richards felt that there was only one answer to that question.

Time had been gained—until to-morrow. On that interval and what happened in it depended the life of Frank Richards and the prisoner of the log-cabin.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

QUEER that Frank's not back!" "Jolly queer!" said Beauclerc, with a troubled look. Cedar Creek School had long been dismissed.

Boys and girls had gone their homeward ways, but Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc remained.

They had waited for Frank Richards to return; but the dusk of the Canadian evening was thickening, and he had not come.

What could be detaining him was a mystery to his chums.

The two schoolboys went for their horses at last.

A dim crescent of moon was showing above the forest as they rode away from Cedar Creek School.

Both of them were looking troubled. "I—I guess nothing can have happened to Frank!" said Bob Lawless at last. "What do you think, Cherub?"

Beauclerc knitted his brows. "I don't see how anything could happen," he answered. "It beats me! But I feel sure Frank wouldn't go home and leave us waiting. Of course, he might have thought we should guess."

"It's possible, I suppose." "He couldn't have had an accident," said Beauclerc. "If he had been thrown from his pony, the pony would come home; he knows his way."

"But he'd go to the ranch," said Bob, "not to the school."

"Yes, that's so! Let's get on, and we shall see whether Frank's at the ranch, at any rate. I think I'll ride home with you, Bob." "Hustle, then!" said Bob.

They broke into a gallop, and covered the distance quickly enough.

Lights were gleaming from the Lawless ranch-house when they arrived there with a clatter of hoofs.

Mr. Lawless looked out, frowning. "Oh, you've come home, you young rascals!" he exclaimed. "I was just thinking of sending a man to look for you. Hallo! Where's Frank?"

The rancher noted that Bob's companion was Beauclerc, and not his English cousin. Bob's heart sank.

"Isn't Frank home yet, popper?" he asked. "Home? No!"

"Oh!" "What does this mean?" asked the rancher. "Why hasn't Frank come home with you, Bob? Has anything happened?"

"Has his pony come home, popper?" "No. What's happened, I say?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Bob dismally. "But something's happened to Franky, that's jolly clear!"

"Come in and tel' me!" said the rancher shortly.

The two schoolboys followed him into the house.

There Bob Lawless explained what had happened in the afternoon—the visit of Mr. Smith to the lumber school in search of someone who could speak French for the purpose of aiding a French-Canadian traveller injured on the trail.

"Was the man known?" interjected the rancher.

"No; I guess he was a stranger in this section."

The rancher knitted his brows. "I guess it must have been O.K.," he said. "A stranger couldn't be supposed to have any grudge against Frank. I suppose Frank hadn't anything about him worth stealing?"

"Only his pony," said Bob. The rancher smiled.

"It's not a boss-thief job," he said. "That's clear enough. Besides, Frank could have got home on foot long ago if it was that."

"I know, father. But—what can have become of Frank?"

"I guess that beats me—unless he's been brown."

"His pony would have come home, popper. He's found his way home alone before now."

"True! Get your suppers, boys, and I'll send Billy Cook and some of the Kootenays to look for him," said Mr. Lawless abruptly.

"You're going to stay, Cherub?" asked Bob, as his father quitted the room.

"I'd like to, if a message could be sent to my father."

"I can fix that." "Then I'll be glad to stay. I'm anxious about Frank."

The chums sat down to a rather dismal supper.

Frank Richards did not appear. Mr. Lawless came in, after dispatching Billy Cook, the foreman of the ranch, with half a dozen of the cattlemen, to search the trails for the missing lad.

The rancher was puzzled and anxious, and Mrs. Lawless shared his anxiety.

Bob and Beauclerc would gladly have joined in the search, but Mr. Lawless bade them remain at the ranch.

If the missing boy could be found, the cattlemen could find him.

But they did not find him. It was long past the schoolboys' usual bedtime when Billy Cook rode up to the ranch with the information that no sign had been found of Frank Richards.

It was evident that nothing more could be done till the morning, and Bob and Vere Beauclerc went to bed with heavy hearts.

Where was their chum? What had happened to him?

These were questions that troubled their thoughts incessantly, and for a long time kept them from slumber.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Last Hope!

FRANK RICHARDS was thinking of his chums in those hours.

He lay in the thick grass close by the log-cabin, in the heart of the forest, sleepless.

Within the log-cabin the French-Canadian miner lay a bound prisoner, with the cabin door barred upon him.

Bonus Bill was in the cabin, sleeping in a blanket on the floor.

Outside, in the grass, the man Smith was camped.

After supper and a cigar, the rascal had looked at Frank Richards' rope, and then rolled himself in a blanket to sleep.

He lay only a few yards from the school-boy, and in the deep silence of the night Frank could hear his steady breathing.

But there was no sleep for Frank. The terrible danger of his position was more than enough to keep him wide awake and restless.

Escape was impossible. He had already tried to reach the knotted rope behind his back, but the work had been thoroughly done, and he could not even get his fingers on the knots.

He was a helpless prisoner where he lay. The danger had been averted till the morrow.

When the rascals found that Clement was leading them on a false scent—what then?

If they found him resolute in his refusal to place the money in their hands, his life would be worth little, and Frank's as little.

Unless help came in the interval there was but slight hope for him.

Could help come? Frank knew that his chums would be thinking of him, that they would be alarmed by his failure to return, and that he would be searched for.

But the search would be on the trail; they had no reason to suppose that he had penetrated miles into the forest.

Midnight had come, and faintly through the great branches overhead glimmers of moonlight filtered down.

There was a sound on the grass near Frank Richards, and he turned his head quickly, a thrill running through him at the thought that it might be a wild animal.

But a soft muzzle was thrust into his hand, and there was a low, affectionate whinny. Frank's heart throbbed.

It was his pony, Brownie. A length of rope still trailed from Brownie's neck.

Frank sat up, his heart beating. The intelligent animal, tethered in a strange place, had known that something

was amiss, and he had gnawed through the tether-rope.

He had found his master, and was showing equine delight at having found him, snuggling his soft muzzle into Frank's hand as he sat in the grass.

Frank Richards cast a quick look towards the motionless figure rolled in a blanket a few yards from him.

Smith did not move; he was evidently sleeping soundly.

Frank's hands were free, and he stroked the pony's nose softly, murmuring endearing words.

But there was no time to lose—every second was precious.

Brownie was free, if he was not, and that knowledge had brought into Frank's mind, like a flash, a new hope and a new plan.

He rose softly and cautiously to his feet, still stroking the horse's neck and murmuring to him.

Silently he turned the pony, patted his head, and pointed to the forest.

The pony's intelligent eyes turned upon him questioningly; he knew that something was wanted, but he did not understand what.

The bridle jingled, and Frank's heart thumped.

He looked quickly, almost in agony, towards the sleeping ruffian.

But the man did not move. Frank pushed the pony away from him, and struck him a smart blow on the flank with his hand.

Brownie swerved away, whinnying. He turned back, and there was reproach in his glistening eyes.

Frank Richards raised his hand again. Then the pony understood the gesture.

He threw up his head, and trotted away into the forest, his footfalls almost inaudible on the grass.

Frank laid down again, his heart beating almost to suffocation.

He listened with tense anxiety. A rustle came from the forest—a sound of brushing twigs and brambles, and it died away.

Brownie was gone. A fear oppressed him that the affectionate animal might creep back to him, but Brownie evidently understood at last.

The last faint sound of the pony brushing through the thickets died away in the silence of the night.

Frank's throbbing heart grew calmer. Far away in the forest, the pony was threading his way homeward, and as soon as he reached the plain he would gallop.

Long before morning he would be at the Lawless Ranch, and he would come as a messenger from the prisoner at the log-cabin.

From the lone cabin in the heart of the forest to the corral of the Lawless Ranch would lie the fresh trail of the pony's hoofs.

Where Brownie forced his way through the underwood the broken twigs and crushed foliage would tell their tale, and on the open plain, wet now with the night-dews, the tracks would remain to reward the keen eyes of a skilled trailer.

Would Bob understand? Frank Richards thought that he would.

There was the gnawed rope still round Brownie's neck to show that he had been tied up, and had freed himself, and that would show that the pony had been in strange hands.

And where the pony had been tied up, Bob would expect to find traces, at least, of Brownie's master, and if he followed the trail—

Perhaps the hope was faint, but Frank knew well his Canadian cousin's skill, and he trusted to it.

There was hope—a gleam where all had been darkness.

Frank Richards closed his eyes at last. Sleep came fitfully to him through the long hours, but ever, sleeping or waking, the hope was in his breast that even in this terrible extremity his chums would find him and save him.

THE END.

(A particularly fine story of Frank Richards & Co. will be published in the POPULAR next Tuesday. It is entitled: "Chums to the Rescue" and tells you how Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc got on the trail of their unfortunate chum. Don't miss it, boys!)

A TRAITOR TO HIS SIDE!—The football fever grips Dick Redfern to such an extent that it makes him almost a traitor to his team!



FOOTBALL MAD!

A Sensational, Long, Complete Story of the Chums of St. Jim's, and Dick Redfern of the New House.

By

MARTIN CLIFFORD.

(Author of the famous tales of St. Jim's in the "Gem.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Against Orders.

"I SAY, Merry!"

Tom Merry halted in the quadrangle of St. Jim's as Dick Redfern hailed him.

"What is it, old man?" he inquired good-humouredly.

"Ahem! I—I'm sorry—" began Redfern.

"Nothing to apologise for."

"Yes, there is. I—I'm sorry I sha'n't be able to turn out with the eleven on Saturday."

"Great Scott!"

Tom Merry started violently. His sunny face clouded over. It was an anxious and a startled glance that he bestowed upon Dick Redfern.

"But we're playing the Grammarians on Saturday!" protested Tom Merry.

"Nothing short of an earthquake ought to keep you from playing in such an important fixture!"

Redfern looked decidedly uncomfortable. He shifted from one foot to the other, and he lowered his eyes. It was not often that Dick Redfern was unable to look anyone in the face.

"I—I know I ought to turn out," he faltered, "but I simply can't!"

"Why can't you?"

It was a point-blank question, which demanded an immediate answer.

"I—I've got an important engagement," muttered Redfern. "Don't ask me the why and wherefore, because I can't tell you."

Tom Merry looked worried.

"It must be jolly important, to keep you from playing in the match," he said.

"Nothing wrong at home, I hope?"

"No."

"Then what—"

"I can't tell you," said Redfern.

"You mean, you won't?"

"Put it that way, if you like."

Tom Merry shrugged his shoulders with an air of resignation.

Dick Redfern was the St. Jim's centre-half, and one of the strongest players on the side. His absence would prove a big handicap.

With a weak link in their armour, it was unlikely that St. Jim's would manage to defeat their near and dear rivals, Gordon Gay & Co.

"This seems a queer business to me, Redfern," said Tom Merry. "You're standing down, and you won't tell me why. You say you have an important engagement, but that might mean anything. You won't explain what the engagement is."

"Why should I?" said Redfern. "It's my own affair."

He nodded shortly to Tom Merry, and walked away. A coolness had sprung up between the two juniors. And the fault was Redfern's. He ought to have given his skipper fuller details. After all, if a member of the team wanted to stand down, Tom Merry was perfectly justified in wanting to know why.

Redfern had left his bombshell until the last moment, too. It was now the eve of the match.

"Confound the fellow!" growled Tom Merry, as he went on his way. "Why couldn't he have let me know before?"

As for Dick Redfern, he went back to his own House, and presented himself at Monteith's study. Monteith was head-prefect of the New House.

"Excuse me butting in, Monteith—" began the junior.

"That's all right," said Monteith cheerfully. "What do you want?"

"I want permission to take to-morrow off."

"Take it off what—the calendar?"

"Of course not! I want a pass entitling me to a day's leave of absence."

"Then you've come to the wrong shop," said Monteith. "I haven't the authority to issue a pass of that sort."

Redfern looked disappointed.

"I wish you'd wangle it for me, Monteith," he said.

The prefect laughed.

"I'm neither a Senior Wrangler nor a senior wangler," he said. "If you want a day's leave you must apply to the Housemaster."

Redfern groaned.

"You know what old Ratty is—"

"Mr. Ratcliff, please!"

"Well, you know what Mr. Ratcliff is, He'd never give a fellow a day's leave unless his grandmother and his sisters and his cousins and his aunts were all expiring at the same time! Ratty's the Pharaoh of St. Jim's. He always hardens his blessed heart!"

"My dear kid," said Monteith, "you mustn't say such things in my presence. What you say about Mr. Ratcliff may be perfectly true, but it shouldn't be told to a prefect."

"Then you can't help me, Monteith?"

"Afraid not."

Dick Redfern made his way disconsolately to Mr. Ratcliff's study. He did not expect to get much consideration at the hands of the Housemaster. It was not a case of "Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he shall not be disappointed."

Mr. Ratcliff looked up from a pile of papers as the junior entered.

"What is it, Redfern?" he asked testily.

"Ahem!"

"Speak, boy!"

"Ahem!"

"Are you troubled with a cough, Redfern?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then pray be more articulate!"

"The fact is, sir," said Redfern, plunging desperately into his subject, "I want to take the whole of to-morrow off."

Mr. Ratcliff frowned.

"Have you any serious illness at home?" he demanded.

"No, sir."

"Then what is your reason for making such a request?"

"I—I want to run down to Southampton, sir."

"For what purpose?"

Redfern was silent.

"Come, Redfern!" snapped the Housemaster. "You cannot expect me to grant you a day's leave of absence unless you give me a satisfactory reason."

THE POPULAR.—No. 207.

"A COWARD'S ORDEAL!" is the Title of Next Week's Dramatic Tale of St. Jim's!

Why do you wish to go to Southampton?"

"To see a football-match, sir."

Mr. Ratcliff's frown became Jove-like.

"What!" he exclaimed. "You wish me to grant you a day's leave of absence in order that you may witness an absurd game of ball? I wonder you had the effrontery to come to me with such a request! A whole day off, simply to go and see a football-match? Absurd! Impossible!"

Redfern groaned. This was just the sort of answer he might have expected from Mr. Ratcliff.

"Leave my study at once, Redfern!" rapped out the Housemaster. "I have a good mind to cane you for your impudence!"

Redfern moved to the door. He lingered for a moment in the doorway.

"Then you—you refuse to let me take to-morrow off, sir?" he muttered.

"Most emphatically!"

And Mr. Ratcliff waved Redfern out of the study.

"There's only one thing for it," murmured the junior as he walked away. "Monteith refused me, and Ratty refused me, and it would be no use going to the Head. So I must take French leave! I wouldn't miss to-morrow's match for a whole term's pocket-money!"

Redfern fully realised the gravity of what he was about to do. To take a day off, against orders, was a most heinous offence.

If it leaked out that he had disobeyed Mr. Ratcliff there would be short shrift for Redfern. But the junior hoped it would not leak out. Saturday was a holiday, and there was quite a good chance that his absence would not be discovered.

Reddy's eyes were bright as he entered his study, and his face was flushed.

These signs of excitement did not escape Lawrence and Owen, his two study-mates.

"Wherefore that excited look, Reddy?" inquired the former. "Thinking of to-morrow's match?"

"Yes."

"Think we shall lick the Grammarians?"

"Bother the Grammarians! It isn't that match that I'm thinking of."

Lawrence and Owen looked astonished.

"Not—not that match?" stammered Owen. "Then what match have you got in your mind?"

"The match at Southampton, between the Saints and Granchester United. I'm going to see it. I'm telling you this in strict confidence, mind. Ratty refused to give me the day off, so I'm going to take French leave!"

"You—you madman!" ejaculated Lawrence, aghast.

"You'll be wanted here, you champion ass!" said Owen.

"I've explained to Tom Merry that I can't play. Noble will take my place."

Lawrence and Owen were startled, not to say shocked. They knew that Dick Redfern was a keen supporter of Southampton, that plucky team which had fought its way into the Second Division of the English League. But they had little dreamt that his keenness would carry him to such lengths as this.

Redfern was acting the part of a traitor. There was no other word for it. He was deserting the St. Jim's team at a time when they wanted him most. He was leaving his side in the lurch in order to go and see a League match. More-

over, he was running a very serious risk in so doing. Surely the fellow could not be in his right senses?

Lawrence and Owen tried all they knew to dissuade Redfern from his reckless resolve. They pleaded with him, they urged him; but all to no purpose.

"Well, if this isn't the giddy limit!" declared Lawrence at length. "You've done some queer things in your time, Reddy, but nothing comes up to this!"

"It's jolly unsportsmanlike of you to let St. Jim's down," said Owen bluntly.

"Pile it on!" said Redfern. "Nothing you say will make me alter my decision. I'm going to see Southampton play to-morrow!"

"Then you're a cad!" said Owen slowly and deliberately.

But he would never have applied that word to his chum if he had really understood. He did not realise, and neither did Lawrence, that Dick Redfern was suffering from that very real malady known as football fever.

There comes a time in the life of almost every fellow when he is smitten with the craze to follow League football. That time had now come to Redfern. He had seen Southampton play during the Christmas holidays, and he hero-worshipped every man in the team. Nothing gave

worry Redfern. He was starting in ample time.

The morning was ideal for cycling. The roads were hard and dry, and Reddy's machine seemed to glide along without effort on his part.

As he sped on his way, the junior's thoughts were full of the great match which would shortly be witnessed by upwards of fifteen thousand people.

With the wind at his back, he made rapid progress, and shortly after one o'clock he found himself pedalling into Southampton.

"Time to get some grub before the match starts!" he muttered. "This spin has given me a terrific appetite!"

Redfern dismounted, and entered a modest-looking restaurant, where he did justice to a meal of steak-and-kidney pudding, followed by a delicious pancake. He was given permission to leave his bicycle at the restaurant, and he set out on foot to the ground, towards which thousands of people were now wending their way.

The turnstiles were clicking merrily when Redfern arrived at the Dell.

Granchester United were a big attraction. And Reddy had a feeling in his bones that this was going to be one of the most thrilling games of the season.

Southampton had had rather a lean time of it up to the present. But they were tough nuts to crack on their own pitch. The Granchester men would have to play wonderful football if they hoped to return home with two points, or even one.

Redfern found that he was in good time. The stands had not yet filled up. In the centre of the pitch a band was playing. And the crowd was a very happy one.

The St. Jim's junior bought a programme, and settled down to watch the match in comfort.

Presently there was a burst of cheering.

The Granchester team sprinted on to field. They were a hefty, bustling lot, and they looked as if they meant business. Then came a further burst of cheering, louder than before.

"Here they come!"

"Here are the boys!"

"Play up, Saints!"

In their red-and-white striped jerseys Southampton took the field. They indulged in shots at goal for a few moments, and then the referee called the two teams together.

Granchester won the toss, and the Saints kicked off with the sun in their eyes. But their forwards were quickly in evidence. Dick Redfern looked on with sparkling eyes as they swept down the field, moving like a well-ordered piece of machinery.

"Good old Saints!"

"On the ball!"

"Shoot!"

The home centre-forward picked up a pass from the left wing. He tapped the ball, and sent in a fast, low drive, which the Granchester goalie fielded with difficulty.

There was a glorious and exciting mix-up in the visitors' goalmouth, and the Saints looked as if they would open their account. But somehow the ball was scrambled away, and a spell of midfield play followed.

Dick Redfern missed nothing of what went on. His whole attention was riveted upon the game. He had forgotten St. Jim's—forgotten the match with the Grammar School—forgotten everything save the struggle which was now taking place before his eyes.

(Continued on page 16.)

WHO IS

?

MR. FANG?

See the Editor's Chat.

him greater pleasure than to join the big crowd at the Dell—Southampton's world-renowned playing-pitch.

So completely was Redfern at the mercy of this football fever that he was blind and deaf to all other considerations. Normally, he would not have dreamed of deserting the St. Jim's team. But he was not normal now. The desire to see Southampton play had become an obsession with him.

Lawrence and Owen were very cool to him that evening. But he did not care. His thoughts were solely of the morrow, and of the great game that he would witness between Southampton and Granchester United.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Match at the Dell.

SATURDAY dawned clear and fresh. Shortly after breakfast, when the coast seemed clear, Dick Redfern started off on his adventure. He pushed his bicycle down to the school gates, for he intended making the journey to Southampton by road. The railway-fare was more than Reddy's slender pocket could afford.

It was a long ride, but that didn't

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. 104.

Week Ending January 6th, 1923.

THE NEW YEAR BURGLAR!

By Arthur Lovell.

BOOM! The last stroke of twelve rang out from the old clock-tower of Rookwood and echoed through the sleeping school.

Hardly had silence reigned again than there was a movement in the Fourth Form dormitory. Jimmy Silver sat up in bed suddenly.

He looked apprehensively through the gloom enshrouding the long room. The sound of heavy breathing came to his keenly alert ears, and the heavier snores of Tubby Muffin. But that was all.

What had awakened him? Why had he started so suddenly out of his dreams?

He could almost hear the ticking of his watch in his waistcoat pocket, yet no other suspicious sounds came to his ears. His heart beat a rapid tattoo against his ribs.

He slipped noiselessly out of bed, and stood gazing round into the blackness.

Creak!
He started violently as a new sharp sound—that of a creaking floorboard—reached his ears. It came from the direction of the dormitory door. Was there someone creeping along the passage outside? Perhaps a Form raid; someone leaving the dorm— One of the nightbirds, or—

Perhaps it was a burglar!
The thought almost made him shiver, and his heart beat quicker.

Creak!
The sound again. This time fainter; and was followed by another.

Unmistakable footsteps in the passage outside—and going away from the room. Silence followed. Jimmy Silver shivered, more from cold than fear.

Someone, whoever it was, was moving away along the corridor outside. It looked very suspicious. Supposing it was a burglar! Jimmy decided at once to investigate. He couldn't go back to bed without satisfying himself that everything was all right.

The Form-captain crept like a mouse across the dormitory and stopped at one of the beds near the door. He touched the sleeping form in the bed on the shoulder. Instantly it shot up into a sitting posture.



CORNERED! A beam of light shot out, almost flooding the passage. The juniors started aback. Within six feet of them was a burly man with a jemmy in his hand.

"Hallo, what's the matter? Who's that?" came the voice of Erroll in the darkness.

"Shush! Not a word, Kit!" whispered Jimmy fiercely.

"Hallo, that you, Jimmy?" whispered Erroll. "What's the row about? Form-raid?"

Jimmy Silver gripped his chum's arm in the darkness and pressed it.

"Kit, I heard a sound of someone creeping outside," he said, "and I'm going to see who it is. Will you come with me in case—"

"It's a burglar!" gasped Kit Erroll.

"Yes, Jimmy, like a shot!"

"All right, get a coat on over your

pyjamas; and I'll get a cricket-bat, or something," said Jimmy.

He slipped away into the gloom to the corner of the room where he knew there was a cricket-bat and one or two stumps. Then he put on a coat. Erroll was waiting for him when he came back. Jimmy handed him a stump in silence, and the two juniors crept away towards the door.

Jimmy Silver silently opened the door. It was inky blackness outside; not a glimmer of a light showed. But by keeping close to the wall the two juniors were able to make their way slowly along the passage and down the stairs.

THE POPULAR.—No. 207.

Supplement 1.]

A Topping Issue on Sale Next Week—A "SPECIAL SHAKESPEARE NUMBER"!

Creak!

It sounded to the two juniors like a clap of thunder. But the sound, coming up the stairs, was really very faint. Jimmy started and stopped. With bated breath they waited. A faint shuffle down below told them only too plainly that someone was on the prowl. Who that someone was the two juniors meant to find out.

Jimmy touched Erroll's arm, and the two moved forward, crouched low against the wall.

At the foot of the stairs ran a long corridor towards the masters' sleeping quarters. They halted at the foot of the stairs.

Suddenly a thin gleam of light stabbed the darkness ahead of them. A moment later it disappeared, but not before the two juniors saw who the night prowler was. In the little time they had, they could just discern the towering outline of a man, who was creeping away up the passage.

They didn't see his features, but his attire and the curious long weapon he carried was enough to convince them that their quarry was a burglar.

Jimmy Silver was perfectly cool and collected now. But his heart was still thudding against his ribs.

Down the passage they went, swiftly and silently.

The form ahead of them had stopped moving, but they still crept on.

Creak!

Unfortunately, Jimmy had stepped upon a loose floorboard. The sound rang along the passage, and there came a muttered grunt from the form in front of them.

Suddenly a beam of light shot out, almost flooding the passage. The juniors started back. Within six feet of them was a burly man with a jemmy in his hand. He turned with a curse as his eyes fell upon the two schoolboys. The two parties eyed one another silently for a second.

Jimmy Silver was the first to recover himself. With a shout, he darted forward, and, before the man quite knew what was happening, the plucky schoolboy had reached him.

The burglar gave a howl of baffled rage as he received the full weight of Jimmy Silver in his chest and he staggered back.

"Back up!" yelled Silver, grappling with the burly man. Erroll needed no second bidding. He was on the two in a moment, and all three, locked in an embrace, fell to the floor with a crash, which rang loudly through the school building.

"Let me go, you young fool!" growled the man, fighting fiercely to free himself from the two juniors' tight clutches.

The sound of the scuffling and lusty shouts had evidently roused the household. Sounds of many voices from both masters and juniors came to the ears of the fighting trio. Lights flashed in the dark corridors, and there was the sound of many scurrying feet.

There was a click, and the passage was flooded with light.

"Hallo, what's this? My hat!" came the loud commanding voice of George Bulkeley.

"Back up, you chaps!"

And in a moment he was fighting hammer and tongs. The fresh attack put a new complexion on the fight. Whereas the burglar was getting the best of the bout before, he was now yelling for mercy, as the powerful punches of the burly captain of the school came home on his person. Within a few moments after the arrival of George Bulkeley, the man was captured.

A crowd of wild-eyed fellows burst upon the scene, and the passage rang with the shouts of the amazed juniors.

A figure in cap and gown burst through the crowd and confronted the four on the ground. It was Mr. Dalton. There was a momentary silence.

"What-what— Bless my soul! What has happened?" spluttered the Fourth Form master, gazing upon the strange scene.

"Bulkeley, what is all this?"

"We've just captured a burglar, sir," said Bulkeley. "I found these two juniors struggling with him when I came along."

"A burglar! Bless my soul! Has the man such— Good gracious!" Mr. Dalton fairly stuttered with amazement. "Is he safe, Bulkeley?"

"Yes, sir; quite safe!" returned Bulkeley grimly. "Haden't you better phone for the police, sir?"

"Yes, certainly, certainly!" gasped the

flustered Form master. "Keep him here; I will phone at once!" He turned and waved the crowd back. "Boys, it is quite all right. Get back to your dormitories at once!" Jabbering with excitement, the crowd dispersed.

Mr. Dalton returned a little later. He had phoned for the police, and the inspector and several men were on their way to Rookwood.

Of course, the juniors' part in the midnight drama soon came out, when questions were asked. The burglar was removed from the school that night in the arms of the law, and Jimmy Silver and Kit Erroll returned to their dormitory flushed with pleasure. They had started the new term very well, as the Head himself had said.

EDITORIAL!

By Billy Bunter.

My dear readers.

At last, after trying for many moons, I got a place in the Remove footer team. Not a permanent place, it is true. But I played in one match, which is something of a start. No doubt I shall have a fixed position later on.

I will tell you how it happened.

The Remove team were going over to Rookwood to play a football match, and I decided, on the spur of the moment, to accompany them.

I spoke to Wharton about my intentions. "Have you enough money for your fare?" asked Harry Wharton.

"No," I replied. "But it is the duty of the Remove Football Club to pay my eggspenses."

"But you are not in the team!"

"True. I shall be merely a speeked tater. But I am going to rite a fool report of the match in my 'Weekly', and give you some free publicity. And I think it is up to you to stand me a treat."

After further argument, Wharton consented to let me come. The members of the team had a wip-round to pay my fare.

When we reached St. Jim's, Bulstrode, the Remove goalie, complained of severe eternal pains.

"What have you been eating?" demanded Wharton sternly.

"Ow! I can't understand it. It must be a billys attack. I simply can't move," replied Bulstrode.

"You certainly look seedy!" said Wharton. "What are we going to do now you can't play. We haven't brought a reserve with us, unfortunately. What chumps we were not to bring one."

"Better play Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "He's no good, but we haven't time to send back to Greyfriars for a better man!"

And so, dear readers, I squeezed myself into Bulstrode's sweater and took up my position in the gole-mouth.

But Johnny Bull and Browney, at full back, played so well that I reely wasn't called upon to save a solitary shot. I suppose it was my presence in the team that acted as an insentiff.

The play was hot, and we had all our work out to keep Jimmy Silver & Co. off the gole. At last Hurree Singh and Cherry scored for Greyfriars.

The match ended with a win 2-0 in our favour.

"But for me Greyfriars would have lost," I told Wharton as we left the ground.

"But you didn't do anything, Bunt. You weren't called upon to save a single shot."

"No, but my presence acted as an inspiration to the others," I replied. "Now I suppose you will give me a permanent place in the team?"

"Then your supposer is out of order, and wants oiling," said Wharton.

But you see if he doesn't call upon me for my services before very long. He knows a good footballer when he sees him, only jealousy prevents him admitting it.

Yours, feeling, very bucked,

BILLY BUNTER.

BAGGY'S RESOLUTION!

By Reginald Talbot.

"I say, you chaps—"

Thus Baggy Trimble, the fatest junior at St. Jim's, as he met Tom Merry & Co. coming out of Study No. 1.

"Hallo, porpoise!" greeted Monty. "Sorry, I'm absolutely stony. Haven't got a sou to my name, and I know Tommy is in the same boat!"

"What do you mean? I don't want any money," growled Baggy.

"You don't what? My hat!" gasped Monty Lowther in mock surprise. "Did I hear you say you don't want to borrow?"

"You did!" cried Baggy Trimble hotly. "Just as if I want to borrow any money from you!"

"Well, that is a surprise!" chuckled Manners. "We shall have Baggy washing his neck next, and refusing a tenth helping at dinner!"

"And you will, see!" howled the fat junior exasperatingly. "I've decided to turn over a new leaf, and—"

"Don't!" pleaded the humorist of the Shell, staggering back against the wall. "You must not do these things, Baggy. Remember, I'm not very strong, and a shock may see me on my back for keeps!"

"Rats, you funny chump!" cried Baggy, glaring at the humorous Monty. "Why can't you leave off fooling? This is no time for playing the giddy goat. Instead of doing that, you should be thinking of turning over a new leaf, like myself. Now, I've decided to make several resolutions. One of them is that I shall forthwith cut down my grub allowance, and only eat just enough to keep body and soul together."

"Well, this is certainly something new," laughed Tom Merry. "And you think you can keep that resolution of cutting down your grub, Baggy?"

"Think I can keep it!" repeated the fat junior heatedly. "Of course I shall. I'm the only chap in the school who has the will power to keep to what I say! Why, you fellows simply couldn't keep a resolution ten minutes without breaking it."

"Oh, you have decided to keep it, then!" said Tom Merry with a merry twinkle in his eyes. "Then I'm afraid that means you won't come to our little celebration to-night. We're going to have a bumper spread, and I was going to ask you. But as you have decided not to eat very much, I will cancel that invitation forthwith."

There was a howl of rage from their fat Form-fellow at that.

"I—I say, Tom Merry, old chap, I— he, he, he!" spluttered Baggy hurriedly.

"Of course, I was only joking when I said that. Yes, I'll come, with pleasure! He, he, he! Good joke of mine—what!"

The Terrible Three leant up against the wall of the passage, and fairly roared with laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, Baggy, you'll be the death of me yet!" howled Tom Merry.

"Look here, you fellows!" cried Baggy Trimble. "Cut out that nonsense! Am I to come or not?"

"Why, how can you come to a big celebration, Baggy, my infant?" sobbed Tom Merry, holding his sides. "You've made up your mind to stop this stuffing business!"

"But I—I was only joking!" yelled Baggy.

"Well, don't joke, that's all! Resolutions are not joking matters," said Tom Merry. "Sorry we can't stop now, my pippin!"

"Good-bye!"

"Keep your resolution like a good boy!"

And with that the Terrible Three staggered down the corridor towards the Close, doubled up with laughter, leaving a very disappointed porpoise behind them. And that was all they heard from Baggy Trimble concerning his resolution!

[Supplement II.]

Are You One of Billy Bunter's Merry Supporters? If Not, Why Not?

THE GREYFRIARS POLICE COURT!

A VERY TRAGIC AFFAIR!

A practical joker named William Wibley was the first prisoner to appear. On entering the dock, he swept the court with his eyes (a rather wonderful achievement!) and threw a fierce scowl at the magistrate.

Mr. Robert Cherry, K.C., for the prosecution, rose to give evidence. It was noticed that one of his cheeks was swollen like a toy balloon.

Magistrate: "What have you been doing to your face man?"

Mr. Cherry: "Mmmmm!"

Magistrate: "I can deduce nothing from that absurd articulation! You'd better employ an interpreter!"

Detective-Inspector Penfold then bobbed up in the witness-box.

"I can tell your worship all about it," he said. "Yesterday morning, the prisoner Wibley happened to be suffering from a mild attack of tic-douloureux and—"

Magistrate: "Does that mean that he hadn't enough dollars to buy anything at the tuckshop, so he asked for tick?"

Witness: "Nunno, your worship! It means that he was suffering from a form of faceache. Quelchy, our respected Form master, gave him a note to take to the dentist. It ran thus:

"Dear Mr. Lugg,—The bearer of this note requires one of his teeth extracted. It is the third tooth from the right (top row). Will you kindly do the needful?"

Magistrate: "And what happened?"

Witness: "Prisoner met Mr. Cherry in the Close, and he said, 'Bob, old man, do me a favour. Take this note to the dentist for me.' Mr. Cherry, being a very obliging and accommodating sort of gentleman, agreed to do so, with the result that he was dumped into the dentist's chair, and his pet molar extracted. Hence the present one-sided appearance of his chivvy. It was a terrible jape, your worship, and I move that the japer be summarily dealt with!"

Mr. Mark Linley, K.C., for the defence, said that Mr. Cherry shouldn't have been ass enough to swallow the bait. He had walked into the trap, and it served him jolly well right!

His worship remarked that the legs of eminent barristers should not be pulled in this way, and prisoner would be sentenced to a severe bumping.

Mr. Cherry: "But that won't compensate me for the loss of my molar!"

Magistrate: "Hallo! Found your voice at last, have you? I'm sorry about that molar of yours, and I'll write to the Zoo authorities and ask 'em if they can fix you up with an elephant's tusk!" (Laughter.)

Report in Brief.

A hulking young giant named Coker indulged in the pastime of "poker."

"You're a queer sort of card, and you'll take six months' hard," said his worship to Coker the Joker!

THE NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS!

By Billy Bunter.

Like most people, I mean to make several resolutions this year, and they will not be like the usual ones, which are of the pleurist variety—made to be broken. No! Once made, they will be kept. I am not a person to go back upon them, like—er—er like Harry Wharton & Co., for instance.

In the future, instead of remaining in bed in the hope of snatching a few more minutes' sleep, I shall get up an hour before fellows are snoozing, my voice will be raised in sweet, cheerful tones as I gaily don my apparel. I have, by the way, decided to wear an apparel this year, instead of ordinary Eatons. After a sharp sprint twenty times round the quad I shall go into brekker feeling fit as a fiddle.

My manners at the table will be changed. Instead of, as of yore, digging the next fellow in the ribs and stretching across him for the pepper-pot, I shall ask him in cooing terms "if he would oblige." I shall not ask for six helpings of bacon and eggs, but will content myself with eight—I mean five. Neither will I pour a cup of tea down the next fellow's neck, or stir my tea with the blade of my knife.

All the fellows from whom I have borrowed money, from time to time, will receive checks for the same, as soon as my postal-or—I mean, as soon as I can write out the checks. A little interest or gratuity will be added, and a note of thanks and apology.

No more will be said of postal-orders, and if anyone offers to lend me money until my checks arrive, I shall gently but firmly refuse to take it.

In the Form-room I shall concentrate all my thoughts on my work, and endeavour to reach the top of the class before the end of the first week in the new term. Old Quelchy will receive a pleasant surprise, and he will call me out before the class and pat me on the head, and say: "Bill, my dear, dear boy! How well you have worked at your lessons, and how proud I am to have you in my class! You are a clever scholar and a master at lang-wages." To which I shall reply: "Mercy booo, monser. Wee, wee, Voopar Perteet mon hammee," in my best French; and he will shake my hand and ask me to tea.

One dozen tarts a day, half a dozen ginger-pops, six cream buns, six doughnuts, and six bars of chocolate will be my allowance of "extra grub" from the tuckshop, and this I will divide generously amongst my loving Form-mates.

I shall be kind to my fellow-creatures, and help them over any tedious task which threatens to spoil the harmony of their days. Like a guardian angel, I will watch over them, fight their battles, and sympathise with them in their troubles. Good deeds will become the order of the day. In time I shall be known as the "Greyfriars Wingless Angel"—the sufferer of the sufferers, and cheerer of broken spirits.

George Washington will lose his place as the man who couldn't tell a fib, and George Bunter will take it. Fibs and prevarications, as Quelchy calls 'em, will be bard. "The truth, and nothing but the truth—that is the question!" will be my guiding motto as I proceed joyously along. In time people will say: "Be like George Bunter, the boy who told his papa he cut the chairy tree down with his little pocket-knife."

The old life will be forgotten and thrust aside as the new life comes dancing in the doorway. Like a dream, it will fade away—ee into the misty distance as I set forth upon the new road.

OUR CYCLING COLUMN!

Conducted by Monty Newland.

The call of the open road is irresistible. And even if the open road happens to be caked with mud, or covered with snow, the ardent cyclist is undaunted. The members of the Remove Cycling Club, at any rate, care nothing for wind or weather. I verily believe they would set out in a raging blizzard!

On Saturday last we had an enjoyable spin to Canterbury. A fine old cathedral city this, breathing the very spirit of Charles Dickens. We took a long time getting there, owing to punctures and halts, but when we did arrive, we made good use of our time. We went over the cathedral and the famous Towers, and we had tea at an old-fashioned place just outside the precincts of the cathedral. Mrs. Mimble ought to visit these particular tea-rooms in order to take lessons in pastry-making. The pastries were really works of art. It was fortunate that Billy Bunter was not with us, or the proprietress would have had to display a "Sold Out" notice outside the door!

Coming home from Canterbury, we had an exciting time. It was a pitch-black winter evening, and our lamps didn't help us much. They didn't help Peter Todd, anyway, for he went headlong into a deep ditch, bike and all! The task of rescuing Peter proved rather difficult, owing to the fact that he was nearly waist-deep in mud. But we got him out somehow, and he was obliged to call at the nearest cottage for a wash and brush-up.

Shortly after this incident, Micky Desmond's brake failed to act when going down a steep hill. I am still wondering how it is that Micky is alive and kicking! He went whizzing down the hill at breakneck speed, and came to grief in a duckpond. Micky can thank his lucky stars that it was a pond at the foot of the hill, and not a brick wall! At every steep descent we came to, after that, Micky Desmond got off and walked!

Greyfriars fellows who happen to be wanting to buy a bike should beware of Fisher T. Fish, who is advertising "a magnificent, eighteen-carat, gilt-edged bicycle" for sale. Fishy wants a modest fiver for this bike. I have examined it, and find it to be an ancient gridiron rescued from the scrap-heap. The frame is battered the handlebars are twisted, the saddle is insecure, the bell won't ring, the brakes won't act, the gear won't work—in short, the first fellow who tries to ride such a sorry creak will be taking his life in his hands. As I say, Fishy is asking a fiver for the machine in question. Personally, I wouldn't give him five pence!

The next "spin" of the Remove Cycling Club will be to Maidstone, on Wednesday afternoon.

THE POPULAR.—No. 207.

FOOTBALL MAD!

(Continued from page 12.)

Play was fast and thrilling up to the interval, by which time no goals had been scored.

Southampton had done the lion's share of the attacking, but they had not enjoyed the best of luck.

In the second half, however, the Saints fairly bottled up their opponents. Their half-back line played magnificently, giving the forwards plenty of assistance.

Two goals fell to the home team in as many minutes, and Dick Redfern, in common with the rest of the spectators, cheered to the echo.

Granchester made desperate efforts to put a better complexion on things, but they had met their masters that day. The Saints were altogether too fast and nippy for them.

Towards the close, another goal was added, and the home team ran out easy winners by three to nil.

Dick Redfern, in his exuberance of spirits, rushed to the dressing-room entrance, and clapped several of the Southampton players on the back as they came in. He would actually have followed them into the dressing-room had not a burly policeman planted himself in his path.

"Well, they've won—and that's all that matters!" murmured Redfern. "I'm not sorry I defied old Ratty and came. And now I must be getting a move on. If I get back to St. Jim's before locking-up time all may be well."

Reddy had a strong wind against him on his return journey.

It was hard work climbing the hills, and the sudden arrival of dusk did not improve matters. But the junior pedaled away doggedly, and he had the satisfaction of reaching the school gates just before they were closed and locked by Taggles, the porter.

Feeling exhausted, but quite cheerful, Reddy put his bicycle away in the shed and went along to his study.

Lawrence and Owen were there. They looked reproachfully at their chum.

"You're back, then?" said Lawrence. Reddy nodded, and flung himself on to the sofa.

"Pretty fine mess you've made of things!" said Owen.

"What do you mean? Has Ratty found out—"

"No. He doesn't know you took the day off. When I said you had made a mess of things I was referring to the match with the Grammarians. If you had played, I'm certain we should have won. As it was—"

"You don't mean to say we were licked?" said Redfern.

"By four to two," said Owen glumly. "Kangaroo put up a great game at centre-half, but he's not up to your weight."

"Tom Merry and the others are furious about it," said Lawrence.

"Do they know I've been to Southampton?"

"Of course not. Your secret is safe with us. But they think it was jolly mean of you to go off without saying where you were going."

Redfern laughed.

"I don't care a rap what Tom Merry & Co. think," he said. "By Jove, it was a great game at Southampton! Wish you fellows had been there. They put

on three goals against Granchester United."

"Look here, Reddy," said Lawrence seriously, "are you going to keep this up?"

"Keep what up?"

"Rushing away every Saturday to see Southampton play."

"Of course," was the reply, "as a loyal supporter, I shall naturally follow the Saints wherever they go. They're playing in London next Saturday against Upton Park Rangers. I shall bike up and see them, wind and weather permitting."

"Then you're an absolute madman!" growled Owen. "You've wangled it once without getting caught, but you can't go on doing it week after week. Besides, you're wanted by the St. Jim's eleven."

"The St. Jim's eleven can go on wanting," said Redfern calmly.

He closed his eyes and sank into a doze. Presently he dreamed that his favourite team reached the final of the English Cup contest, and that he—Dick Redfern—cycled to Wembley Park to witness the titanic tussle. It was a glorious dream; but Reddy sighed to think, on waking, that there was precious little chance of it coming true.

Southampton was a gallant little team, with a fine Cup-fighting reputation. But they would have to go a long, long way before they could hope to secure the coveted trophy in 1923!

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Call of Duty.

"GREYFRIARS are coming over to play us to-day," said Tom Merry, stopping Dick Redfern in the quad on the following Saturday morning. "Don't tell me you've got an important engagement, Reddy."

"But I have!" was the reply. Tom Merry looked staggered.

"You left us in the lurch last Saturday," he said. "Are you going to keep on doing it?"

"I don't like letting you down, Merry, but it can't be helped. I've got to go to London to-day, whatever happens."

Tom Merry shook his head helplessly. "This is the last straw!" he said.

"How on earth do you suppose we can win matches when one of our best players keeps fading away every Saturday?"

STAND AND DELIVER!

Only three words—but
they mean a lot to you!
Watch this column
NEXT TUESDAY!

"Don't ask me," said Redfern. "I'm no good at conundrums."

Tom Merry frowned.

"I've a jolly good mind to restrain you by force from going to London," he said.

Redfern laughed aloud.

"Now you're talking piffle," he said. "You'd never be able to compel me to play for St. Jim's. You might stop me from going to London, but that wouldn't help you. You can take a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink."

"I think you're behaving like a cad," said Tom Merry.

"You've said that before."
"And I mean it! I can't think what's come over you to make you desert the team like this!"

"I'm not going to stop and argue," said Redfern. "My time's too precious."

And he strolled away, leaving Tom Merry gazing reproachfully after him.

It was again a bright, fresh morning. And Dick Redfern started on his ride to London in good spirits. As on the previous Saturday, his mind was obsessed with one thought—the thought of seeing Southampton play.

Reddy had reached Wayland, and was cycling leisurely along the High Street, when he caught sight of a graceful girlish figure on the pavement. Instantly he whipped off his cap.

"Good-morning, Miss Marie!"

Marie Rivers, the school nurse, smiled at the junior. She stopped short, as if she wished to speak to him. Reddy promptly dismounted.

"Where are you going, if it is not rude of me to ask?" inquired Miss Marie.

Under the steady eyes of the girl Redfern felt that he could not be evasive.

"I'm going to London, Miss Marie," he said.

"Then you won't be playing against Greyfriars this afternoon?"

"No."

Marie looked troubled. "I hope it isn't a serious family illness that takes you to London?" she remarked.

"Not at all. I—I'm going up to see a League match—Upton Park Rangers versus Southampton. I'm a supporter of the Saints."

"So am I," said Marie.

"You!" Redfern looked amazed.

"Yes. Some girls follow football quite as keenly as boys. I've often seen Southampton play, and I love it!"

"My hat!"

"I should go and see them this afternoon, but—"

"But what, Miss Marie?"

"Duty calls. I have to be at my post in the sanatorium. And you have to be at yours."

Marie Rivers spoke quietly, but firmly. Redfern understood her allusion only too well.

"You think I ought to be playing for St. Jim's this afternoon, instead of going up to town?" he ventured.

"Most certainly!"

"But—but I'm awfully keen on seeing Southampton play—"

"I don't doubt it. But you've no right to be selfish. Let me speak quite plainly. You are a red-hot supporter of Southampton, and you are simply longing to see them play. But you've the honour of your school to think about, and that should come first."

Redfern stood silent.

"Do you suppose you are the only person in the country who likes to see Southampton play?" Marie went on.

"There are at least ten thousand people in the South of England who would love nothing better. If every Southampton supporter went to London this afternoon to see them, why, they'd have to close

the gates long before the time of the kick-off. The ground would never hold them all."

"That's true."
"I happen to know a doctor who is crazy keen on seeing Southampton," said Miss Marie. "But he only gets the chance once in a blue moon. His duty to his patients comes first. And I know a St. Jim's fellow, like yourself, who would give anything to go and see Southampton play. But his duty to his own team comes first."

"Do you mean Talbot?"
"I do. And Talbot would never dream of leaving his side in the lurch. You ought not to dream of it, either. Why, you are allowing this football fever to carry you off your feet! It is making you act against your better judgment. You have no right to go to London to-day, quite apart from the risk you are running in taking the day off without permission. Now, I appeal to you to be sensible—to play the game—to take your place with the St. Jim's team this afternoon. They want you."

Dick Redfern promptly reversed his bicycle so that it faced in the direction of St. Jim's.

"You are right, Miss Marie," he said. "I've been a selfish cad! I've been blind to a proper sense of duty. And I'm jolly glad I've met you this morning, and that you've opened my eyes!"

Marie smiled.
"You are going back?" she said.
Redfern nodded.
"I shall play against Greyfriars this afternoon," he said. "And what's more, I shall play the game of my life!"
"Splendid!"

Miss Marie took Dick Redfern's hand, and clasped it warmly. Her appeal to the junior's better nature had not been in vain. He would continue to be a staunch supporter of Southampton; but his duty to his own school would come first.

Reddy cycled back to St. Jim's, and the first person he encountered in the quad was Tom Merry.

Tom was looking very miserable. The responsibilities of the football captaincy weighed heavily upon him just then.

"I say, Merry," said Redfern, jumping off his machine. "Twice you've called me a cad, and on each occasion you were justified. I left the team in the lurch last Saturday, and I've no excuse to offer. But I'll try to make amends this afternoon, if you'll let me. I want to play against Greyfriars."

Tom Merry's face brightened at once. "That's ripping!" he exclaimed. "To tell the truth, I was worried out of my wits because we couldn't field a full team. But now I know we shall have our strongest side out, I'm happy. We shall be able to give Greyfriars a good game, after all."

It was a memorable struggle that took place on the St. Jim's ground that afternoon.

Greyfriars came, and saw, but they did not conquer. They brought over their strongest side, and they played with the dash and skill for which they were famous. But they could make no impression on the superb St. Jim's defence.



FOOTBALL AT SOUTHAMPTON!—Granchester won the toss, and the Saints kicked off with the sun in their eyes. Dick Redfern looked on with sparkling eyes as they swept down the field, moving like a well-ordered piece of machinery. "Good old Saints! On the ball!" (See Chapter 2.)

Dick Redfern was a tower of strength at centre-half. He had told Marie Rivers that he would play the game of his life; and he kept his word. Time and again he broke up the dangerous rushes of the Greyfriars forwards; and the crowd in the touchline cheered him to the echo.

"Good old Reddy!"
"He's bang on top of his form!"
"Hurrah!"

Meanwhile, the St. Jim's forwards were not idle.

Tom Merry scored a peach of a goal in the first half; and in the closing stages Talbot crashed the ball into the net after a fine individual effort.

Greyfriars played up pluckily to the bitter end. But they had met their Waterloo.

Dick Redfern's great display roused the crowd to such a pitch of enthusiasm that they carried him shoulder-high from the field, when the game was over.

There was a big banquet that evening in the junior Common-room, for a victory over Greyfriars was always celebrated in style.

Redfern, flushed and happy, sat at the head of the table. Seated to left and right of him were Lawrence and Owen. They were once again on the best of terms with their chum and leader.

"You were a sport not to go to

London after all, Reddy," said Lawrence.

"No credit to me," was the reply. "It was Miss Marie who showed me that my first duty was to St. Jim's."

And it was Miss Marie who received three rousing cheers when the banquet was over. But for her, the St. Jim's team would have fared disastrously in their match with Greyfriars, to say nothing of their subsequent fixtures."

Just before the feasters dispersed, Cardew of the Fourth came into the Common-room with an evening paper.

Dick Redfern and Talbot both rushed for the paper at the same moment. And among the football results they saw something which pleased them mightily.

"At Upton Park.
UPTON PARK RANGERS—2
SOUTHAMPTON—3."

"Good old Saints!" said Dick Redfern. "But for a chance meeting with Miss Marie, I should have seen that match. But I'm jolly glad I did the right thing, and stayed at St. Jim's."

"Yes, rather!" said Talbot. "Tell you what, Reddy. We'll go and see Southampton together, during the Easter holidays. Are you game?"

Did Redfern reply "Not at all"?

Not at all!

THE END.

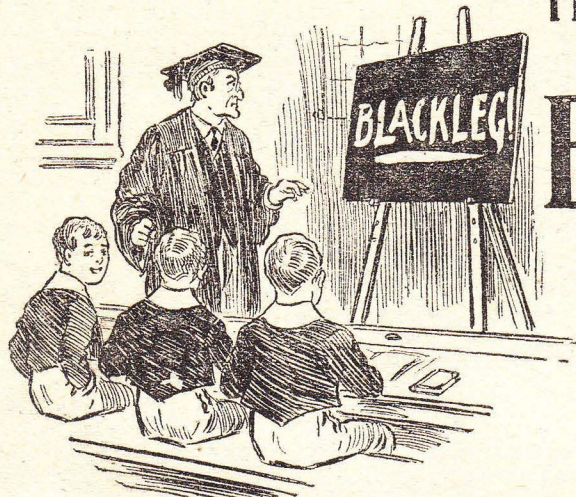
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RUCTIONS AT ROOKWOOD!—The new masters arrive at the school and take the place of the strikers. But they find that Jimmy Silver & Co. are a tough proposition to handle!

THE STRIKE BREAKERS!



A Fine, Long, Complete Tale of Rookwood, dealing further with the amazing Masters' Rebellion.

By
OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Picket Duty.

GREELY, by Jove!" said Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four paused. Jimmy Silver & Co. were entering the platform at Coombe Station—the station for Rookwood School—when they caught sight of the portly figure of Mr. Greely.

The Fifth Form master of Rookwood was standing on the platform, facing the line, where the train from Latham Junction was almost due to arrive.

His arms were folded upon his buttoned frock-coat, his silk hat pushed a little back from his bald forehead.

His brows were grimly contracted, and his fat face wore an expression of the grimmest determination.

He was evidently there on business—stern business.

"Waiting for the train, I suppose," murmured Lovell. "I say, Greely can't be here for the same reason as little us, can he?"

"My hat!" murmured Raby. "I shouldn't wonder."

Jimmy Silver burst into a chuckle. "I've got it! He's a picket!"

"A which?" ejaculated Newcome.

"A picket—a strikers' picket, you know! He's here to speak to the giddy blacklegs when they arrive."

"Great Scott!"

"Look at his chivvy!" argued Jimmy Silver. "He looks like Ajax defying the lightning. Depend on it, he's here to jaw the new masters."

The Fistical Four chuckled. Jimmy Silver & Co. had strolled down to the station to see the new staff arrive. They were due at Rookwood that afternoon.

Jimmy Silver had heard from Tubby Muffin that they were coming by that train. Tubby had his own means of acquiring information.

The chums of the Fourth were naturally rather curious to see the new masters.

With the exception of two or three on the Modern side, the whole staff of Rookwood School were on strike—not one of the Classical masters was on duty.

Even the French and German masters had joined in the strike.

For several days the school had been "run" by the Head and the prefects—not very successfully.

In fact, something like anarchy was developing at Rookwood, and the Head was very anxious to see his new staff take up their duties.

Dr. Chisholm had been very busy with the telegraph and the telephone, but suitable masters for a school like Rookwood were not to be picked up at a moment's notice.

It was possible, in fact, that the Head

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had had to be satisfied with some masters who were not wholly suitable.

Arthur Edward Lovell declared that they were bound, under the circumstances, to be a rather scratch lot; and his chums agreed with him.

So the Fistical Four had walked down to the station to get an early view of the strike-breakers.

And they found Mr. Greely, the leader of the masters' strike, on guard at the station!

Jimmy Silver's surmise was evidently correct. Mr. Greely was there to interview the arriving staff.

From the point of view of the old masters, the new masters were, in fact, "blacklegs," and Mr. Greely was a picket.

Jimmy Silver & Co. went quietly on to the platform, and took up their position a little way back from Mr. Greely, not caring to attract his attention.

They did not mean to miss the scene. The sight of a Rookwood master acting as a strikers' picket was unusual enough, and was likely to be entertaining.

"Look out for the circus!" murmured Lovell. "The train's signalled!"

"Good luck to him!" murmured Raby. "After all, the Head's in the wrong. He oughtn't to have sacked Mr. Bootles."

"And it was decent of the rest to stand by Bootles," said Newcome. "They've lost their jobs."

"I'd go for them if I was Greely," commented Lovell. "I'd jolly well mop up the platform with the whole lot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush!"

The train was rumbling in. Mr. Greely did not change his Napoleonic attitude.

He stood with stern brow and folded arms, watching the train as it stopped and disgorged its passengers.

From a first-class carriage five gentlemen alighted, evidently travelling companions.

Mr. Greely's stern gaze fixed upon them. They were the only passengers who could be supposed to be the new masters for Rookwood; the rest were farmer-folk, women, and a few soldiers.

"There he goes!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Mr. Greely unbent from his Napoleonic attitude at last!

He strode towards the newly arrived quintette.

Five frock-coated gentlemen, three of them in spectacles, blinked at him, evidently wondering who he was and what he wanted.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," said Mr. Greely, in his deep, rich voice. "May I inquire if you are the new masters for Rookwood School?"

"That is correct," said a tall, thin gentleman with a hooked nose cruelly pinched by a pair of gold-rimmed pince-nez. "You are here to meet us, I suppose?"

"Quite so!" said Mr. Greely.

"Dr. Chisholm has sent—"

"I have not come from Dr. Chisholm," said Mr. Greely. "My relations with the Head are, unfortunately, strained at the present time. Gentlemen, I am here to speak to you on my own account, and on account of the rest of the staff of Rookwood School."

"Indeed!" said the hook-nosed gentleman, blinking at him.

"You are doubtless aware of the state of affairs at Rookwood?"

"I am aware that Dr. Chisholm's staff has suddenly left the school," said the hook-nosed gentleman. "I am aware of nothing further."

"Then you are not informed that there is a strike?"

"A—a—a—a what?"

"A masters' strike."

"Absurd!"

"Not at all absurd!" said Mr. Greely warmly. "It is the fact! I am here, sir, to acquaint you with the circumstances—"

The hook-nosed gentleman looked at his watch.

"Thank you very much!" he said, in a thin, acid voice. "I'm afraid I have no time to spare, as I understand that I am required to take the Fourth Form this very afternoon!"

"So that's our new Form master!" murmured Jimmy Silver to his chums. "Looks a beaky boulder—what?"

"Horrid!" said Lovell. "We sha'n't get on with him. Not that we want to."

"Sir!" Mr. Greely's deep voice grew deeper. "Sir, I beg you to listen to my explanation—"

"I fear that I cannot spare the time, sir!"

And the beaky gentleman walked away to the platform exit, bag in hand.

Mr. Greely gave a snort.

"Gentlemen—" he began, appealing to the other four.

One of them followed the beaky gentleman; then another.

Mr. Greely stepped in the way of the last two as they were about to move on.

The big, portly master towered over them, and they stopped.

The last pair were small men, and they seemed overawed by Mr. Greely.

"I insist upon your hearing me!" exclaimed the Rookwood master.

"Ah! Ahem! Certainly!"

"Pray proceed!"

The two little gentlemen blinked nervously at Mr. Greely, who proceeded:

"Gentlemen, Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth Form, was unjustly dismissed by Dr. Chisholm."

"Indeed?"

"The rest of the staff, with very few exceptions, took up his cause, and supported him."

"Ah! H'm!"

"As the Head proved obdurate, they all tendered their resignations, under my advice."

"H'm! Ah!"

An Amazing State of Affairs at Rookwood! What Happens Next Week?

"With the result," pursued Mr. Greely, "that the masters of Rookwood have taken up their quarters at the Coombe Inn, and the school is without masters."

"H'm!"
"I have come here, gentlemen, to protest against your taking the positions offered to you over the heads of the staff by Dr. Chisholm. Among trade unionists such a proceeding is known as 'blacklegging.'"

"H'm!"
"Now that you are acquainted with the facts, I am sure that you will not accept positions that rightfully belong to other gentlemen," said Mr. Greely.

"Ahem!"
"What is your answer, gentlemen?" asked Mr. Greely, with a great deal of dignity.

"Ah! Ahem! H'm!"
"You will not, I am convinced, act in so underhand a way?" suggested Mr. Greely. "You will not take up your positions at Rookwood?"

The two small gentlemen did not reply in words.

They suddenly parted, and ran quickly past Mr. Greely, one on either side.

The Fifth Form master spun round in surprise.

It was quite an undignified proceeding on the part of the new masters, but, really, there seemed no other way of escaping Mr. Greely's eloquence.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed Mr. Greely. But they did not look round.

"Gentlemen! I insist—"

Mr. Greely strode after the fleeing gentlemen.

"Blacklegs!" he exclaimed. And then they were gone.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Beginning Well.

"H A, ha, ha!"
Jimmy Silver & Co. roared.

They could not help it. The sudden flight of Mr. Greely's victims was too much for them.

The Fifth Form master looked round, frowned, and then strode out of the station with knitted brows.

He had done his best, but certainly he had been a hopeless failure as a strikers' picket.

Probably the five gentlemen, who had been in such a hurry to secure posts at Rookwood, were too much in need of "jobs" to care much whose jobs they were.

"Oh, my hat!" said Jimmy Silver. "Poor old Greely! I say, that gang looked an awful scratch lot. Not the style of Rookwood masters at all."

"What did you expect?" said Raby. "The Head had to bag them in a terrific hurry, and that gang have been sent down by some blessed agency, without much inquiry, I should say."

"That beaky bounder looks a cough-drop!" remarked Lovell. "We shall have trouble with him. He's got a jaw like a vice."

"We're ready for trouble," observed Jimmy.

"Hear, hear!"
The Fistical Four strolled from the station.

Outside the Head's car was waiting, ready to take the new arrivals to Rookwood.

Mr. Greely was striding away in the distance.

The new staff packed themselves into the car, and it glided away up Coombe High Street.

As it passed the Coombe Arms a number of gentlemen could be seen looking down from the inn balcony—Messrs. Bootles, Wiggins, Bohun, and Mooney—masters of Rookwood at present on strike.

Mr. Greely joined them there, and pointed to the car, as it passed, with a fat forefinger, that trembled with indignation and scorn.

Jimmy Silver & Co. followed the car, and they raised their caps very respectfully to Mr. Bootles, their old Form master.

Mr. Bootles gave them rather a worried smile.

The master of the Fourth was not a truculent gentleman like Mr. Greely, and he was greatly distressed by the turn affairs had taken at Rookwood.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" Jimmy Silver called up to the Form master.

Mr. Bootles leaned over the balcony.

"Good-afternoon, my boys! Have you leave from lessons this afternoon?"

"N-n-no, sir!"

"Then surely it is time you were in the Form-room?"

"Ahem! We've taken time off, sir."

Mr. Bootles looked more worried.

"That is not right, Silver. Of course, I have no right to give you orders now. But I hope, my boys, that you will do your best to maintain order in the Form under these—these very trying circumstances."

"Oh, certainly, sir!" said Jimmy.

"There hasn't been much order in the Fourth, though, since you left, Mr. Bootles."

"I am sorry to hear it, Silver."

"We don't like being run by blessed prefects, sir!" said Lovell. "We want our own Form master."

"That is for the Head to decide, Lovell. I must not give you commands, but I am sure you will remember my wishes."

"Oh, yes, sir!" said the Fistical Four together.

They walked on, looking very thoughtful.

"Bootles is a good little ass," remarked Lovell, as they came into the lane. "His Form is the apple of his merry eye, and he doesn't want us to break out. All the same—"

"I think he's right," said Jimmy Silver.

"After all, I suppose we needn't get mixed up in a row between the Head and the masters. Suppose we give our new man a chance. It would please Bootles."

"Oh, all right!"

"We're sure to have trouble, by the look of him," added Jimmy Silver. "Let's give him a run, and let him begin it."

"Ha, ha! Done!"

"Hallo, there's the car!" said Lovell.

The Head's car had stopped in the lane, and the chauffeur was on his hands and knees.

"Trouble with the Central Powers!" remarked Raby, with a grin.

The five gentlemen were blinking out at the busy chauffeur.

The beaky master addressed him as the juniors came up.

"Are we likely to be long delayed, my man?"

Grunt!

"Kindly tell me—"

Grunt!

"We are in a hurry to reach the school!" exclaimed the beaky gentleman. "How long shall we remain here?"

The chauffeur turned up a red and somewhat excited face.

"P'raps ten minutes!" he snapped.

"P'raps an hour! P'raps two! Who knows? I don't!" Grunt!

"I shall walk!" said the beaky gentleman decidedly.

He stepped out of the car, and, catching sight of the Fistical Four, beckoned to Jimmy Silver.

"Can you tell me how far it is to walk to Rookwood School?" he asked. Then, looking more closely at the juniors, he added: "Perhaps you belong to Rookwood?"

"Yes, sir!" said Jimmy.

"Your Form?" The beaky gentleman's manner was quite authoritative now, and the juniors did not like it.

"Fourth!" said Jimmy curtly.

"Then you are in my Form!" said the beaky gentleman. "I am Mr. Stange, your new Form master."

The Fistical Four felt it incumbent upon them to raise their caps.

Mr. Stange looked at his watch.

"It is three o'clock," he said. "Surely you boys ought to be at classes. Is it a half-holiday to-day?"

"No, sir."

"Then why are you out of school?"

"Fourth Form's taken by a prefect this afternoon," explained Jimmy Silver. "We thought we'd have a walk."

"Without permission?"

"Ahem! Yes!"

"That is not the kind of discipline I shall maintain in my Form," said the beaky gentleman, his thin lips coming together like a trap. "Mr. Mobsby, will you kindly lend me your cane?"

One of the small gentlemen handed Mr. Stange a walking-stick.

The chums of the Fourth blinked at their new master.

"Your name?" snapped the beaky gentleman.

"Silver!"

"Very well! Hold out your hand, Silver!"

"What for?" asked Jimmy Silver quietly, but with a glimmer in his eyes.

"Don't bandy words with me, boy! I am

about to punish you for absenting yourself from school without leave."

"Are you?" asked Jimmy gruffly.

"Certainly. Hold out your hand!"

Jimmy Silver put his hands into his pockets.

"Do you hear me, Silver?" thundered the beaky gentleman.

"I hear you," answered Jimmy.

"Obey me at once!"

"You're not our Form master yet," said the captain of the Fourth coolly. "We'll obey you when you are, Mr. Stange. Come on, you chaps!"

Jimmy Silver walked away with that towards Rookwood, and his chums followed him.

"Boy!" shouted Mr. Stange, growing purple.

The other four gentlemen were smiling. It was rather a setback for the beaky gentleman.

The Fistical Four walked on, without a glance back.

"Silver! Come back at once!" shouted Mr. Stange.

Jimmy Silver whistled a merry tune, and walked on.

Mr. Stange was left to swallow his wrath as best he might.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Nico for the Fourth.

"SEEN the gang?"

Mornington of the Classical Fourth asked that question, as Jimmy Silver & Co. came into the Form-room at Rookwood.

The Fourth were in class, but it was not a very orderly class.

Lonsdale of the Sixth, a prefect, was in charge.

Lonsdale was a good-natured and easy-going fellow, and he certainly did not worry the Fourth very much.

They rewarded him by not worrying him.

They did about as much work as they pleased, which was not a staggering amount.

It was probably fortunate for all concerned that Lonsdale let them do very nearly as they liked.

There had been severe trouble when Carthew of the Sixth had tried other methods.

So long as the juniors were not actually rioting in the Form-room Lonsdale seemed content, and probably showed his wisdom thereby.

"Seen the new crowd?" continued Mornington. "Tubby was right about the train?"

"Oh, yes," said Jimmy.

"What are they like?"

"A pretty dusty lot," answered Jimmy Silver. "Three of 'em look like tame rabbits, one like a walrus, and the other like a Hun."

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Mornington. "What a zoological collection! And which one is goin' to honour us?"

"The Hun!"

Mornington grinned.

"We'll give him as good as he sends!" he remarked. "He won't find this Form easy to handle."

"No fear!" said Flynn emphatically. "Sure we're going to kick up a shindy if we don't get our Form master back."

"Had any trouble with the man, Jimmy?" asked Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver explained.

"So that's the sort of worm he is, is it?" said Tommy. "He will have a high old time in the Fourth if he tries that game."

"And he can bet his socks on that!" said Cook.

"Hear, hear!"

A scout came in from the passage with the news that the new masters had arrived and had all gone into the Head's study.

"That means a long jaw!" yawned Lovell.

"Mayn't see 'em this afternoon, after all!"

And Lovell changed his seat from the form to the desk.

He was still in that elegant position, about a quarter of an hour later, when the door suddenly opened, and Dr. Chisholm came in, accompanied by the tall, hook-nosed gentleman.

There was a sudden hush.

The Head's keen, sharp glance swept over the class.

"Lovell!" he thundered.

Arthur Edward Lovell slid off the desk as if it had suddenly become red-hot.

Dr. Chisholm fixed his eyes upon the confused Lovell, and seemed about to begin on him, but he changed his mind, and let the matter pass, much to Arthur Edward's relief.

"The Popular.—No. 207.

"Boys," he said quietly "this is Mr. Stange, your new master!"

Grim silence from the Fourth. They were not prepared to welcome any new master. They wanted their old master, as the Head was well aware.

"I fear, Mr. Stange, that you will find order somewhat relaxed in this Form," said the Head. "Doubtless you will soon effect a change for the better in that respect."

"You may rely upon me for that, sir," answered Mr. Stange, in his thin, acid voice.

"Boys! Mr. Stange now takes charge of this Form, and you will treat him with every respect and obedience. Lonsdale, you may return to the Sixth Form room."

Lonsdale left the Form-room gladly enough.

He had not enjoyed his dealings with the Fourth.

"I shall now leave Mr. Stange in charge," continued the Head, with a grim look at the silent class. "I trust there will be no occasion for me to return here."

And after a few words in a low voice to the new master the Head rustled out.

Mr. Stange stared over the class, his glance meeting with a good many sulky faces.

His eyes rested upon the Fistical Four, and a glitter came into them as he recognised the juniors.

He beckoned to them with a bony forefinger.

"You four boys will stand out here," he said. "Silver and the three who were with you in the road this afternoon."

The Fistical Four walked out of their places, with grim looks.

Mr. Stange took a cane from the master's desk.

Evidently he intended to lose no time in putting his foot down.

"Hold out your hand!"

Jimmy Silver hesitated.

But the new Form master was armed with authority now, and the Rookwooders were not yet provoked to the point of resisting constituted authority.

Jimmy held out his hand.

Swish!

"Now the other hand!"

Swish!

Jimmy's face was quite pale as he received the sharp cuts—much harder and sharper than any Mr. Bootles had ever administered.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome went through the same punishment in their turn.

They went back to their seats with set faces.

Mr. Stange's glittering eye rested on Tubby Muffin, and he beckoned to him.

"Your name?"

"M-m-m-muffin, sir!" stammered Muffin.

"What are you eating?"

"A tut-tut-tut-tart, sir!" gasped Tubby.

"Come here!"

Swish, swish!

"Oh!" groaned Tubby Muffin.

Tubby Muffin crawled back to his place quite limply.

Mr. Stange laid down the cane with a grim smile.

He looked as if he thought he was starting well!

It was possible that he was starting a little too well!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Trouble Ahead.

JIMMY SILVER & Co. were not looking happy when they came out of the Form-room that day.

Afternoon lessons had turned out decidedly unpleasant.

No doubt the Fourth Form at Rookwood were a little out of hand, and perhaps they needed a strong hand to pull them together again; but Mr. Stange's hard severity was not likely to have that result.

It roused a spirit of angry opposition and obstinacy in the Fourth, which was destined to bear its fruits.

Jimmy Silver was rather curious to learn how the other Forms had got on with their new masters, who had all taken up their duties that afternoon.

Only the Form masters, as yet, had been replaced; the less essential masters could be dispensed with for a time.

Jimmy looked for his cousin, Algy Silver of the Third Form, and found that lively young gentleman in great spirits.

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He grinned at Jimmy as the captain of the Fourth came up.

"Corkin'!" said Algy, without waiting to be questioned.

"You like your new master?" asked Jimmy.

"We love him!" answered Algy. "Don't we, Grant?"

"We do!" grinned Grant. "We does! Little scrubby beast named Mobsby—and he's afraid of us! Goodness knows where they found the animal! But we like him all right."

"He's a duck!" chuckled Wegg. "Algy caught him behind the ear with an ink-ball, and he pretended not to notice it! That's the kind of frump he is!"

Jimmy Silver smiled as he walked away. From their own point of view, the Third were right to be pleased with their new master, but the discipline of the Form was likely to suffer.

Jimmy looked next to Mornington II., otherwise 'Erbert of the Second Form.

He found Mornny's cousin looking blue.

"How do you like your new master, 'Erbert?" queried Jimmy.

"'Erbert rubbed his hands ruefully. "Rotten!" was his reply. "Beast named Hogg. Lays into a chap. Oh dear!"

"Had it bad?"

"Awful! I say, we're not going to stand much of it! The chaps are talking about pelting him with exercise-books to-morrow. We'll do it, too, if he don't mind his p's and q's!" said 'Erbert darkly.

So there was trouble brewing in that quarter, too, though in a different way.

Jimmy Silver found a group of Shell fellows discussing their new master in the corridor.

Adolphus Smythe was laying down the law.

"What's the Head thinking of? That's what I want to know. What the merry dickens is the Head thinking of?" Adolphus was saying.

"How are you getting on with your new man, Smythey?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"We're not gettin' on with him at all!" answered Adolphus. "I don't know where they dug him up. His name's Suaggs, and he looks it. I shall certainly protest to the Head! The man's a fearful bounder!"

"Horrid!" said Tracy.

"Uses scent!" said Howard, with a shudder.

"Strong scent—about ninepence a gallon, I should say, by the nil!"

"And wears elastic-sided boots!" said Smythe, almost tearfully. "They creak when he walks."

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"We shall be going on strike soon, like the giddy masters," said Tracy. "The best thing the Head could do would be to give us all an extra holiday while he's scrappin' with his staff. He can't expect the Shell to stand a bounder like this person Suaggs. We're thinking of screwin' him up in his study. There's no standin' his scent!"

Jimmy Silver strolled on, smiling.

Undoubtedly, the new set of masters for Rookwood were, as Lovell had predicted, a scratch lot.

He looked in at Hansom's study, to ascertain what the Fifth thought of their new man.

He found Hansom and Lumsden and Talboys in excited consultation.

"Cheeky rotter!" Hansom was saying. "The Head must have been potty to take on such a cad! Picked him up in a hurry, I suppose! We can't kick up a row like the fags, but—"

"But the man will have to be put in his place!" said Lumsden. "What slum was he dragged up in, I wonder, where he never learned that you don't cane fellows in the Fifth Form?"

Jimmy Silver grinned, and passed on without making any inquiries; he had learned how the Fifth liked their man.

He went along to the end study to tea in a thoughtful mood.

Trouble was brewing at Rookwood—that was certain.

It was pretty plain already that the new masters would not be a success.

The fact was, that the masters' strike and the Head's obstinacy had shaken the habit of discipline; and even a first-class set of masters would have found it difficult to pull the school together.

With such a "scratch lot" as the Head

had succeeded in mustering in a hurry the task was impossible.

"There's going to be some fun, I think," said Jimmy Silver to his chums. "I don't believe the new regime will last long."

Arthur Edward Lovell gave a snort.

"It won't last another day in the Fourth!" he said. "I'm not going to be caned again by Stange. I know that! I've made up my mind. The man's a low cad."

Jimmy wrinkled his brows thoughtfully. "That means trouble with the Head," he remarked.

"Let it! Why doesn't the Head bring our own masters back? He's in the wrong, and he ought to know it! He sacked Bootles for nothing, and the others were right to stand by Bootles."

"Quite so! We were willing to give our new man a chance, but he's asked for trouble," assented Jimmy. "If he wants trouble, he can have it—hot and strong! He's caned half the Fourth to-day, and I dare say he'll cane the other half to-morrow. It's going to be war!"

"War!" assented Lovell. "And there won't be any pacifists in the Fourth! Even Tubby is breathing vengeance!"

After tea the Fourth-Formers gathered in the Common-room, where there was a good deal of excited discussion.

It was proposed by Jimmy Silver, seconded by Lovell, and carried nem con., that there should be no preparation done that evening.

At the usual hour for prep the juniors went to their studies, but they did not settle down to prep.

What Mr. Stange would say in the morning they did not know—or what he would do. But they were agreed that they would stand no nonsense from the new master.

As it happened, they did not have to wait till the morning.

The Fistical Four had dropped into Erroll's study for a chat, when the door opened—without a knock—and Mr. Stange looked in.

The juniors were silent at once, rising to their feet, with the exception of Mornington, who remained at ease in the armchair.

Mornny's hands were still smarting from a caning, and he had no politeness to waste upon Mr. Stange.

The latter had a cane under his arm, as if he expected to find some use for one in the Fourth Form quarters.

"Mornington!" he rapped out, fixing his eyes upon the dandy of the Fourth.

"Hallo!" said Mornington coolly, without changing his position, except to cross one leg carelessly over the other.

"Get out of that chair at once! Are you not aware that you should rise to your feet when a master enters?"

"My Form master's puttin' up in Coombe, Mr. Stange, drawed Mornington."

"What?"

"Mr. Bootles always used to knock at a chap's door before enterin'," went on Mornny. "But perhaps you don't know our customs, sir."

"Will you rise to your feet at once, Mornington?" thundered Mr. Stange.

Mornington descended to rise at last, lounging carelessly out of the chair.

Mr. Stange had let the cane slip down into his hand.

The juniors knew what that meant, and their faces hardened.

The new master's angry gaze swept over the half-dozen Fourth-Formers.

"Why are you not at your preparation?" he demanded.

"Ahem!"

"Answer me, Silver! You are perfectly well aware that this is time for evening preparation, yet I find you loafing about!"

Jimmy drew a deep breath.

"We're not going to do any prep," he answered.

"What?"

"Fed-up, you know!" explained Mornington, with polite impertinence. "You may be an awfully fascinatin' man, sir, but we don't like you."

Mr. Stange seemed rooted to the floor, petrified by that remark, as well he might be.

He recovered himself in a few moments, however, and strode towards Mornny.

"You insolent young rascal! Hold out your hand!"

Mornington put his hands behind him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Back Up!

MR. STANGE stared at the juniors, and the juniors stared at Mr. Stange.

There was a breathless pause. "You hear me, Mornington?" said the new master at last.

"Oh, yaas!"
"Will you hold out your hand?"
"Not this evenin'!"

"If you do not instantly obey me, Mornington, I shall thrash you with the utmost severity!"

"By gad, will you, sir?" drawled Mornington.

"Yes!" thundered Mr. Stange. Mornington glanced round at his silent companions.

"You fellows standin' by me?" he asked. "Yes, rather!" said Jimmy Silver, between his teeth.

"We're backing you up, Moray!" Mr. Stange made another stride towards Mornington, who looked at him coolly without receding a step.

But he moved quickly enough as the new master grasped him by the collar and the cane swung in the air.

"Back up, you fellows!"
"Swish!"

Mr. Stange had time for only one cut. Then half a dozen pairs of hands were laid upon him, the cane was wrenched away, and he was hustled to the door.

That outbreak seemed to astonish him so much that he staggered out helplessly, scarcely resisting.

He tottered across the passage, and leaned against the opposite wall, gasping for breath.

Jimmy Silver & Co. crammed the doorway of the study, with flushed and determined faces.

So determined were their looks that the new master, after making one step towards them, stopped dead.

"Better not come back, sir!" said Morny, with a grin. "If we have to collar you again we'll roll you down the stairs, sir!"

Mr. Stange panted. "This is mutiny!" he spluttered.

"Somethin' in that line!" agreed Mornington, with perfect coolness. "Like some more of it?"

Other fellows were coming out of their studies now, and there was a crowd in the passage looking on breathlessly.

Mr. Stange seemed quite at a loss for some moments, and he finally turned away and strode towards the stairs.

A loud hiss from the Fourth followed him as he disappeared down the staircase.

"Bet you he's gone for the Head!" murmured Raby.

"Phew!"
"My hat! How are we goin' to deal with the Head if he comes along?" said Townsend.

"Chuck him out, too!" said Mornington recklessly.

"Fathead!"
"Who's game for downin' the Head if he chips in?" asked Morny, looking round.

"Dry up, you ass!" whispered Roll.

"None of that!" said Jimmy Silver quietly. "The Head's a bit of a mule; but he's our headmaster, and he's got to be respected. I'm against checkin' the Head in any way."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders. "Just as you like," he answered. "I don't care! Let him rip!"

The juniors waited rather anxiously for some time.

For Mr. Stange they did not care two pins; but the Head was, as Conroy remarked, quite another proposition.

But the Head did not come. Evidently Mr. Stange had not, after all, gone to Dr. Chisholm to report the happenings in the Fourth Form passage.

Probably he did not care to confess to the Head how utterly he had failed to exert authority over the Form placed in his charge.

Tubby Muffin, a little later, came along with the information that Mr. Stange was in the masters'-room talking with the other masters.

The juniors returned to their studies, relieved.

They saw no more of Mr. Stange that evening.

The new master had swallowed the affront, though doubtless he was planning to make the Fourth sorry for themselves on the morrow.

In the junior Common-room that evening there was a good deal of talk, the juniors rejoicing over their preliminary success, and auguring well from it for the future.

Mornington confidently predicted that Mr. Stange would be fed-up in a very short time, and would "give them their head."

When bed-time came the Fourth marched off to their dormitory in a rather noisy crowd; but the noise ceased when Bulkeley of the Sixth came along.

Bulkeley was not to be trifled with; and, moreover, Jimmy Silver & Co. had no desire to "rag" the captain of the school, who was very popular.

They rather expected Bulkeley to make some reference to the incident of the evening; but he did not, though, from his looks,

BLACKLEG!

That was why the Fourth were early in their places—to prepare that polite greeting for their new master!

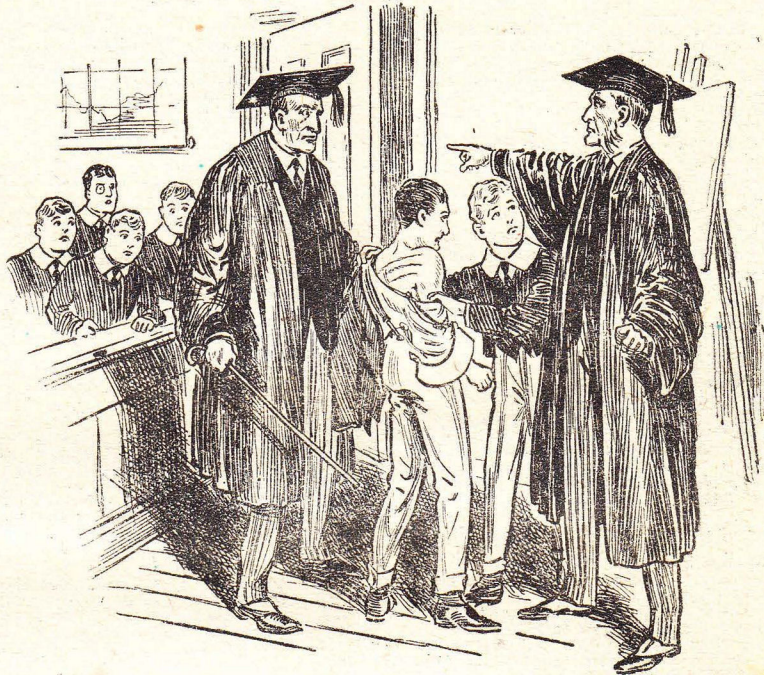
Mr. Stange's hard face purpled as he looked at the blackboard, and his eyes glittered over his pince-nez.

There was a deep-drawn breath in the class as his glittering eyes turned upon them.

The struggle was coming!
"Who wrote that word?" gasped the new master.

Silence!
"I demand to know who has done this!" shouted Mr. Stange.

The juniors did not answer. Mr. Stange was welcome to find it out



"Silver—" The Head broke off as his glance fell on Lovell's shoulder, cruelly scored by the cane. "Bless my soul!" He turned upon the new master. "Mr. Stange! How dare you use a Rookwood boy in this manner?" exclaimed Dr. Chisholm, his voice trembling with anger. "You are a ruffian, sir! A brute!" (See Chapter 7).

it was pretty clear that he had heard of it.

There was a buzz of talk in the dormitory after Bulkeley had put out the light and retired.

The Classical Fourth were in great spirits, and quite ready for more trouble next day.

The next morning Jimmy Silver & Co. went in to breakfast still in great spirits.

They found Mr. Stange at the head of the table in Mr. Bootles' accustomed place.

His brow was black, but he did not speak to the Mistical Four.

"We're tamin' him!" remarked Mornington, as they came out after brekker. "A few more days, dear boys, and he will feed out of our hand."

And the juniors chortled. It really did look as if the tyrant of the Fourth was being tamed already.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Stange Loses His Temper.

JIMMY SILVER & Co. were rather early in the Form-room that morning.

They had their own reasons for that.

When Mr. Stange came in to take his class he found all the Fourth in their places, looking very orderly—in fact, quite demure.

He glanced over them in some surprise, and all the juniors looked their meekest.

The blackboard was standing on its easel, in the middle of the Form-room, and Mr. Stange glanced at it in passing.

Then he gave a sudden start. On the blackboard was chalked in huge letters the single unpleasant word:

if he could, if he was anxious for information. The Fourth Form did not intend to give him any help.

"Silver!"
"Yes, sir?"
"Are you aware who wrote that word on the blackboard?"

"Yes, sir."
"Give me his name at once."

"Sorry, sir."
"Will you do as I tell you, Silver?"
"No, sir!"

There was a pause. Mr. Stange had to calm himself before he spoke again.

"Silver," he said, in a more moderate voice, "take a duster at once and wipe that word off the blackboard."

Jimmy Silver decided to obey that command.

He came out before the Form, and rubbed out the offending inscription.

"Now hold out your hand, Silver," said Mr. Stange, taking up his cane.

Jimmy walked calmly back to his place and sat down.

Again there was a pause, while Mr. Stange looked at the Fourth, and the Fourth looked at Mr. Stange.

"He, he, he!"
That fat chuckle came from Tubby Muffin, who was greatly entertained by the expression on Mr. Stange's face.

The savage glance of the new master picked him out at once, with a look that made poor Tubby cease chuckling all of a sudden.

"Muffin!"
 "Eh! Oh! Yes, sir!" stuttered Tubby.
 "You were laughing!"
 "Oh, no, sir!" gasped Tubby. "Not at all, sir! I—I wouldn't think of such a thing, sir! Not for worlds!"
 The unfortunate Tubby sat palpitating.
 Mr. Stange beckoned to him.
 "Step out, Muffin!"
 Tubby Muffin stepped out, with a groan.
 He knew very well that the tyrant of the Fourth had picked on him because he was the easiest fellow in the Form to deal with. Jimmy Silver & Co. were made of sterner stuff.

Jimmy knitted his brows.
 Mr. Stange intended to punish Tubby severely, that was plain; partly as a vent for his wrath, partly perhaps as an example to the rest of the Fourth.

That preceding did not accord at all with the ideas of Jimmy Silver.
 As Tubby Muffin passed the end of his Form, Jimmy took hold of his fat arm and stopped him.

"Go back, Tubby!" he said.
 Muffin blinked at him.
 "I—I say, Jimmy—" he mumbled.
 "Go back! We'll stand by you!"
 "Oh dear!" gasped Tubby.
 He blinked at Jimmy, and he blinked at Mr. Stange, greatly dismayed and undecided.

He did not want the caning that was waiting for him, but Mr. Stange's cruel eye seemed to fascinate him, like a serpent's.

"Muffin!" thundered Mr. Stange, "come here at once!"
 Tubby jumped.

"Yes, sir! Oh, yes, sir! I—I'm kik-kik-kik-coming!" he stammered.
 "You're not!" said Jimmy Silver, still holding the fat arm. "Go back to your place, you young ass!"
 "I—I say, Jimmy—"

Arthur Edward Lovell rose and took Tubby by the collar and led him back to his place.

He plumped Tubby down in his seat.
 "Stay there!" said Lovell.
 "Oh dear!"

"Look out, Lovell!" yelled Oswald.
 Lovell spun round just as Mr. Stange reached him.

The new master was striding on him, his eyes gleaming.
 Lovell dodged too late, and the new master's grip fastened on his collar.

"Let go!" roared Lovell, struggling.
 With a wrench, Mr. Stange jerked him to the middle of the Form-room, and then he laid on with the cane across Lovell's back and shoulders.

His hard face was pale with rage, and he laid on with the cane as if he were beating a carpet.

The blows fell like rain.

It was so suddenly done that for a moment

or two the Fourth stared on at the scene, while the lashing of the cane and Lovell's wild yells rang through the Form-room and the corridor outside.

Jimmy Silver leaped to his feet.
 His hand closed on his Latin dictionary, and he hurled it with unerring aim.

The solid volume struck Mr. Stange full on the ribs, and clattered to the floor.
 An inkpot from Mornington followed it, just missing.

"Come on!" shouted Jimmy.
 The cane was still lashing.
 Jimmy Silver rushed out, followed by nearly all the Fourth.

At that moment the door of the Form-room was flung open, and Dr. Chisholm stepped in.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
The Order of the Boot.

ARTHUR EDWARD LOVELL tore himself away from Mr. Stange's grasp as the Head entered the Fourth Form room.

The new master relaxed his grip at the sight of Dr. Chisholm.
 Lovell's face was white with pain.
 "You rotter!" he panted. "You beast! Oh!"

"Lovell!" exclaimed the Head.
 Mr. Stange turned, cane in hand, gasping a little.

He had quite lost his temper, and he was well aware that the punishment he had administered was far beyond what was permissible.

"So he is a rotter!" shouted Lovell recklessly. "And a beast, too!"
 "Silence! What does this scene mean, Mr. Stange? I heard that boy's cries from the Sixth Form room!" exclaimed the Head.

Mr. Stange spluttered.
 "I have had to deal with utter insubordination in this Form!" he exclaimed. "Disobedience and disrespect. I have actually had hands laid upon me!"

"Bless my soul!"
 "And you'll have them again if you don't clear out!" shouted Mornington.

"Hear, hear!"
 "Silence!" thundered the Head.
 The shouting voices died down, but there were fierce looks on all sides.

The Fourth Form were in a dangerous state of exasperation and their accustomed respect for the Head himself was on the point of falling.

Jimmy Silver took hold of Lovell's arm to hold him.
 The unfortunate Lovell was white and almost fainting.

He leaned heavily on the captain of the Fourth.
 Dr. Chisholm's brows darkened as he looked at him.

Severity was not unknown at Rookwood, by any means, but brutality was a new thing there, and it was clear enough, even to the Head, that this was a case of brutality.

"Mr. Stange—" began Dr. Chisholm.
 "The boy openly defied my authority, sir," said Mr. Stange. "He is not the first. I felt compelled to make an example of him."

"You rotten hooligan!" hooted Mornington.
 "Silence!"
 Jimmy Silver peeled off Lovell's jacket.

He knew what cruel marks must have been left by the blows that had rained on his chum's back, and he dragged down the shirt to reveal them.

"Look at that, Dr. Chisholm!" said Jimmy, in a choking voice. "Is that the right thing for Rookwood?"

"Silver—" The Head broke off as his glance fell on Lovell's shoulders, cruelly scored by the cane. "Bless my soul! My poor boy! I did not imagine—"

He turned upon the new master.
 "Mr. Stange! How dare you use a Rookwood boy in this manner?" exclaimed the Head, his voice trembling with anger. "You are a ruffian, sir! A brute!"

"Sir!" stuttered Mr. Stange.
 Dr. Chisholm raised his hand.
 "Leave this school at once, sir!"
 "Wha-a-at?"

"I give you," said the Head, "a quarter of an hour to be gone, sir! If you remain longer than that I will see that a prosecution follows for this act of brutality!"

Mr. Stange gasped for breath.
 The tables were turned with a vengeance.
 Jimmy Silver helped Lovell on with his jacket.

The tyrant of the Fourth had overshot the mark, and he had brought about his own discomfiture.

"Dr. Chisholm, I—I—I refuse—at all events, I shall claim—" stammered the discomfited man.

"You may claim what you choose, sir, but you will leave Rookwood School immediately, or I will have you thrust from the doors!"

With a whipped look the tyrant of the Fourth slunk out of the Form-room.

There was a buzz among the juniors.
 Dr. Chisholm turned to the class as Mr. Stange's footsteps died away down the corridor.

The beaky gentleman was gone for ever.
 "My boys, I am sorry that this has occurred," said the Head very quietly.

"Owing to—to—to circumstances, I allowed that—that person to take up his duties here before I had time to make a sufficiently full examination into his credentials. He was recommended to me, but— However, I need not go into that. He is leaving Rookwood at once, Lovell!"

"Ye-e-es, sir!" mumbled Lovell.
 "You may leave the Form-room. You are excused from lessons to-day. Silver may go with you. The rest will take their seats, and"—the Head's voice grew more stern—"kindly keep order here. I shall send Bulkeley here to take charge of the Form for the—present."

Dr. Chisholm left the Form-room, and Lovell followed, leaning heavily on Jimmy's arm.

Arthur Edward rather prided himself on being "tough," but he had been very hard hit this time, and he was likely to feel the effects for some time to come.

But he grinned faintly at Jimmy Silver in the passage.
 "I don't care!" he murmured. "After all, we've got rid of that brute! It was worth it! Ow! Yow!"

"There he goes!" muttered Jimmy Silver.
 Through the open doorway the two juniors had a view of Mr. Stange in hat and coat, striding away towards the gates.

The new master disappeared from sight, and Lovell grinned again.

"The Head's goin' to have a high old time, bookin' masters in a terrific hurry," he said.
 "I wonder what the next will be like? Ow!"
 "I wonder!" said Jimmy.

THE END.

(There is a tremendously exciting story of the Fourth Form at Rookwood in next week's issue of the POPULAR. The story is entitled, "Fun for the Fourth!" and is written by Owen Conquest. No lover of really good, healthy school stories can afford to miss it. Make sure of your copy by ordering it NOW.)

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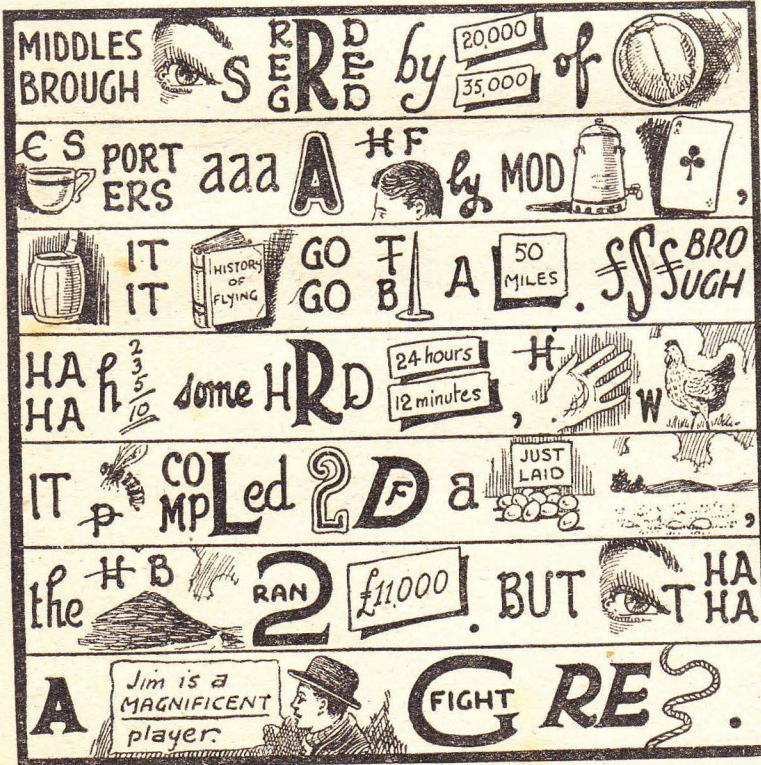
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"De Omnibus."

In next week's "Popular" you will be immensely interested in that omnibus. Mautly is the driver, and Mr. Frank Richards' capital yarn concerns a special outing organised by his noble lordship.

"Mautly's Treat!"

That is the title of as bright a story of good old Greyfriars as you need wish to meet. Mautly, as we all know, is not the kind of fellow to do things by halves. It is this way. There is a grand footer match in a town some miles from the school, and Lord Mauleverer charters an omnibus, and invites a crowd of fellows to attend the function with him as his guests. The adventures are as numerous as they are surprising. The merry excursionists meet other things besides sensational football passes. Mautly is a fair marvel all the way through, and he acts up to his reputation as a fine fellow, and even when the unexpected happens, he is all there. Watch out for this fine tale with the real Greyfriars touch in it.

Mean as Mellish.

There is a rousing story of St. Jim's next week called "A Coward's Ordeal," and a certain party named Mellish figures in it conspicuously. Mellish is a bit of a craven—like that chap called Sextus who flourished some time back in Rome. Sextus got things thrown at him as he walked the streets. Mellish, so to speak, is in the same boat. One of Mellish's big troubles is that he is not as brave as he ought to be. Mr. Martin Clifford shows in fine style some of the strange workings of Mellish's brain, and this new yarn will be read with keenest interest. The excitement never flags a second, and there is plenty of humour as well. One thing is plain as paint, namely, that Mellish is the giddy limit.

Riots at Rookwood.

They are still up to their necks in trouble at Rookwood. Mr. Owen Conquest contributes a stirring story next week which shows the progress of the most amazing strike which ever happened. "Fun for the Fourth" is simply great. When the cat's away—we know the rest. When masters go out on strike there is considerable entertainment for the rest of the school. You will like the way in which Jimmy Silver and his chums show up. Their part is considerable. But let it be remembered all the time that there is heaps of justification for the extraordinary state of affairs at Rookwood. You can't get away from that outstanding fact. The "Popular" has never published a more rattling yarn than the new one appearing next week.

"Chums to the Rescue!"

There is tremendous grip in the story of Cedar Creek which may be looked for next Tuesday. These yarns of the Backwoods School get more and more liked as we go on, and it is not surprising. The new tale deals in thrilling style with the deadly peril in which Frank Richards finds himself. He has been captured and comrades pick up the trail of the kidnapers, and lose no time in dashing to the rescue. This is a well put together story, full of spirit and dramatic action.

Other Attractions.

Mr. Victor Nelson will earn plenty of compliments for his coming instalment of that magnificent serial, "The Rival Sportsmen." Talking about compliments, it can be taken for granted that W. G. Bunter will receive heaps of enlogry for the splendid manner in which he tackles Shakespeare in the new Supplement.

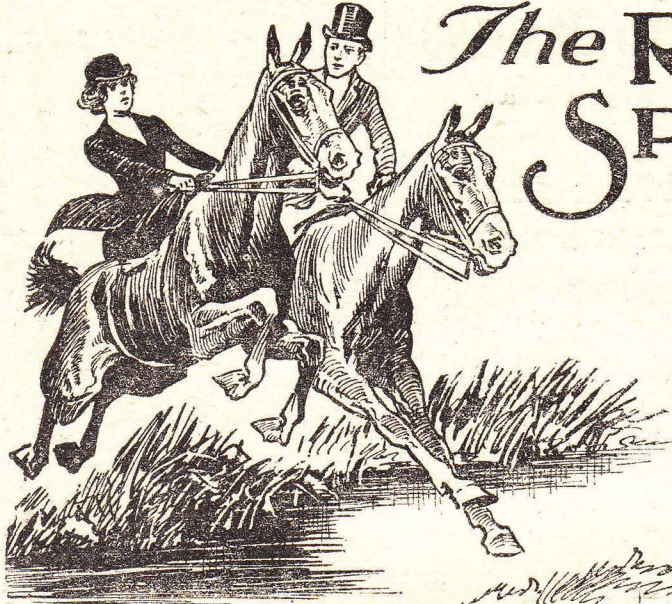
For the Future.

I should like to add a few words concerning the splendid treats which are coming. They are great. But of this more anon.

YOUR EDITOR.
THE POPULAR.—No. 207.

If Others Have Won, Why Not You? You MUST Have a Shot!

HERE'S A FINE SPORTING TALE YOU'LL LIKE, BOYS! The extraordinary fight between two sportsmen for a great fortune!



The RIVAL SPORTSMEN!

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

By VICTOR NELSON.

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

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

By the terms of the late Sir Charles Lestrade's will, Harry Lestrade and his cousin, Austin Courtney, must fight for 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, and he is "signed on" to play for the Wessex Wanderers permanently.

Several other sporting events, in which both the cousins compete, are won by young Harry Lestrade. Furious at his non-success, Courtney tries underhand methods of getting Harry out of the struggle.

In the fourth round of the English Cup, Courtney's team, Romford Rovers, is drawn to meet the Wanderers. Courtney arranges with a reserve, Jem New-

bold, who is up against Harry, to administer drugs to his team at half-time.

The dastardly scheme is carried out, and when the two teams commence the play again, three of the Wanderers fall down unconscious. But in spite of this catastrophe, Codling, the captain of the Wanderers, decides to continue the match, playing short.

After a stern struggle the Wanderers defeat their opponents. Later Tony Wagg discovers that Newbold is responsible for the drugging, and Newbold is turned out of the club.

As Courtney is partly responsible for his suspension from the club, Newbold meets him later and asks for compensation. As they are talking, in a restaurant, a newspaper-boy rushes past, yelling: "Result of semi-final! Football results!" (Now read on.)

THE RESULT. Further Conspiracies!

COURTNEY jumped from his chair, left the restaurant, and presently returned with a special edition of the "Evening News" in his hands. One glance at his face, which had gone livid, told Newbold how the game up at Barnsley had finished.

"Look!" Courtney said, between his teeth. Newbold took the paper, and saw in the "Latest" column:

SEMI-FINAL RESULTS
Barnsley 0 Wanderers 1
(Lestrade scored for the Wanderers)

Liverpool Invicta 2 Middlesbrough U. 0
(Hobson and Smart scored for Liverpool)

"The young brute has the luck of the dickens!" Newbold said, as he looked up. "I can just imagine how the other fools wrung his hand and slapped his back when he got the goal that won for his side. Well, what now?"

"I have as good as told you," Courtney answered, sinking his voice, though they were at a secluded table and none of the other customers in the place were seated near. "This makes matters desperate for me—more desperate than they have ever been. The Wanderers now meet Liverpool Invicta in the Cup Final in, roughly, a month's time, and they'll very likely wind up the season by winning that and annexing the Cup. Oh, how I hate him! He seems to be able to do nothing wrong."

His expression was momentarily murderous. His eyes were narrowed, and his lips twisted

into a snarl. He had not seen fit to tell Newbold how the fight of a fortnight before between him and Harry Lestrade had ended, but it was in his mind now. Courtney had registered a vow to be revenged for the well-merited hiding he had received, and now that his cousin had again outshone him in sport, his determination to strike back at Harry was strengthened.

"What's the respective chances of your two horses in the big race next Friday up at Aintree?" Newbold inquired.

"Fast and Free could not be going better," Courtney replied, with a shrug. "But, on the quiet, an acquaintance of mine, a man named Murker, has been keeping an eye on Tearing Haste, my cousin's mount. He reports that the horse jumps like a cat, and that he will strip trained to the hour next Friday afternoon if"—his tone grew significant—"nothing happens to him in the meantime."

"You'll make an attempt to get at the horse—not its rider, then?" asked the ex-footballer.

"It depends," Courtney answered. "Go and send a wire for me—here's the address: Jerry Murker, c/o The Chequers, Studleigh, Wessex. It's quite near the castle, you know. I prefer not to write the message myself, as I want to avoid any chance of evidence against me if we take desperate steps, as we shall. Just say 'Meet me ten o'clock on Monday morning on London Road.' There's no need for any signature. He will understand. Jerry Murker is as anxious as you to get in a blow at my cousin, and he will be almost sure to have some plan for crocking either him or the horse."

"I hope he will be for the former," Newbold said, as he took the scribbled address Courtney was holding out to him and rose to his feet.

Ten minutes later the message was speeding on its way to Jerry, the Limper.

It was the beginning of yet another scoundrelly conspiracy against Harry Lestrade.

The Meeting with Murker—The Unsuspected Listener—Tearing Haste's Peril!

ON the Monday morning, at some ten minutes before ten o'clock, Jem Newbold and Austin Courtney were striding along the London Road, some mile from Lestrade Castle.

They were there to keep the appointment Courtney had made with the villainous racing tout Jerry Murker, known more familiarly to his intimates as "The Limper." Courtney had been paying the tout well to spy upon Harry Lestrade and Tearing Haste, when at exercise, so that he might be well posted as to how his cousin's Grand National candidate was shaping, and he had no doubts that Murker would be somewhere on the road to meet them.

There sounded the sharp tinkling of a bicycle bell and the two men drew into the side of the road to let the rider pass. Newbold saw Courtney's face darken, as the cyclist, a young and slender girl in furs, flashed by.

"Someone you know?" he asked curiously.

"Yes," Courtney replied. "She's a friend of young Lestrade's and I am sure she holds me in contempt because I have tried to put him out of the running in the big struggle between us. For that reason, I hate her almost as thoroughly as I do him. Her name is Randall and she's the daughter of Sir Travers Randall, a big pot in these parts."

Marjorie Randall had recognised Courtney and suppressed a little start as she had peddled past the two men. What was Harry Lestrade's cousin doing in these parts? she wondered.

Marjorie knew that he no longer lived at the castle.

With her cheeks flushed by the keen March air, the girl sped on around a sharp curve in the road, which was bordered on either side by tall hedges, shutting it off from extensive meadows and pasture lands.

On the left, some hundred yards ahead, stood an old, weather-beaten, half-rusted windmill, long since fallen into disuse. Just as Marjorie drew abreast of this, she ran over some broken glass she had failed to notice. Her front tyre punctured with a sharp report and immediately went quite

True Blue Harry, of the Wanderers, on the Ball—Next Week!

flat, and, with an exclamation of annoyance, the girl dismounted.

She hesitated. She was some two to three miles from her home and, for a moment, debated whether she would wheel the bicycle and walk, or stop and mend the puncture.

She decided for the latter course, having an outfit in her saddle bag. She remembered that there was a pond just behind the hedge facing the old mill, and, so that she might make use of the water in her task, she wheeled her cycle through a gate on to a rough track that had once been used by the owners of the mill.

A few minutes later, hidden by the hedge, the girl was beside the pond. She had turned her cycle upside down, so that it rested on its saddle and handlebars and was preparing to lever off the outer tyre and take out the damaged inner tube. And it was just at that moment that Jerry Murker limped down the road and waved an unclean hand to Courtney and Jem Newbold, as they approached from the opposite direction.

The Limper waited in the road almost level with the spot where Marjorie stooped by her cycle. The girl ceased to remove the tyre, as she heard Courtney greet his confederate and recognised his voice.

"Well, guv'nor?" the Limper queried, in his habitually husky tones.

"My cousin's horse hasn't got to win the National, Jerry," Courtney answered meaningly; and, behind the hedge, Marjorie started and drew a sharp breath. "At least, it hasn't got to win with him on his back, so that he gets further ahead of me. Either Tearing Haste or my dear cousin has got to be 'crooked.' I wired you to meet me, as I thought you might be able to suggest something."

With her eyes indignant, Marjorie remained still and silent, listening. There was a pause, whilst the Limper apparently gave the matter thought. Then—

"I've got it, guv'nor," he said, with an evil chuckle. "The horse, I understand, leaves the stables by motor horse-van for London to-morrow morning, where, if he got there safely, he would be taken to Euston to be put on rail for Liverpool." He laughed again. "Have you ever realised what a hefty weapon a catapult could be in the hands of a sure marksman?"

"What do you mean?" Courtney asked puzzled.

"Just this—that I was mad on a catapult when a kid and I can still use one and never miss my aim," the Limper replied. "There's only one road the horse-van can take, coming from the castle towards here, the road for London. That means that it will come down that steep hill midway between here and the castle that ends in the flimsy, wooden bridge that spans the river Mole. Just supposing that someone waited near the bridge and got the driver a smack in the head with a good-sized stone from a catapult," he added significantly. "What would happen? It's almost certain that it would knock him senseless and, out of control, when the van ran on to the bridge, it would swerve and crash through the wooden rails. And the river at that point is deep enough to cover the van twice over."

"But supposing the driver went over with it and was drowned as well as the horse?" Newbold asked nervously.

"What if he was?" the Limper demanded, shrugging his shoulders. "There would be no evidence left as to how the thing happened and— By shots! What's that?"

There had come a sudden crash and the sharp tinkling of a bell from behind the hedge. The Limper had sunk his voice as he had outlined his dastardly plan, and in craning forward to listen, Marjorie had sent her bicycle toppling over.

His teeth coming together with a click, Austin Courtney wheeled about and went at a run through the gate into the field. His two companions followed at his heels, and all three stood for a breathing space, staring at the dismayed Marjorie.

The girl turned to run, but she was too late.

Courtney sprinted after her like a hare, flung his arms about her, then clapped a hand over her mouth to stifle the cries for help she would have given.

"Quick! Help me get her into the mill!" he panted, as Newbold and Limper hastened

up. "She has heard everything, and we have got to see that she is kept silent until after Tearing Haste has been sent to join his departed ancestors."

In spite of her struggles, between them Newbold and Courtney carried her up the slope that led to the mill and through its main and now doorless entrance.

In one of the store-rooms, high up, on a level with the hub of the ruined sails, Courtney forced a knotted handkerchief between Marjorie's teeth, to gag her, whilst the Limper lashed her hands together behind her back with an unclean scarf he had torn from his neck. When Newbold had found some rope, she was rendered even more helpless by having her ankles lashed together.

"An revoir, Miss Randall!" Courtney sneered, as he gave a last tug at the knots, then straightened up. "One of us will free you after the horse has been dealt with to-morrow morning. You can tell what tale you like, then, but as I shall take care to have an alibi, you will find it difficult to prove anything."

They left her. There was a key in the rusted lock, and Marjorie heard one of them turn and remove it as they slammed the door upon her.

Desperately, feverishly, Marjorie struggled with her bonds; but the rogues had made sure of their work, and the more she strained at them, the more the knots seemed to tighten.

Gasping for breath, the gag threatening to suffocate her, the girl at length gave up and lay exhausted. She was bitterly angry with herself for allowing her excitement to get the better of her, so that the bicycle had been knocked over and her presence behind the hedge betrayed to the plotters.

There seemed no chance of escape, and if she had to remain in the mill until one of the conspirators returned to free her, it would mean that the splendid thoroughbred with which her boy friend had hoped to win the Grand National would go to its doom!

Marjorie's Escape—Too Late!

MARJORIE RANDALL again began to wrestle with her bonds.

The thought that Harry Les-trade's Grand National candidate, the splendid racer, Tearing Haste II., would be killed, if, with his connections unwarned, he was started on his journey to London, gave her added strength, added powers of endurance, and she strained at the scarf and rope about her wrists, and jerked her head from side to side, to try to rid herself of her gag, until she was almost breathless.

But it was all to no avail. After thrusting the knotted handkerchief between her teeth, Austin Courtney had secured it in position with some short lengths of cord, which he had knotted with inhuman tightness at the nape of her neck. To work the gag from her mouth, so that she could cry out for help, seemed an impossible task; whilst, though she had jerked and wrenched at the bonds about her wrists until the delicate flesh was chafed and bleeding, they appeared to have tightened rather than slackened.

All through the day Marjorie persevered in her efforts to free herself, save for intervals, when utterly exhausted, she was forced to rest.

Then, when the short afternoon had lapsed into evening and darkness had come, a very real terror was added to the plight of the unfortunate girl.

As, after a particularly strenuous tussle with her bonds, Marjorie lay panting, she heard a sudden scratching sound. She started, and lay listening.

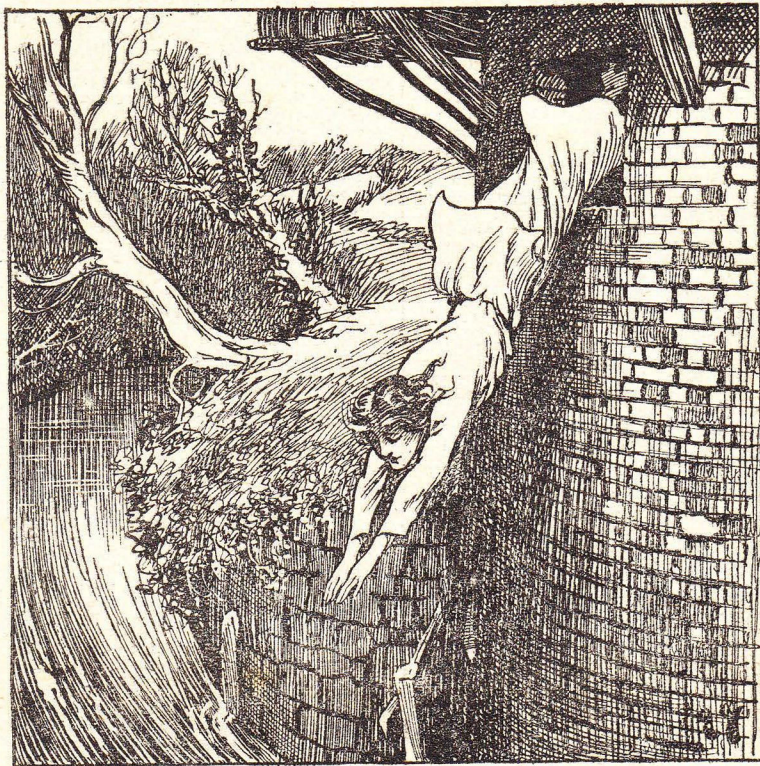
At first, the silence was broken only by the steady rush of water. It came from a deep stream on the farther side of the mill, which passed over a great water-wheel, long since clogged and rendered stationary.

Then the scratching noise began again, and it was followed by a distinct scampering, as Marjorie moved her bound feet.

The old mill was infested with rats, and before the long night was out, there was no saying how bold the odious rodents might become.



IN THE ENEMY'S HANDS! Marjorie turned to run, but she was too late. Courtney sprinted after her, flung his arms about her, then clapped a hand over her mouth to stifle the cries for help she would have given. "Quick! Help me get her into the mill!" he panted, as Newbold and Limper hastened up. (See this page.)



A DIVE FOR LIBERTY! Marjorie squeezed through the small window of the mill. The next moment she was hanging head downwards over the mill-race. Then she brought her arms over her head and dived swiftly. (See page 26.)

Marjorie had heard of rats attacking human beings, even when they were free and able to protect themselves. What might not happen to her, bound and helpless as she was.

She shuddered, and then commenced once more to try to free herself.

Her movements kept the furry inhabitants of the old and half-ruined building at a distance. But the moment Marjorie paused to regain her breath after her exertions, she again heard one or more of them quite near her.

Was there any chance that help might come?

What had happened to her bicycle, she wondered? If it had been left behind the hedge, someone might find it, and it might eventually be identified as her property.

There would be hope then, she thought, that the mill would be searched to see if she were within. By this time her father must be getting anxious at her prolonged absence. He might even already have gone to the police.

Had Marjorie but known, however, her captors had reasoned much as this, and they had taken care that the bicycle should not be discovered.

After they had locked her in this upper room in the ruin, they had carried the cycle to the millstream and cast in it. As the waters were very deep and it had naturally sunk like a stone, no one was likely to discover it there.

As the time wore on, an almost overwhelming weariness descended upon the girl. Afraid to sleep because of the rats, Marjorie fought with her drowsiness, but, at last, her lids, which felt as though they might be weighted with lead, drooped, and she drifted into slumber.

It seemed to Marjorie that she had barely closed her eyes when she was jerked into wakefulness by a sharp pain in her ankle.

Had she not been gagged, she would have cried out in horror and repulsion, for instantly she realised that one of the rats had bitten her. She sharply drew up her legs, lest some of the rodents should be still at

her feet. And then there happened an amazing thing.

There was a snap, and Marjorie suddenly realised that she could freely move her ankles. The cords that had been lashed about her ankles had parted, and her legs were free!

The girl contrived to struggle into a sitting posture, and then she received a second surprise. She happened to glance towards the one small, glassless window of the store-room, and she saw that the first grey streaks of dawn were beginning to steal across the sky.

She had lain in the deep slumber of exhaustion, all oblivious of the rats that must have scampered about her for many hours instead of minutes, as she had believed. In an hour it would be daylight.

As the room grew lighter and lighter, Marjorie Randall looked curiously at the cords which still hung loosely about her ankles.

Then she understood that something very like a miracle had happened. One or more of the rats with which the mill was infested must have gnawed at the cords and weakened them, and when the teeth of one of the small but vicious furry creatures had nipped her ankle, and she had jerked her feet, the strands had snapped.

Perhaps after all the rats were going to prove a blessing in disguise!

She could at least move about the store-room once she gained her feet, and she might find a means of freeing her hands.

Marjorie got upon her knees, and thence to her feet. She looked about her, and her eyes fell, and rested upon a rusted nail protruding from the further wall.

It gave her an idea. She crossed to it, turned her back, and, getting the cords and scarf that imprisoned her wrists over the nail, she began to rub and saw at them.

Her sleep had left her wonderfully refreshed, and tirelessly she persisted in her task, her eyes holding an anxious light.

She had heard Jerry Murker say that Tearing Haste was to leave the Lestrade stables by motor horse-van this morning. Marjorie was aware that in racing-stables everyone is up and doing at a very early

hour, and she feared that unless she could quickly free herself and break from her prison she would be too late to frustrate Austin Courtney's foul plot.

Ah! She felt the cords loosen, and knew that she must have sawn through the strands. But the scarf still remained tightly lashed about her wrists, and, though she tugged at it desperately, it refused to slacken.

Working now with feverish energy, Marjorie used the rusted head of the nail to tear at the material of the neck-handkerchief. But it took her a full half an hour before she had weakened and frayed it sufficiently for it to slacken and enable her to draw one hand from out of it.

As she did this Marjorie raised her hands to the knots of the cords securing her gag. She sighed with intense relief as she was at last able to snatch the knotted handkerchief out of her mouth and throw it down.

She herself was free, but a locked door still remained between her and the outer world.

The girl crossed to it and examined the lock. Though old and rusted, it was massive and strong, and there was no implement in the room with which she could attack it.

Over to the window darted Marjorie, forgetting the cramped stiffness of her limbs. She seized the framework, which was almost devoid of glass and rotting, and as she exerted her strength and tugged at it, it came away bodily.

Marjorie craned out of the small window, which she judged was just large enough to allow her shoulders passing through, but that was all. There was not a soul in sight, and the girl felt that it would be useless to call for help.

For a breathing-space she was nonplussed, and as she realised how minutes that might be precious were slipping away, her eyes filled with something akin to despair.

Then once again she looked out of the window, gazing down at the dark and swiftly coursing waters of the stream thirty feet below.

On this side the lower stonework of the mill had its foundations in the stream, and the black waters lapped against it as they continuously dashed by and rushed on and on to join the River Mole.

Marjorie set her teeth. If it were humanly possible, she must reach the Lestrade stables and tell of the dastardly plot that had been hatched against Tearing Haste before the horse left en route for Aintree, and there seemed only one desperate way.

The girl squirmed her slender shoulders through the window. It was touch and go whether they would go through; but she did achieve her object, tight squeeze though it was.

The next moment she was hanging head downwards over the mill-race. Then the rest of her slim form slipped through the tiny opening, and she had brought her arms over her head and was diving swiftly through the air.

She cleft the water with scarcely a splash, and made a momentary disappearance beneath the surface. Then she came up, dashing the water from her eyes, and, with a few rapid strokes, reached the side and scrambled, dripping, on to the grass.

The water had been icy cold, and Marjorie's teeth began to chatter. But the circulation of her blood was quickened as she swung about and, gaining the road, dashed at top speed towards Lestrade Castle.

Would she be in time? she wondered. When the girl reached the private training-stables adjoining the fine old pile that for centuries had been in the family of the Lestrades, she saw no sign of anyone being about, and her heart sank. She guessed that Tearing Haste had left upon his journey.

Across the schooling grounds Marjorie ran, and a few seconds later, she was tugging at the bell of the house of Williams the late Sir Charles Lestrade's trainer.

Williams himself presently opened the door, and he gave an exclamation of mingled relief and astonishment as he saw the identity of the caller.

"Why, Miss Marjorie, there's been the dickens of a scare about you!" the trainer cried. "Your father and the police have been searching for you half the night, and so I have my stable-lads, Master Harry, and I myself. Where have you been? What's been happening to you?"—as he saw her saturated condition. "Sir Travers is almost insane with anxiety!"

"Tearing Haste?" the girl panted, ignoring his questions, and clutching at the lapels of his coat in her agitation and excitement.

"Tearing Haste! He left ten minutes ago in the motor horse-van on his way to London and then Aintree," Williams answered; and Marjorie dropped her hands and groaned.

It seemed that she was just too late to save the noble creature from the cruel death planned for him!

Can Tearing Haste Be Saved?—Harry Lestrade's Thrilling Ride.

As he realised the despair that was in the girl's pale face, Williams' expression became uneasy, and his hands fell to her wet shoulders.

"What's the trouble, Miss Marjorie? Why do you ask about the horse?" he demanded anxiously. "He was as fit as a fiddle when he left here, and, barring a tumble, I believe he'll show everything else a clean pair of heels and win."

"He won't—he won't, unless the van can be overtaken in time!" Marjorie objected, with a sob of intense distress in her voice. "There is a conspiracy against him—a conspiracy to stun the driver of the van and

send it and the horse into the River Mole! For pity's sake, Mr. Williams, don't waste time in asking me questions but send for Harry—Master Lestrade!"

The trainer was impressed by her earnestness.

He said no word, but dashed back into the hall where there was a telephone.

He rang through to the castle—it was a private wire—and asked for Harry. The lad, who had been up early to see Tearing Haste safely boxed in the motor horse-van and sent on his way to London, in spite of having been with the search-party—that had sought Marjorie until the small hours, hurried to the telephone.

Williams asked that he would come to the stables immediately.

"Miss Randall is here, and says there is a plot to get at Tearing Haste," he added. "I do not quite understand anything as yet, Master Harry, but I believe that the horse is possibly in grave danger."

A startled exclamation reached Williams from over the live wire. Within a few minutes, Harry Lestrade came sprinting into the stable-yard.

"Marjorie, what's wrong?" he asked anxiously, as he gripped both her chill hands.

In breathless sentences, the girl quickly told him everything; how she had taken her bicycle behind the hedge to mend a puncture, and whilst there listened to the dastardly plans of Austin Courtney and his hirelings. How an accident had betrayed her presence, and how she had been made a fast prisoner in the old mill, not to escape until daylight had come.

Harry's face grew white as he listened, white with mingled concern and anger. Apart from expecting to go close in the National and thus take another great stride towards winning his father's fortune, he loved all horses, and to contemplate the fate his cousin had schemed for Tearing Haste made his blood boil.

He thought for a moment. Was there a chance that he might be able to overtake and stop the motor horse-van before it reached the bridge spanning the Mole, which was roughly four miles distant?

"Your motor-bike, Williams!" Harry rapped out. "Is it in running order?"

"Yes, I meant to use it to-day, to run over to Birchwood, twenty miles away, to make that new forage contract we were discussing. I had it cleaned and filled up last night."



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"Thank Heaven!" Harry said. "Quick, man! Where is it?"

At a run, Williams made for an outhouse. Harry dashed after him, and Marjorie followed more slowly, clenching her teeth to try to prevent their chattering.

The trainer unlocked the door of the shed and ran the cycle out. Harry seized the handle-bars and turned to the girl.

"See Mrs. Williams, Marjorie, and get her to let you turn into bed, whilst news of your safety is sent to your father and some dry clothes are fetched for you. I mean to try to catch up with the van before it reaches the river. I promise you that my cousin shall pay dearly sooner or later for his treatment of you."

He dashed his foot to the kick-starter and set the engine humming. Running along beside the cycle for a few yards, he leapt into the saddle, then sent it leaping across the yard and out of the gates on to a road running across the exercise grounds.

Once there, Harry Lestrade let the motor-cycle out. From twenty miles an hour it was speedily going forty. But even that pace did not satisfy the lad, and with a clear road before him, he increased its onrush to a speed little short of that of the fastest express train.

The cycle was almost new and a flyer. Leaning low over the handle-bars, the boy thundered across the schooling-ground like an arrow freed from a bow. One false movement, a misplaced stone in the road, would mean almost certain death, but Harry did not think of that.

If speed could accomplish it, he was determined to reach his Grand National horse before it gained the vicinity of the river, where his unscrupulous enemies waited.

As he neared the public road he had to slow down to turn into it. But once round the bend he once more let the machine have its head, and, with no consideration for speed limits, the motor-cycle was very soon roaring over the ground at its former break-neck pace.

The local constable was passed, and he first hopped out of the way in terror, then shouted indignantly after the boy who might one day be master of Lestrade Castle.

But Harry took no notice. It was doubtful if he heard. With his handsome, boyish face grim and set, he kept on and on at the same reckless speed until he neared the brow of the steep hill which led down to the river.

Again he slackened his pace, but only slightly. As he dashed over the lip of the hill he uttered a gasp of joy, though next

instant he wondered if his relief had been premature.

The motor horse-van was in sight, some two-thirds of the distance down the decline, which was really a sunken road, with high banks on either side.

But it was within little more than thirty yards of the deep river that ran right across the road at the hill's bottom and the wooden bridge that spanned it.

Harry shouted a warning to the driver at the top of his voice, but the man did not seem to hear. From behind some bushes high up on the bank on the left, at a point some dozen yards from the bridge, the evil face of the Limper peered at the approaching vehicle.

The scoundrelly tout held in his hands a powerful catapult, and a large round stone was in its sling. If the Limper had seen the pursuing motor-cycle, he had failed to recognise Harry, and attach importance to it.

"Watch me get him!" he muttered to Jem Newbold, who crouched beside him, as, holding the catapult in his left hand, with his right he drew out the stout elastic to its fullest capacity. "He'll topple over like a shot rabbit!"

Nearer and nearer drew the motor horse-van, the driver sitting unconcernedly before the wheel, little dreaming of his danger.

There was no one with him. Tearing Haste, who was standing passively in the box on the lorry, would be received by stable-boys at the station, a couple of whom would travel with him; but they had gone on ahead some time before.

Nearer, nearer! And faster and faster raced Harry Lestrade in the desperate pursuit.

The motor horse-van drew almost level with the hiding-place of Jerry Murker and Newbold, and, taking careful and deliberate aim, the former released the stone from between his fingers and sent it whizzing through the air.

It struck the driver of the van fairly and squarely on the temple, and the man was instantly rendered unconscious, his hands falling from the wheel, his body toppling limply to one side in its seat.

"Good!" the Limper chuckled. "Got him a beauty, Newbold, an'— Holy snakes! Look—look! It's Lestrade!"

The latter words were gasped out by him as Harry thundered level with the van on the motor-cycle. He had lessened his mad pace somewhat, and, swinging his leg over the saddle, he was standing on the running-board.

The Limper and Newbold stared spellbound. They saw Harry gather himself together;

saw him release his hold upon the handle-bars and leap, letting the motor-cycle take care of itself.

The boy landed on the footboard of the horse-van, whilst his cycle shot off at a tangent and struck the high bank at the side of the road. Its front wheel was buckled as if made of the softest lead, and, rebounding, it fell upon its side, wrecked.

Harry almost missed the handrail of the box—almost, but not quite. His body swung round dangerously, but he recovered his balance, and began speedily to work his way along the footboard towards the unconscious driver, while the motor rushed towards the bridge over the river.

Harry Lestrade reached the front of the box, and fairly hurled himself into the seat beside the driver as the front wheels of the vehicle passed on to the bridge and it swerved sharply.

A-quivver with excitement, the boy gripped at the wheel and tried to turn the motor back into the centre of the bridge. But in this he was just too late. The near-side wheel crashed into the flimsy wooden rails at the side of the bridge, and smashed through them as if they had been so much matchwood. But Harry had had the presence of mind to jam down the foot-brake with all his strength, and, with a jarring and grinding of its wheels, the car's movement slowed.

For a breathing-space the lad thought the other front wheel would follow its fellow, and that the van, himself, the stunned driver, and Tearing Haste would be precipitated into the river, which at this point was quite twenty feet deep.

But the fact that its front axle was resting upon the edge of the bridge and the clapping on of the brake brought it to a standstill in the very nick of time.

Tearing Haste was saved!

Jem Newbold and Jerry Murker realised this, too, as, not knowing how much Harry Lestrade might have seen, or what evidence he might be able to bring against them, they bounded to their feet and dashed away over the brow of the bank.

They cursed the boy again and again as they ran.

Austin Courtney had been right when he had recently said that he possessed the luck of the dickens!

Had he been a second or two later in boarding the motor horse-van, nothing could have saved it from pitching into the water and Tearing Haste being drowned!

(There will be another instalment of this exciting sporting serial included in next week's bumper programme of stories. You simply must not miss it.)

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