

C. J. F. Richard.

SCHOOL, WILD WEST, MYSTERY, & ADVENTURE TALES, WITHIN!

Week Ending—
March 3rd,
1923

New
Series.

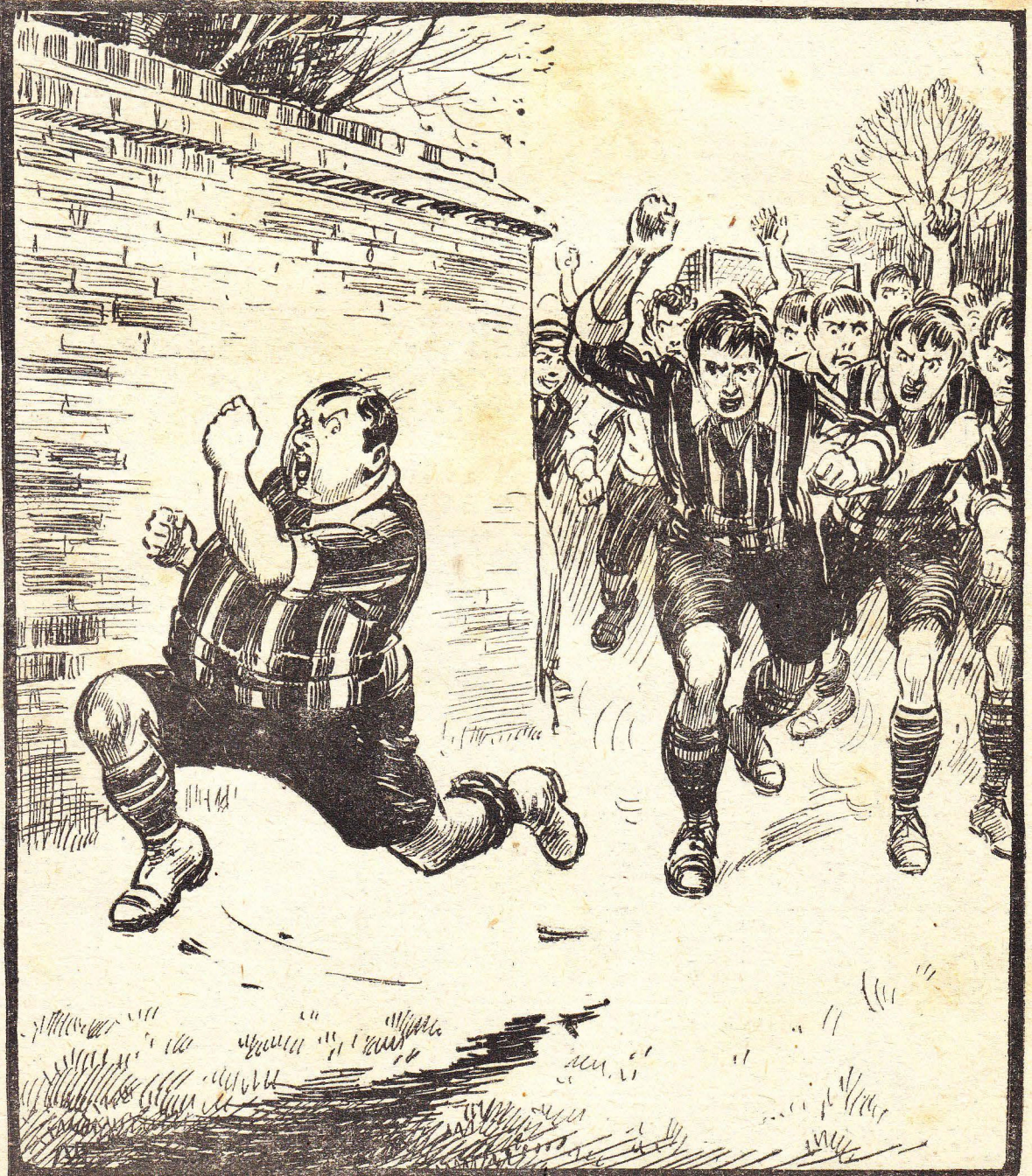
No.
215.

Twenty-eight
Pages.

The POPULAR 2^D

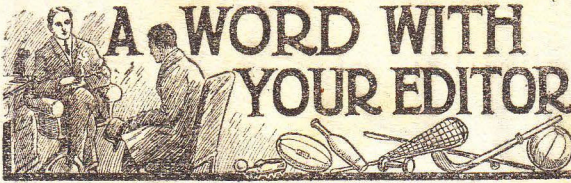
The Story Book for Boys.

Money Prizes
Every
Week!



BAGGY TRIMBLE'S "PAID" TEAM TURNS ON ITS MANAGER!
(An Amusing Incident from Our Long St. Jim's Tale Inside.)

WHAT'S FOR NEXT WEEK, CHAPS? See the Bumper Programme below!



GRAND PHOTOS OF FAMOUS SPORTSMEN!

The magnificent glossy photographs of famous sportsmen which the POPULAR is giving away every week are creating a sensation! They are the best possible, and I advise all my friends to make sure of each fine portrait. Look out for the grand real photo given next week!

"THE CHASE ACROSS THE SEA!"

Next week's thrilling Greyfriars story is so much out of the common that I should like to devote a good bit of space to referring to the many tremendous situations it describes, and the wonderful drama of the whole business. Unluckily, there is no room to enlarge on the plot of this—one of the grippiest yarns to which Frank Richards has set his name. It all pans out this way: Vernon-Smith flies from justice! That is what it amounts to! The Boarder thinks he has killed Gerald Leder, and he runs for it!

"STRANDED!"

Cedar Creek scores next week! The spirited chums of the Backwoods School will be found far up country, right away in the mysterious wilds. And they are up against something they did not expect, too! It's like this, Frank Richards, the trusty Bob, and the others are stranded. They are fairly swallowed up in the back of beyond.

"BORROWED GLORY!"

The Rookwood story for next Tuesday is a certain winner. Somehow, one sort of senses that Tubby Muffin is in this business. He is, that, up to his neck. Tubby and bravery are usually as far apart as the Poles, but the fat fellow saw a chance of posing as a giddy hero and took it. As the poet said, there is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune. If Bulkeley had not fallen into the river, Tubby would not have had his opportunity. But Bulkeley did plunge into the watery element, and somebody fished him out. Mr. Owen Conquest shows in an amazing sequence of brisk incidents that the glory of the rescue falls to Muffin. And Tubby makes the most of it, be sure!

"THE SPORTING SEVEN!"

Baggy Trimble is throwing his weight about these days! It might have been thought that one would have to wait till the cows come home to see Trimble as a patron of sport; but the unexpected often happens! Baggy is in funds, and he organises a team of bright chaps from Wayland to meet Tom Merry & Co. The results are quite satisfactory.

THE FLOWERS THAT BLOOM IN THE SPRING!

All the cheery things in this department will be found flourishing like a green bay-tree in next week's marvellous issue of "Billy Bunter's Weekly." It is just the very article you want at the season when the first primrose peeps out amidst the green leaves. The plain fact is you will have to go easy with Bunter's Special Spring Poets' Number! If you are not careful, you will be swept off your feet with the romance and enthusiasm and poetry of it! The coming supplement is simply packed with poetic feeling.

"STAND AND DELIVER!"

I should be sorry if anyone missed next week's instalment of David Goodwin's powerful serial. The exploits of the two comrades of the highway, Dick Turpin and Young Neville, make magic reading.

OUR COMPETITION!

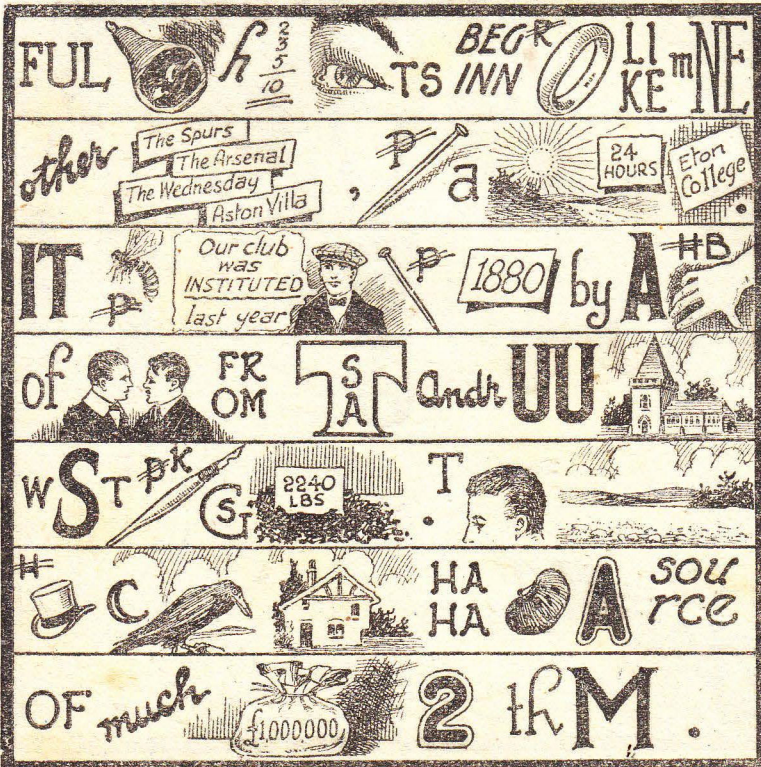
The above useful test of keenness will be found as usual. It is a feature which makes more headway with each week that comes round.

Your Editor.

ANOTHER CHANGE FOR YOU—

JUST SOLVE THE SIMPLE PICTURE PUZZLE HISTORY BELOW. You may win a topping cash prize.

FIRST PRIZE £5 0 0: Second Prize £2 10 0: TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS EACH.



What You Have To Do.

Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Fulham Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears below, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Fulham" Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, March 8th, 1923.

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

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

I enter "Fulham" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

P

WHEN MONEY COUNTS!

With his newly-gained wealth Baggy Trimble "gets busy" with his sporting campaign to make Tom Merry & Co. "sing small"!

FOOTBALL EXTRAORDINARY!

THE TEAM THAT BAGGY BUILT!

An Amazing Long Complete tale, dealing with Baggy Trimble's extraordinary sporting campaign against Tom Merry & Co., The Chums of St. Jim's.



By
Martin
Clifford.

(Author of the Famous Tales of Tom Merry & Co. appearing in the "GEM" Library.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Baggy Gets Busy.

LISTEN!" said Monty Lowther. The Terrible Three of St. Jim's who were strolling arm-in-arm along the Fourth-Form passage, on their way to visit Jack Blake & Co., stopped short, and pricked up their ears.

From Study No. 2 came a musical chinking sound, as of someone counting coin.

"Sounds like a giddy miser reckoning up his hoard!" said Manners.

Chink, chink, chink! Tom Merry threw open the door of Study No. 2 without ceremony. He gazed into the apartment, and Manners and Lowther peered over his shoulder.

A strange sight met the juniors' gaze. Baggy Trimble was seated at the table, his eyes gleaming, his hair dishevelled. Before him, on the table, was a bundle of Treasury-notes, and several piles of half-crowns, forins, shillings, and sixpences. Baggy was now engaged in sorting out coppers.

"What the thump—" began Tom Merry, in amazement.

Baggy Trimble gave a violent start. He leaned forward, and spread his hands out over the money, as if he feared that the Terrible Three might help themselves.

"Buzz off, you fellows!" he exclaimed. "Like your cheek to come barging in here. Pity I didn't lock the door!"

The Terrible Three were staring at the plump miser and his hoard.

"The king was in his counting-house, counting out his money!" quoted Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Lowther—"

"So you are still in funds, Trimble?"

said Tom Merry.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" growled Baggy.

"Where did this latest windfall come from?"

"I don't see why I should enlighten your curiosity," said Baggy Trimble. "I suppose you think I've been burgling a bank?"

"It wouldn't altogether surprise us if you had," said Manners.

Tom Merry advanced towards the table. And Baggy Trimble grew wildly excited.

"Stand back, you rotter! I don't want you fingering my money—"

"I'm not going to touch your money, you fat idiot! But I sha'n't leave this study until you've told me where it came from. You're such a dishonest toad that a fellow can't help being a bit suspicious."

"Oh, really, Merry— It's jolly mean of you to imply that I came by this money dishonestly. Matter of fact, my Uncle Solomon sent it."

"But he sent you a tenner only the other day—"

"What's that got to do with it? He can send me a tenner every five minutes, if he likes. The more the merrier."

Tom Merry looked thoughtful.

"This Uncle Solomon of yours is a bit of a puzzle," he said. "You say he's a gold-miner?"

"Yes, out in Klondyke."

"Then how is it he has only just started to shower remittances on you?"

"He didn't have a chance before. He's been prospecting for years, and he's only just struck oil."

"Oil!" said Monty Lowther. "But I thought you said he was a gold-miner?"

"So he is, you ass—"

"Then he ought to have struck gold, not oil."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Baggy Trimble gave a snort.

"You know jolly well what I mean," he said. "My uncle's ship has only just come home—"

"But you said he was out in Klondyke!"

"So he is—"

"But if he's out in Klondyke, how can his ship have come home?" asked Lowther innocently.

"That was a figure of speech, you idiot! What I mean is, he's only just made good."

"Oh!"

"My uncle's had a hard time of it out there," explained Baggy Trimble. "He's been prospecting for years and years, and never struck a bit of gold—"

"Perhaps he was afraid the gold might strike him back?" suggested Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dry up, you ass! As I was saying, Uncle Solomon's had a rough time of it, but the tide has turned at last. He's got a gold-mine of his own, and he's a millionaire several times over. That's why he can afford to send me such fat remittances."

Tom Merry & Co. were obliged to accept this explanation of Baggy Trimble's sudden accession to wealth. But they were no means convinced of its truth. It was curious that Uncle Solomon, the wealthy gold prospector, had never been heard of until lately.

"I say, Merry," said Baggy Trimble suddenly, "I asked you the other day if I could buy a place in the junior eleven—"

Tom Merry looked grim.

"And you had your answer," he said. "You went out of our study on your neck. And you'll go out of our own study in the same way, if you're not jolly careful!"

"But—but I'm willing to give you five pounds for a place in the team—"

Baggy Trimble broke off abruptly. He didn't like the expression on Tom Merry's face.

"Enough of that!" said the captain of the Shell sternly. "Places in the footer eleven are obtained through merit, not through money or unfair influence. The sooner you digest that fact, Trimble, the better."

Baggy's eyes gleamed wrathfully.

"So you're not going to give me a place in the team?" he said.

"Not at any price!"

"And yet I bought you a whole lot of new gear for the club."

"You can have it back," said Tom Merry.

"Thanks, I will. I shall want it for my own team. Since you won't let me play in your eleven, I propose to raise one of my own, a team that will lick yours into a cocked hat!"

The Terrible Three chuckled. They had heard this threat before, and it left them cold.

"Let's leave the fat dummy to count up his filthy lucre," said Manners.

And the juniors strolled out of the study.

When they had gone, Baggy Trimble sat gloating over the piles of money in front of him.

"They swallowed my yarn about Uncle Solomon," he murmured, with a chuckle. "But if they only knew!"

The gold-mining uncle did not exist—save in Baggy's fertile imagination. The fat junior's wealth had come to him from another source. It had been bestowed upon him by Sir Jeffrey Manning, a local baronet.

Sir Jeffrey had been attacked one evening,

in a lonely meadow, by a tramp. He had fallen to the ground unconscious, and the tramp had been about to rob him when Baggy Trimble came on the scene. Baggy was fleeing from a number of village roughs at the time. He jumped clean over a hedge, and landed heavily upon the tramp who was about to rifle Sir Jeffery's pockets.

It was very dark at the time, and the tramp, scared out of his wits by the fourteen-stone thunderbolt which had descended upon him so suddenly, scrambled to his feet and fled for dear life.

When Sir Jeffery Manning regained consciousness, Baggy Trimble posed as a gallant hero. He allowed the baronet to think that he—Baggy—had fought a fierce hand-to-hand encounter with the footpad, and driven him away.

On the strength of Baggy's alleged bravery, Sir Jeffery had given the fat junior fifty pounds, in various instalments.

Trimble was not entitled to this money. He had no right to pose as a hero, for he had certainly done nothing heroic. Had the footpad shown fight, Baggy would have scuttled away and left Sir Jeffery to the scoundrel's mercy.

In receiving money from the baronet, Trimble was behaving downright dishonestly. But he was too obtuse to realise the fact. He "kidded" himself into believing that he had actually saved Sir Jeffery's life, and he had accepted the money without any qualms. He would have accepted more, too, if more could be had. But Sir Jeffery did not seem disposed to go beyond fifty pounds.

With his ill-gotten gains, Trimble had bought a gramophone, and a new suit, besides several nicknacks for his study. But there was still a goodly sum left—enough to finance a football team for a time, at any rate.

Having failed to purchase a place in the St. Jim's eleven, Baggy was determined to raise a team of good players from outside the school, with a view to challenging Tom Merry to a match.

But how was he to get the players? Baggy pondered over this problem as he scooped up his money and restored it to his pockets. Good footballers would want finding. They didn't grow on every bush.

Trimble seated himself in the armchair, first of all picking up a paper which Mellish, his study-mate, had left lying there. He glanced casually at the paper. It was the current issue of the "Wayland Gazette."

Baggy leaned back in the armchair, his gaze travelling idly over the advertisement columns. Then, under the heading of "FOOTBALL NOTICES," he suddenly observed a paragraph which fixed his interest.

"WAYLAND WARRIORS F.C.—This club having been disbanded, ten of its playing members (average age 17) find themselves disengaged. They will be pleased to accept any engagements from now to the end of the season. All splendid footballers.—Apply to HARRY HUGGINS, Blacksmith, Brighton Road, Wayland."

"What luck!" chorled Baggy Trimble, rising to his feet. "Here are ten players crying out for a job. I'll go along and see this fellow Huggins, and fix up a team. The eleventh man will be me, of course. My hat! Tom Merry will shake in his shoes when he sees what a fine, hefty team I've got!"

Trimble hurried out of the study. He made his exit at the same moment as Mellish made his entry, and there was a grinding collision in the doorway.

"Ow!"
"Wow!"
"Why don't you look where you're going?" growled Baggy Trimble.

"Sorry, old man," said Mellish, who had been most polite to Trimble since the latter had come into his small fortune.

"Bless your sorrow!" snapped Baggy.

"Look here, I want to borrow a bike?"
"You can borrow mine, with pleasure," said Mellish. "If I can ever be of any service to you, dear man, you've only to let me know."

Without so much as a thank you, Baggy Trimble rolled away to the bicycle-shed. And a few moments later he was pedalling and puffing laboriously along the road to Wayland.

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Rainbow Covers!

BAGGY TRIMBLE dismounted outside the Wayland smithy. It did not stand under a spreading chestnut tree, like the traditional smithy. It was a ramshackle little place, standing well back from the pavement.

A brawny youth, of Herculean proportions, was working at the forge. Baggy Trimble hailed him.

"You Mr. Huggins?"
"That's me!" was the cheerful reply. "Wot can I do for you? Got any 'osses that want shoein'?"

"Not at present," said Baggy. "But I expect I shall own quite a lot of horses later on—raceshorses, of course!"

Harry Huggins stared at the fat junior. "Be you a bloated millionaire, then?" he inquired.

"Getting on that way," said Baggy, jingling the silver in his pocket. "Look here, Huggins—I'll drop the 'mister,' because this is no time for formalities—I've called to see you about your advertisement?"

"Oh, ah!" said Huggins. "Is it correct that Wayland Warriors have been disbanded?"

The young blacksmith passed a grimy hand across his brow.

"Dunno wot you mean by disbanded," he said.

"But you used the word in your advertisement—"

"Oh, ah! But I never writ that myself. Got our old sekkertery to put it in the paper for. If you mean, 'ave Wayland Warriors packed up, the answer's 'Yes.'"

Harry Huggins was careful not to explain why. The truth of the matter was that Wayland Warriors had been expelled from the Wayland and District League for persistent foul play.

"Well, look here, Huggins, I've got a job for you," he said eagerly.

"Oh, ah!"

"Don't keep saying that. It gets on a fellow's nerves," said Baggy irritably.

"Would you mind dropping it?"
"Oh, ah!" said Huggins. "You'll 'ave to excuse me, sir, I ain't 'ad the eddication wot you 'ave. But wot's this 'ere job you was speakin' of?"

"First of all," said Baggy, "let me introduce myself. My name's Trimble—Bagley Trimble—and I belong to St. Jim's. Owing to personal jealousy, I've been refused a place in our eleven, so I'm going to raise a team of my own, and challenge the beasts to a match, see!"

"Oh, ah!"

"Will you join my team, Huggins?"
"All depends, Master Trimble."

"On what?"

"On 'ow much I'm going to get out of it. Me an' my mates are good footballers, an' we can't give our services for nothin'."

"Oh, that's all right," said Trimble, with

an airy wave of his hand. "I'll provide you with jerseys, and boots, and all the rest of it, and pay you five bob a match. How will that suit you?"

"Tip-top!" said Harry Huggins. "I want to see you fellows play, before we call it settled," said Baggy. "You might be a set of duds, for all I know."

"Duds! Perish the thort, Master Trimble! I'll round up the other chaps, an' we'll come out on the recreation-ground an' show you what we can do."

"Go ahead, then."

It was arranged that Baggy Trimble should proceed to the recreation-ground, and wait there till the ten footballers arrived.

Baggy had to wait quite a long time, for Harry Huggins had to go forth into the highways and the byways, so to speak, to collect his men. But at last they put in an appearance, and Baggy's eyes glistened when he saw them. They were big, brawny fellows, mostly of the labouring type. Their height and girth were tremendous. None of them wore football attire, but one of them carried a football.

"Ere, we are!" said Harry Huggins affably. "If you'd care to stand in that goal, Master Trimble, we'll be pleased to show you wot we can do."

Having carelessly thrown Mellish's bicycle on to the grass, Baggy took up his position between the posts.

Harry Huggins & Co. divested themselves of their coats, and rolled up their sleeves, revealing powerful muscles.

"You take first kick, Charlie," said Huggins, addressing a shock-headed giant.

Charlie obliged. He drove the ball in with such force that it knocked Baggy Trimble clean into the net.

"Goal!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"
Baggy sat up in the goalmouth, with a dazed expression on his face.

"Ow! I—I wasn't ready for that one!" he gasped.

Harry Huggins fished the ball out of the net, and dribbled it to a distance of about twenty yards.

"Be you ready now, Master Trimble?" he called out.

"Yes."

"Ere goes, then!"
Plonk!

The hobnailed boot of Harry Huggins met the leather, and it fairly flashed towards the goal. Baggy Trimble tried to dodge it, but he might as well have tried to dodge a cannon-ball. For the second time, he was knocked backwards into the net.

"Lumme!" said Charlie, the shock-headed youth. "This is better'n playin' skittles!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

Baggy staggered to his feet.

"Yow! I've had enough!" he panted.

"I'm quite satisfied that you fellows can shoot. If you play like this against Tom Merry's team, you'll simply pulverise them! Now, are you all willing to be sworn in as members of my team?"

There was a general nodding of heads.

"Give me your names, then," said Baggy, taking out his notebook, "and tell me which positions you play in. The centre-forward berth is reserved for me, so none of you can collar that."

"I'll give you the names," said Harry Huggins. "Goalkeeper—George Grubb, Right back—Bill Brewer. Left back—'Enry Brewer. Right 'alf—Ted Brewer—"

"How many more?" asked Baggy, busy with his pencil. "There's enough Brewers here to form a brewery!"

"There's one more," said Huggins, "an' that's Ben Brewer, at centre 'alf. The left is Steve Jenkins. Got that?"

Trimble nodded.

"Now for the forwards," said Huggins. "Me at outside-right, Charlie Coggins inside-right, yerself at centre-forward, Percy Parker at inside-left, an' Jerry Parker at outside-left."

"Good!" said Trimble, closing his notebook with a snap. "Now I want you fellows to come before me one at a time, and swear—"

"Which we ain't given to strong language," observed Harry Huggins.

"Ass! I don't mean that. I want you to swear allegiance to me, your skipper."

"Oh, ah!"

"You first, Huggins. You will repeat these words after me. 'I, Harry Huggins—"

Treasure Island
By ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON



The most wonderful and exciting story of pirates, the "Jolly Roger," and hidden treasure ever written. You can start it in this week's "UNION JACK" (out on Thursday, March 18). Order your copy TO-DAY, and ask your newsagent to keep you a copy each week. Ask for

UNION JACK
LIBRARY Every Thursday 2d

"The Sporting Seven!" is the Title of Next Week's Rollicking St. Jim's Tale.

"I, 'Arry 'Uggins—"
 "Do hereby promise to be loyal to me—"
 "Do hereby promise to be loyal to me—I mean, you—"
 "In all my football undertakings, from this day forthwith."
 "In all my football undertakings, till this day fortnight," said Huggins, who had not quite caught the last sentence.

Baggy Trimble roundly rebuked Huggins, and made him repeat the phrase until he had got it right. Then the other footballers came forward in turn, until the "swearing-in" process was complete.
 "Now," said Baggy, "what are we going to call ourselves?"

Huggins suggested the Merry Mudlarks, but this was ruled out of court, Charlie Coggins, who was by way of being a humorist, proposed the Dainty Dancers. One had only to note the size of the footballers' feet to see how ludicrous such a title was.

After a good deal of debate, Baggy Trimble himself hit upon the title of the Rainbow Rovers, because, as he explained he intended to rig his men out in jerseys of countless hues.

"Come along with me to the sports outfitters," said Baggy, "and I'll fix you up with footer togs."

"Wot about our wages?" asked Huggins.
 "I'll pay you all on Saturday, before the match starts."

"Good enough."
 Baggy picked up Mellish's bicycle, and led the weird and wonderful procession from the recreation-ground. Baggy was desperately in earnest, but most of the members of his eleven looked upon the affair as a huge joke. It was a particularly good bit of fun, they reflected, because they were making money out of it.

Having purchased the jerseys, the boots, and the rest of the paraphernalia, Baggy instructed his men to turn up at St. Jim's on Saturday afternoon at two o'clock for the purpose of putting Tom Merry's team through the hoop. The fat junior took it for granted that Tom Merry would accept his challenge.

Baggy fancied himself greatly in the role of player-manager of the Rainbow Rovers. He posed as a person of considerable wealth, and Harry Huggins & Co. were greatly impressed.

Baggy even conceived the notion of billeting his team in the village, but on due reflection he decided that this would make too big a hole in his exchequer. Besides, the footballers were all local residents, and Baggy would have no difficulty in calling upon them at any time.

Having completed his plans for the downfall of Tom Merry's team, Baggy Trimble cycled back gaily to St. Jim's.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Pigmies versus Giants!

"I 'VE raised it!" exclaimed Baggy Trimble, bursting into Tom Merry's study, in a state of great excitement.

"Raised what?" asked Monty Lowther. "A loan on the strength of Uncle Solomon's next remittance?"

"Don't be an ass! I'm simply swimming in shekels, and I don't need to raise loans!"

"What have you raised, then?" asked Manners. "The roof of the Fourth Form dormitory, with your snoring?"

"Rats! I've raised my eleven." We're calling ourselves the Rainbow Rovers."

"Because you're always coming out after it's finished raining?" queried Lowther.

"No; because of the colour-scheme of our jerseys. I say, Merry, you're willing to play us on Saturday, of course?"

"I'm not so sure about that," said Tom.

"You haven't another fixture—"
 "True. But I don't see why we should turn out to play a set of duds and duffers, whom we shall probably lick by about ten to nil."

Baggy Trimble glared.
 "Do you call me a dud and a duffer?" he demanded.

"Certainly! And if all the others are like you, we shall have a walk-over."

"They're not like me. They're vastly superior—I mean, they're not nearly up to my weight, of course. But they're hefty fellows, and your team won't stand 'an earthly!"

Tom Merry turned to his chums.



THE RAINBOW ROVERS AT PRACTICE! "You take the first shot, Charlie," said Huggins, addressing a shock-headed giant. Charlie obliged, He drove the ball with such force that it knocked Baggy Trimble clean into the net. "Goal! Haw, haw, haw!" (See Chapter 2.)

"To be, or not to be?" he said. "Shall we play these Rainbow Rovers, and send them home with their tails between their legs?"

"Might as well," said Manners. "They're cheeky enough to think they can lick us, so we'll teach them a lesson."

And Monty Lowther nodded approvingly.
 After further discussion, Tom Merry accepted Baggy Trimble's challenge.

There was great excitement at St. Jim's during the days that followed. And it reached its height on Saturday afternoon, when all roads led to the football field.

The arrival of the Rainbow Rovers, punctually at two o'clock, was the signal for a storm of laughter to break loose.

Tom Merry & Co. were dismayed to see how tall and hefty their opponents were. But their amusement was greater than their dismay.

The appearance of Harry Huggins & Co. was extraordinary. Joseph's celebrated coat of many colours would have had to play second fiddle to their jerseys. Red, white, and blue, yellow and green and carmine, purple and pink and cerise, were but a selection of the colours that were blended in those amazing garments.

"The Rainbow Rovers!" gasped Tom Merry. "They couldn't have been christened more fittingly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "They are all stars and stripes and dots and dashes!" said Monty Lowther. "Is that to strike terror into us, I wonder?"

"They're big fellows," said Talbot seriously. "We shall have all our work cut out to lick them. They may or may not be good players, but in height and weight they've got a terrific advantage."

"But Trimble's in their team, so we're bound to win," said Dick Redfern. "Baggy will score a couple of goals at least against his own side!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 When Baggy Trimble waddled on to the playing pitch the spectators were in a state bordering on hysterics.

Baggy in football garb was always a comical sight, but he had never looked so comical as now. His multi-coloured jersey was already beginning to burst in the region of the shoulder-blades, and two patches of bulging flesh were visible.

Baggy carried a purse in his hand, and he looked very pompous and important.

"Have my men arrived?" he asked. "Oh, yes, there they are! Line up in a row, you fellows!"

The Rainbow Rovers obeyed with lamb-like meekness.

"Answer your names!" thundered Baggy, in tones that echoed far and wide. "Huggins!"

"Ere, Master Trimble!"

"Bill Brewer!"

"Ere!"

"Henry Brewer!"

"Ere, matey!"

And so it went on until the roll-call was completed.

"I'll pay you your wages now," said Baggy Trimble. And he passed along the line, handing out five shillings to each member of the team.

Baggy made these payments in public in order to create a sensation, and to impress his schoolfellows with his wealth.

The footballers, looking extremely gratified, slipped their money into the pockets of their shorts.

Darrel of the Sixth came striding on to the playing pitch. He had agreed to act as referee.

Tom Merry and Baggy Trimble tossed for choice of ends. Baggy won, but, in his sublime ignorance, he set his men to face a stiff breeze.

Darrel blew his whistle, and there was a chorus of ironical shouts from the crowd.

"Play up, Trimble!"

"Throw your fat about!"

"Go it, the giants!"

The giants certainly "went it." From the kick-off, Harry Huggins and Charlie Coggins took the ball down the field between them. Dick Redfern raced up to tackle Huggins, and the burly blacksmith sent him spinning with a powerful shoulder charge. Reddy turned a complete somersault as he fell.

Then Figgins tried to capture the ball. Charlie Coggins, cannoned into him, and Figg recoiled from the impact, and fairly shot along the ground.

Having shaken off their opponents as a horse might flick away flies with its tail,

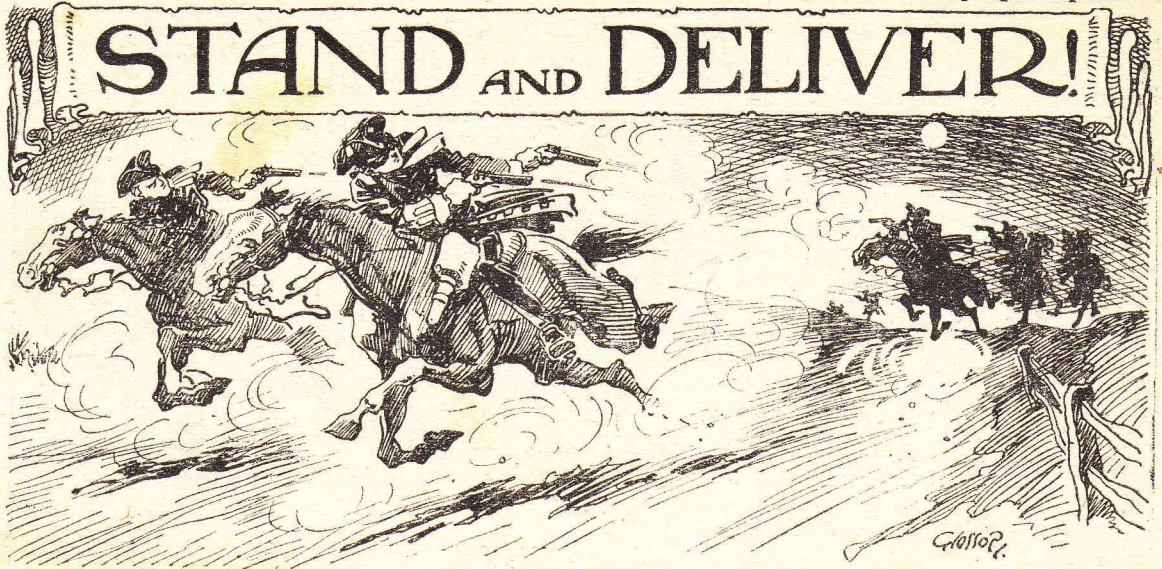
Baggy Issues An Amazing Challenge to St. Jim's Next Week!

6 Don't be backward in coming forward—order next week's issue to-day!

IN CAPTAIN SWEENEY'S HANDS!

Dick Neville, outlawed and pursued, falls into the hands of his deadly enemy, the notorious footpad captain!

THE PLOT!



A Wonderful Story, dealing with the daring exploits and adventures of Dick Turpin and Richard Neville—two knights of the broad highway.

By **DAVID GOODWIN.**

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Dick Neville, the young squire of Faulkbourne, is turned out of his rightful inheritance by the low-down treachery and deceit of an adventurer who calls himself Hector Neville, Dick's cousin. Hector is helped in his vile plotting by reason of the fact that Dick has fallen into disgrace with the Government, owing to the assistance he has rendered the famous highwayman, Dick Turpin. The young squire has also

another deadly enemy in Captain Sweeney, a notorious footpad. Hector Neville is determined to obtain possession of the lordly mansion wherein Dick has taken up his abode. The rogue has been foiled the first time, but he returns to the charge armed with legal warrants. Dick first of all resists Hector, but when news comes through that he has been outlawed, and that the King's Riders are after him, he

leaves Faulkbourne with his brother Ralph, and Dick Turpin. The three are chased across the moors, but they escape from the clutches of the troopers.

When they are safe, Dick turns to his brother.

"You must leave me here. I am going to settle the question of Faulkbourne with Hector. Either he or I must die before it is settled."

(Now Read On.)

CALLED AWAY—THE SECRET MISSION!

"HE knows it, Dick," said Ralph. "Before I rode out to you, I heard that he has sworn never to rest till he sees you swinging in chains."

Dick laughed grimly. "There has been many a gibbet prepared for me," he said, "and many an enemy has sought my death. Those enemies have come to little good, and I still ride the roads. If ever dangers threaten you, Ralph, remember I am your brother!"

And, after a heartfelt handgrip from the two highwaymen, Ralph turned his horse's head and rode back to Huntercombe.

"Tis sorrow to part with him, doubtless," said Turpin, drawing one of his pistols, and carefully cleaning it, "but the lad is better out of it all."

"I am with you there," said Dick. "My only fear is that he may have been recognised by some of the Riders in that little brush upon the moor. But I think not. Besides, he is too young to be held for such an affair."

"He is old enough to hang," said Turpin, "though I think with you that he will come to no harm this time. So now the pan is clean. Always see well to your pistol's priming, Dick. Your life may rest on it. 'Tis a proverb on the road that Turpin's pistols never miss-fire."

"A pleasing reputation to have," laughed Dick. "Add to it that the bullet always reaches its mark, and 'tis no wonder they seek you so eagerly for the gibbet, comrade, though by this time I think there's little to choose between us."

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

"Nay, I think I am still the most sought after," replied Turpin, rather jealously. "You are young, and have scarce so pretty a record as I. Yet I will not deny that you come second—a very good second."

"We won't quarrel about that," said Dick, laughing heartily. "If you prefer it, let it be that you are a still greater blackguard than I. You know what the pot said to the kettle, eh, Turpin? But who is this running out of the wood?"

A brown-faced, bare-legged boy approached, and saluted Turpin.

"Tis Master Richard Turpin, sir, I doubt not?" he said.

"No other," said the highwayman. "What's your pleasure, my young Romany?"

"I have been following you this hour, sir, with this message from my father, Jasper Griengre."

Turpin tore this missive open, and uttered an exclamation.

"Od's wounds! An old comrade of mine needs my help sorely, Dick. I must ride swiftly to his aid."

"So! I'll come and lend a hand!" said Dick eagerly.

"Nay, lad! I would like nothing better than to have you, but this is a matter in which I must move alone. We shall meet again soon, and I shall have news for you. Wait for me at the Wensley cross-roads by midnight in three days' time. Farewell now, for I spur and spare not!"

"Good luck go with you! I will be there!" called Dick; and, with a wave of his hand, Turpin galloped away down the road, cleared a five-barred gate, and was off across country as straight as the crow flies.

"Now, what under the stars may Turpin be riding at such speed for?" said Dick to himself, as he rode along the North Road at

an easy trot. "Who is it that needs his aid, and why should he not let me come?"

Black Satan shook his ears as if Turpin's departure puzzled him.

"Either way, I shall be blithe when the hour comes for us to meet at the cross-roads. What a staunch, merry rascal it is, and how good a friend in need! Od'so! It takes the sting even from the loss of Faulkbourne and my outlawry to ride knee to knee with him across England. And to think we were near quarrelling with each other not much more than half an hour back!"

Dick laughed, and urged Satan to a canter, as they came upon a breezy down, beyond which lay the dark woods of Danesford.

THE LONELY HUT ON THE MOOR!

"BUT twelve guineas left! Satan, boy, this will not do. We must fill our coffers with a barker in each hand, and I will be blithe to see some gold-bearing magnate riding this way, his mind bent on the shillings he could screw from the poor. Now, a good stout brewer—Hallo! Who slips back among the gorse-bushes?"

Dick was riding on his way to the north, after staying for the night at a small hostelry near Danesford. Passing over the common, he thought he caught sight of a shabby-looking fellow watching him among the whims.

"Pink me, if I like those byway inns! I thought this morning the landlord had some suspicion who I was. In truth, Black Satan and I are becoming too well-known about the country. If mine host has set any man to spy upon me, 'twill be ill for him!"

Dick's lips set grimly, and he watched

The Grim Shadow of the Gallows Gets Nearer and Nearer!

carefully as he rode to see if his movements were followed. For the danger he cared nothing, but treachery was a thing he always punished sorely; and, indeed, there were few by this time who cared to play such tricks upon Dick o' the Roads. Convinced after a time that his suspicions were groundless, he rode on his way to the north, halting for an hour at mid-day for food, and pushing on in the afternoon.

He drew his riding-cloak about him, for night was beginning to fall, the wind was rising, and the most threatening sky Dick had ever seen soon shrouded the setting sun.

"Ods! It looks as though a tempest were brewing. I trust not. A thunderstorm in March is not common, but all the worse when it happens. On, Satan! Let us find shelter before the storm breaks. Yonder is one who will suffer by it. 'Tis an odd time to sit by the roadside."

A solitary figure, despite the gathering storm, sat on the roadside some way ahead. As Dick approached he saw it was an old man, poorly clad, who sat with his head bowed in his hands, oblivious of the threatening sky. So sad and wretched was his attitude that the young highwayman was touched with pity.

"What ails you, good father?" he said, drawing rein. "By the sky, 'tis no time to letter!"

The old man raised his head. "The tempest can do me no worse hurt, sir," he said. "Let it burst. My sorrow is so deep it can be no worse."

"I grieve to hear it," said Dick. "Is it a matter that I can mend? Any help I can give is yours. Perhaps you are in want?"

"'Tis not only money that I lack," said the old man, "but I am homeless. This very day I was cast out from the place I have lived in all my life, my livelihood taken from me, and there is nothing left me but to die!"

"Turned from your home!" exclaimed Dick. "Who did such a thing?"

"'Twas Farmer Bence, of Stamford, who has bought the land round where my old hut stood. He would have my little plot as well, which was mine in freehold, and he schemed long to get it. He has accused me now of stealing two of his lambs, and so cast me out!"

"But you did not steal them!" cried Dick. "Or, even so, how could he claim your land?"

"Nay; but he arranged the evidence so cunningly—for he is a man of great wit—that I dare not answer it in a court of law. 'Tis a hanging, and, though I am innocent, I should die upon the gallows. So he forced me to make over to him my little plot in order that he would not charge me with the theft. I had no choice but to obey, and this morning they seized my poor belongings at the hut, and turned me out to starve!"

"Ods blood!" exclaimed Dick. "This is just such a matter as pleases me to set right! I will present myself to this Farmer Bence in such manner that he will think 'tis the fiend himself has come to claim his own! Come, good father, walk at my stirrup-iron. I will see you righted, and you shall see me teach this man Bence such a lesson as will shake him to the marrow!"

"My thanks to you, sir!" said the old man, rising and looking keenly at Dick. "I see you are a youth of no ordinary parts and courage. How you can benefit me I do not know, but I believe you will do it!"

"You shall see," said Dick. "Now, take me to the house of this man, and I will lay a rare jest before you. I have a plan in my head which promises good sport, so let us not delay."

"Will you not come first to my hut, sir," said the old man, "that you may know I speak the truth?"

"Ay," said Dick, after a moment's thought: "perhaps that will be the better way of it. We will bring the worthy Bence thither, and show him the error of his ways. 'Ods bodikins, but I promise myself some sport to-morrow night! Lead on!"

They made their way over the moor till they reached the slope of a valley, down which they went.

"A plaguey lonely spot, this place of yours!" said Dick.

"I was born in it, and love the lonellness," said the old man. "Yonder is my poor abode—mine no longer, since that cormorant has cheated me of it!"

He pointed out a large thatched building like a barn, standing in a stony ravine.

"Egad!" murmured Dick, as they reached

it. "Doubtless you have a love for it, father; but to a stranger it seems no great loss. I have seen many a cowed that was a palace to it. I wonder, too, 'tis not swept away by floods, for it looks like the bed of a river."

"Centuries ago it may have been," said the old man; "but no water has flowed here in living memory, and the position is sheltered from the winds that sweep the moor."

"Yet it shows signs of flood-water round the walls," said Dick. "But, Od's fish, good father, can you have lived in here?" he added, as they entered. "Why, half the roof is gone!"

"You must understand that Farmer Bence wishes the hut removed," said Dick's guide, "and his men have even now begun to pull it down. The roof was sound yesterday."

"Now, do you listen well to what I say, and act upon it," said Dick.

"I am all attention," said the old man.

"To begin with—Nay, stand where I can see your face. What are you passing behind me for?"

"This!" said the old man.

Dick suddenly felt a pair of powerful arms thrown round him, like a vice, from behind. Then in a moment the whole room was filled with men. They leaped up from behind the straw-sheaves, rushed in by the door, and scrambled through the crazy window. They flung themselves on Dick like one man, and overpowered him.

"Bind him fast!" said the old man.

And Dick was bound hand and foot, securely as ropes could make him. They propped him on his feet against the wall.

The old man advanced slowly, his glittering eyes fixed on the young highwayman.

"Well met, Dick o' the Roads!" he cried.

It was Captain Sweeny.

"This," said the footpad captain, waving his fist round the hut, "is by way of a little lesson to teach you that I always keep my word. I fear, however, you will not live long enough to profit by it!"

Dick, as well as he could for his bonds,

glanced round the hut. The most of Sweeny's followers were there—a very dirty, evil-looking, villainous crew. Many of them Dick recognised as those who had been beaten off in the attack on Faulkbourne, when they were after Turpin, and they laughed in coarse mockery at their captain's plight.

"So I have fallen into the hands of the poultry thieves," said Dick calmly. "You are flying at high game, Captain Sweeny. Take care you do not capture more than you can hold. It had been safer for you to keep to snatching shillings from little girls sent to the village grocer's upon errands, which is a trade that better suits you and your rufflers than this!"

Captain Sweeny gloated upon him with cruel eyes that gleamed and glittered, deep sunk in his head. Triumph and the lust for revenge were written on every line of his swarthy face, and, in spite of Dick's cool contempt for him, he looked what he was—the cunningest and most dangerous knave in England.

"Ten days ago," he said, devouring Dick with his eyes, "I nailed on your door a death-warrant, warning you that your end was near."

"You did," said Dick, "and the kitchen-maids of Faulkbourne used it to light the fires. I have to thank you for it."

"You will sing a softer note ere long," said the footpad, licking his lips. "I have now fulfilled the first part of my promise, and the second part will shortly begin. You esteem yourself a youth of quick wits, I believe, but you are neatly tricked this time."

"You have a certain low cunning which serves you well," said Dick, "and I was off my guard."

"You dog!" broke out the footpad captain, starting forward his eyes burning in his head. "Enough of your tongue! Do you see that you are in my power at last? Cringe, grovel, you dog! Beg for mercy, as befits one who has fallen into my hands! Cower, and pray for your life!"

CAPTAIN SWEENEY MAKES A CAPTURE!



The lieutenant of the gang fixed a black mask roughly over Dick's face. Captain Sweeny bent down and thrust the torch to the piles of straw and furze. The flame caught and blazed up with a crackle. "Gather round, lads! Dick o' the Roads shall sing you to sleep!" cried Sweeny. (See page 8)

Dick laughed in his face.

"Did you think a Neville would so much as blink an eyelid before such low dogs as you?" he said, with rasping contempt.

"You shall pay for that!" said Sweeny, licking his lips again. "You shall scream for mercy! No man has ever crossed my path and lived, nor bearded me and lasted to boast of it! I am Sweeny, you whelp—Sweeny—Sweeny! There is no hamlet in England but trembles at the name of me!"

"Enough of bragging!" said Dick. "Do your worst!"

"You whelp!"

Sweeny smote Dick across the face with all his force, leaving a livid mark upon the young highwayman's cheek and lips.

Dick said nothing, but his eyes glared defiantly, and Sweeny turned to his men.

"Now to your sport, lads! What shall it be—the fire, or the little knife?"

"The fire, captain!" said half a dozen voices, with a hoarse guffaw. "'Tis a cold night, and we shall warm ourselves round it while he grills!"

"Here is a post that will serve for a roasting-jack," said a long, lean rascal, who was plainly Sweeny's lieutenant, "ready driven into the ground."

"Well said, Jack!" cried Sweeny. "Take the whelp and bind him fast against it. Lash him like a hop-pole, and we will wring different music from that tongue of his."

They dragged Dick to the cattle-post in the centre of the barn, and bound him to it so tightly that the cords cut into his wrists and ankles, laughing brutally the while. He gave no sign of pain or fear.

"Bring up those bales of straw and gear," said Sweeny. "Pile them about him—not too thickly, for we do not want too fierce a heat at first. The night is long, and the sport would last us an hour or two."

They made a cross-pile of sheaves round Dick, who looked straight before him, and whose face was motionless as if it had been carved in wood.

Under it his wits were working swiftly. Half a score of plans occurred to him, but he saw no way out. The footpad captain was not fool enough to let himself be tricked of his prey, now he had him-tight.

"They mean to burn me," thought Dick, "and I see no help but to suffer it with what fortitude I may. 'Tis an end of me at last. Heaven give me strength to bear it like a man, for to show fear before such riff-raff as these would be shame too bitter!"

He groaned inwardly at his folly for letting himself be tricked. Yet the trap was a clever one, and well set. It showed a deep knowledge of Dick's ways, for the wrongs of the old man by the roadside was a certain bait to draw the young highwayman into a trap. Dick had not dreamed that Sweeny was in the neighbourhood, nor that he was clever enough a knave to lay such a trap and work it so well.

And now the arrangements were complete, and Sweeny, lighting a torch from a barn lantern that one of the rascals carried, advanced to the pile of sheaves.

"Prepare to die!" he said. "You have a nimble tongue, but it will grow far nimbler when the flames take hold! Each word you have uttered shall be a tongue of fire to gnaw the life from your body!"

HOW SWEENEY'S MEN WARMED THEMSELVES!

SWEENEY stooped to apply the torch, but raised himself again and looked into Dick's face.

"Wait," he said. "I will give you one chance. 'Twill deprive us of some sport, but I am always willing to exchange a ruby for a diamond. Since you took to the roads, you have been riding with Turpin."

Dick made no reply.

"I have a longer score against him than any man in Britain, and, I confess it, he has the strangest luck. So far, he has slipped through my fingers."

Dick laughed savagely.

"Ay, and always will, until one day you will fail to slip through his."

"Bah!" said the footpad. "Not he, nor fifty like him, will turn me from my path. But I own I have found him troublesome. He has come to my knowledge that you are the only living being he trusts. Now, you

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

AT THE MERCY OF THE FLOOD!



The hut melted away as the swirling waters of the flood swept down on it. Bound to the stake, Dick was helpless, and the water rose higher and higher. (See this page.)

may buy your release from the flames if you will tell me where he is and help to bring him into my hands."

"You may set your torch to the pile," returned Dick grimly, "and let the flames mount. It is not our custom on the road to sell each other. As for Turpin, he is out of your reach, and lucky is it for you. Were he to appear in that doorway, with his double pistols cocked, there would be a rare rush of footpads for the window!"

Captain Sweeny swore softly to himself.

"He has chosen the roasting; so much the better sport for us. There is one more thing. Jack, do you search him for the black velvet mask and clap it upon his face. He boasted that, though I might beat Neville of Faulkbourne, Dick o' the Roads was too much for me, so it is as Dick o' the Roads I will burn him. Search, man! It should be in the fob of his jacket."

The lieutenant of the gang put his hand inside Dick's laced coat, and drew out the young highwayman's mask. He fixed it roughly on Dick's face, slipping the band behind his head, and the footpads laughed loudly.

Sweeny bent the knee, and thrust the torch to the bales of straw and furze. The flame caught, and blazed up with a crackle and a flare.

"Gather round, lads! Warm yourselves at the blaze, an' Dick o' the Roads shall sing you to sleep!" said Sweeny.

The men gathered round, flinging taunts at the prisoner, and, with coarse jests and laughter, stretched themselves round the fire. The flames took fierce hold of the bales, and volumes of sparks and smoke arose, but as yet the fire did not reach Dick.

A high wind was roaring overhead, and the long-gathering storm had burst at last. The thunder crashed and rolled, and torrents of rain swept in through the open roof; but no rain could put out the fire of straw and furze.

The storm howled and the thunder-claps echoed like great guns down the narrow valley. The fury of the elements seemed a fitting accompaniment to the tragic end of the young highwayman's life.

Such a pall of greasy, curling smoke rose from the first of the fire that Dick gasped and fought for breath. Sweeny's voice rang out above the roar of the wind that raged round the hut.

"Pull the damp bales away; they will not serve. We do not want the whelp choked with smoke before the fire reaches him! Cast on drier sheaves from the far end of the barn, and let us see the flames lick his ribs!"

The smoking bales were pulled away and drier ones cast on. These took flame at once, and Dick felt the full heat of the fire mount up to him and grip his body.

In a few moments the flames would have him for their own. Dick set his teeth and dug his nails into his palms, and prayed silently. Through the glow of the fire he saw Sweeny's evil face, gloating upon him with greedy eyes, and the hulking forms of the ruffians lying round the blaze, watching him cynically. He wondered if, when the agony gripped him, he could still keep his tongue between his teeth, and die silently, like a Neville.

He felt the skirts of his riding-coat catch the flames, and the bite of the fire reached him. Dazed and bewildered, fighting for breath, he was still conscious of the storm that raged overhead with redoubled fury. Such a crash of thunder, and such a burst of rain fell, as only it can fall on the wild Yorkshire woods.

A dull roaring was heard in the distance, growing nearer, fast as a galloping horse. The men round the fire suddenly rose up. The floor was a foot deep in water, which seemed to rise from nowhere, running swiftly from end to end of the hut.

Still the fire blazed, but the distant roar became louder. It seemed to burst upon the hut like the waves of the sea. Oaths and shouts arose among the footpads.

"A cloud-burst up the hills!" shouted Sweeny. "The valley's flooded! Run for the high ground!"

Before the man could reach the door, the walls of the hut shook, collapsed, and were borne down before a great torrent of water. It swept out the fire with a hiss and a rush, and Dick gave a wild, heartfelt cry of relief as the cold flood enveloped him and saved him from the fire.

But his joy was short-lived. The hut melted away in sections; the footpads were swept off their feet and swirled along on the roaring waters, crying and screaming as they were borne away. Sweeny's voice called hoarsely on his men to save him, but none answered—each was fighting for his life.

Saved from the fire, Dick found himself sacrificed to a quicker death. Bound to the stake, helpless and immovable, the flood claimed him for its victim. Down it came, higher and higher yet, till it soared deep over his head, and blotted him out from the land of the living.

When the dark water swept over his head, Dick gave up all hope, for the span of his life was to be counted by seconds.

The black flood roared in his ears, and inky darkness surrounded him. He might perchance have blessed the kindly water that, even while it killed him, saved him from a fate ten times more horrible, but the spirit is ever unwilling to leave the body, and Dick had no such thoughts. A hundred thoughts seemed to flash through his brain in those brief seconds, but he could only struggle like a tethered colt.

He had taken a deep breath as the flood enveloped him, that would give him life for a few seconds longer, but now the water was over him he believed his end had come at last.

Suddenly he felt himself sway forward. A ray of hope shot through him. The post was moving! Already loosened in its foundations by the water, the tremendous pressure of the racing torrent was tearing it from its hold. Dick felt as if his lungs must burst for want of breath, but he made a mighty effort, and flung all his weight forward. The force of the torrent lifted itself, and, to his unspeakable joy, Dick felt the post be bound to, leave its foundations and free itself.

Post and prisoner both shot to the surface, and Dick drew breath with a great gasp. He caught a glimpse of the dark sky and the flicker of the lightning, as if he were suddenly cast up from the dead world into the land of the living again.

Over and over he rolled, whirled along on the breast of the torrent, now drawing deep breaths, now spluttering in the water. The valley widened, and the flood became calmer

Dick Turpin, Highwayman—A King Without a Kingdom!

and less foaming, but still Dick was swept along at a giddy speed.

He blessed the post to which he was bound, for in his exhausted state he would never have kept up in that raging flood without it. A little while before it had held him to meet his death, but now it acted as a lifebuoy, and kept him above water. He floated along on his side, the wooden bank bound to his back, and for the moment, at least, his life was saved.

"Am I going to get out of this alive?" he thought. "Has Sweeny lost his prey for once?"

The cold was gripping him to the marrow, and he felt numb and helpless. The black velvet mask was gone; it had been washed from his face by the water. When he first came to the surface he heard faint cries and shouts echoing through the darkness, doubtless from Sweeny's men, but now all was still.

"Even if I die," thought Dick grimly, "I am glad to yield up my life under the flood and the storm rather than at the hands of that vile footpad and his knavish crew!"

Gradually he felt his senses leave him. A numb, sleepy feeling grew upon his brain; it seemed as if an icy hand were laid upon his heart. The on-sweeping torrent, strengthening, rolled him over and over; his head struck against a spur of rock, and he knew no more.

The first thing Dick was conscious of was a strong burning in his throat, and he coughed violently, and opened his eyes.

"Are ye better?" said a gruff voice. "Take another nip."

A second dose of raw, rasping liquid was poured down Dick's throat. It scorched him like fire, but it made the blood pulsate quicker in his veins, and he looked feebly round. He was in a rocky cave, dimly lit, yet strangely warm and close.

He looked up suddenly into a face that was bending over him—a swarthy, ill-shaven face. It belonged to a man who was holding a tin pannikin, which he put to Dick's lips again. In a flash Dick found his wits.

"Hold, enough, friend!" gasped Dick. "I thank you from my heart, but that liquor of yours has done its work. Another dose would burn my inside out!"

"Ay, thou'll do now," said the man, putting away the pannikin. He squatted down in front of Dick, and fixing a pair of surly, penetrating eyes upon the young highwayman, stared at him for some time without saying a word.

Dick, feeling revived, sat up and made a rapid survey of his surroundings. He was in a large, low cavern, with rocky walls and roof, and a floor which sloped down towards a narrower tunnel which looked like the entrance.

A charcoal fire, giving no smoke, was burning on a large open hearth, and over it was a great iron tripod. In one part of

the cave were three large iron vessels, several tubs, and a number of wide metal pipes, mixed with other gear. At the upper end stood a vessel like an enormous flat butter-tub with a lid, big enough to hold a couple of men. A strong, drowsy smell filled the place.

All this Dick took in in the glance of an eye, and it puzzled him. The man was watching him carefully as he glanced round. Dick did not know what to make of it, and, finding his voice, he turned to the man.

"How did I come here?" he said.

"I found tha' floatin' down on t' flood-water, tied to a baulk, an' I pulled thee out an' browt thee in here," said the man, scanning Dick from top to toe.

All the events of the night came back to Dick with a rush.

"Then I owe you my life," he said. "You will find me grateful, and I will find means to do you as good a turn as you have done me. I never forget a service."

He took another glance round, for the puzzle of his surroundings was still uppermost in his mind, and Dick, as the dangers of his calling made needful, always liked to know what was afoot.

"Where am I?" he said. "What place is this?"

The man's eyes grew cunning. "If tha' doesn't know, tha'll do well enow wi'out tellin'," he said grimly. "Don't seek to learn too much, an' tha'll find it healthier!"

Dick's suspicions were aroused at this, and one more look round confirmed them. He had the key to the mystery now.

He was in an illicit "still"—a hiding-place in the wolds where "potheen" and raw whisky were made to supply the low inns on the moorland roads, and cheat the King's Customs.

Dick thought it no very savoury trade, and he knew what a low reputation the men who worked it bore.

Plainly, the fire was used for brewing, the tubes and barrels were part of the apparatus, and the huge butter-tub was a vat, full of the raw spirit.

"A mighty dark spot I've fallen into," thought Dick; "however, 'tis no affair of mine, and the man saved my life."

He wanted to thank his preserver more heartily, but, somehow, the words stuck in his throat. He did not like the look of the man at all.

"How shall I repay you for what you have done, friend?" said Dick. "Is there aught I can do for you?"

"I'll take whatever price tha' sets on tha'self," said the man, shrugging his shoulders, looking as though he did not believe Dick had anything.

Rather relieved that it was only a question of money by which he would be rid of the man, Dick felt in his pockets.

But his purse was in the left holster of his saddle, as was Dick's custom to carry it on a long ride, and Black Satan was—Heaven knows where.

"I fear for the moment I have no money," he said; "but you shall not lose by that."

"Ay; by the way I found thee, tied to a horse-post, I reckoned tha'd have little!" sneered the man. "An' if it's a fair question, who put thee there?"

"A very dirty knave, who has a grudge against me, bound me to it by way of revenge," said Dick.

Knowing nothing of his man, he thought it safer to leave out Captain Sweeny's name. The man made no answer.

"These are wild parts," said Dick, "and as I have already suffered to-night through being unready with weapon, by your leave I will see that it doesn't happen twice."

He reached into the flap of his riding-coat, and took out a small single-barrelled pistol which, taught by experience, Dick had taken to carrying, beside the one in his holsters.



SWEENEY had been so full of his triumph and his lust for revenge that he had not troubled to search Dick after he was tied up, and the little pistol remained to him.

It was, of course, soaked through by the water. Dick sat up coolly enough, drew the wet charge, cleaned and dried the little weapon carefully, and reloaded it from a small watertight powder-horn he always carried.

The distiller watched him closely as he rammed the bullet home and primed the pan. "A very proper precaution," said the man, rising. "No lad i' these parts knows when he may need it. An' now thou had best wait an' soop a bit afore thou goes on. There's a stew simmerin' on t' fire, and 'twill soon be agate to eat of."

Dick thanked his host, and, feeling a deep drowsiness creeping over him, lay back upon the floor again.

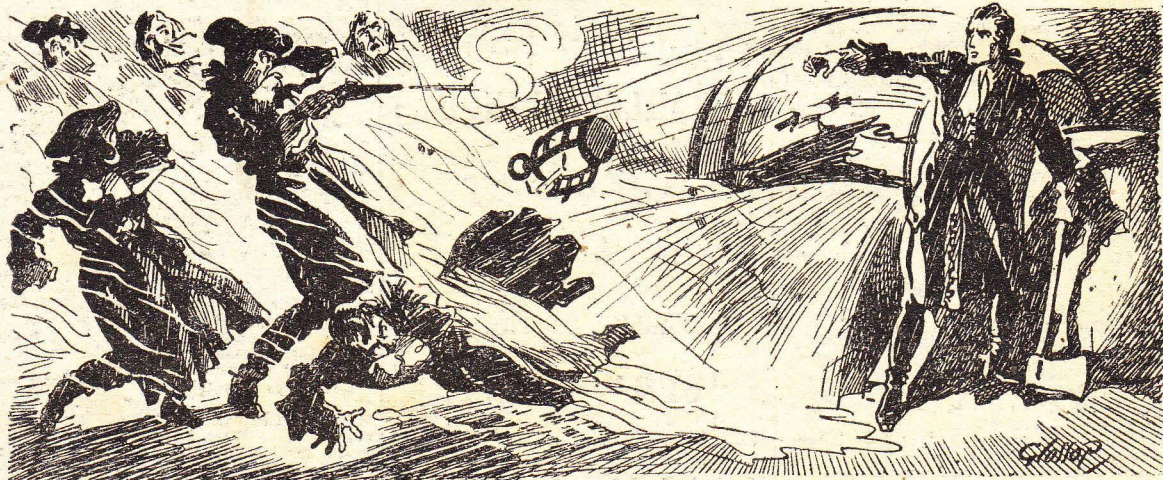
The sleep of exhaustion overcame him almost at once, and he dropped off, the pistol-butt still in his hand, and began to snore softly.

Hardly had he closed his eyes, when a form stole quietly into the cave from the tunnel below. It was a roughly-clad man in a fur cap, and he halted on seeing Dick.

The still-keeper laid his finger on his lips, and signalled to the stranger to come forward noiselessly.

"What ha' thou gotten here, Steve?" whispered the newcomer as he joined Dick's host.

THE STREAM OF FIRE!



With three crashing blows of the axe Dick broke in the side of the great spirit vat, and an avalanche of liquid burst forth. Then he dashed the large lamp into the flowing spirit, and instantly it caught alight. The torrent of fire swept down upon Sweeny and his men. A STARTLING INCIDENT FROM NEXT WEEK'S INSTALMENT.

"A prize, I'm thinkin'," said the other, under his breath. "He came down on t' flood-water, tied hand an' foot to a cattle-pest, an' higher his death than he's ever seen. I reckon!"

"Sitha!" exclaimed the other. "What did tha' pull him out for?"

"He ha' got good clothes to his back," said the still-keeper. "There should be somethin' to be made by him."

"Ay, na doot," said the other contemptuously. "else he might ha' stayed i' t' watter for me!"

The stranger, who was the swartly man's partner in the still, bent over the sleeping form of the young highwayman.

"He's been awake, then?" he said, pointing to the pistol.

"He drew t' thing out an' reloaded it; an' by t' way he handled it 'twas plain to me he knows how to use a barker."

"Ah!" said Jack. "Well, man, tha's done a good evenin's work. I can guess well who t' sub is. 'Tis one that Sweeny's after."

"Does tha' say!" exclaimed the still-keeper.

"I ha' seen two o' Sweeny's men to-night—half-drowned by t' flood, they were—an' they told me a gay bit o' news. Sweeny had a young highwayman by the ears that he's sworn vengeance on, an' was goin' to burn him up at t' old hut. There was a bit kind up in t' hills, an' t' flood came down and washed 'em all out. 'T' whelp was drowned, they said, bein' tied top to t' post. But, by what thou ha' told me, this should be him."

"Ay, thou ha' nicked it!" muttered the other. "That's who he is. An' yon's good news, too. What will Sweeny pay for him?"

"A good price. Leave that to me!"

"Happen we might get more from t' young 'un to get him clear; or we might make somethin' by him, an' then turn him over to Sweeny after it," said the still-keeper.

"Nay! Does thou want to fall foul o' Sweeny, thou fule?" returned the other sharply. "He's no man to play tricks on. He's a good friend to the likes o' us, too, an' we'll sell this young calant to him."

"Tis but fair they should pay a price, after war trouble, an' we'll bargain to see the sport, too, when Sweeny settles w' him. Man, t' captain's just an artist at that sort o' work. We'll enjoy ourselves!"

"'Tis a bit dull here in t' cave," said the other, rubbing his hands. "an' lang since I had a bit o' fun. Shall we tak' him to Sweeny, or let Sweeny fetch him?"

"There's no better place than this," said Jack. "We'll be able to sell a whcen refreshments while t' play-actin' goes forward, too. Business combined w' pleasure, so to say. I'll go to Sweeny an' get his price before I let him know where t' whelp is. He sleeps sound, I see."

"He'll be no trouble," said the still-keeper. "Shall we put a rope round him?"

"Leave that to Sweeny."

"Or take yon pistol from under his paw while he sleeps?"

"Nay; it would mak' him suspicious. Better let him lie till Sweeny's here to take him; 'twill be less trouble. As to yon pistol, I'll show tha' how to settle that."

He stepped to a water-butt in the corner of the cave, took up a little water in a tin cup, and, stealing gently to Dick's side, poured it over the pan of the pistol.

"But suppose he wakens, an' wants to be goin' afore Sweeny comes?"

"Then tha've got to keep him here. Do it by persuasion if tha' can; an' if not, tha' can easy settle him."

"Ay, or a dozen like him!" said the big man scornfully.

"I'll just be goin' now. See, I'll show Sweeny an' his lads the way in below there, an' I'll enter mysel' by the upper passage, through the day-ole."

"Go on, then; t' quicker t' better."

"Half an hour will do it—maybe less. I know where to find Sweeny, but he'll ha' to collect his men."

"What, to mak' a job o' one young puppy that's a ready too stiff to stir or bite? Fut, man!"

"Tha' knows what Sweeny is," said Jack. And he left the cave.

(Dick has fallen into the merciless hands of new enemies. Will they carry out their plans of handing the young highwayman over to Captain Sweeny? Will Dick escape? Next week's instalment of our powerful serial will thrill you!)

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

THE TEAM THAT BAGGY BUILT!

(Continued from page 5.)

Huggins and Coggins went merrily on their way, till they came within shooting distance. Then Huggins, kicking with full force, sent the ball crashing past Fatty Wynn into the net.

"Goal!"

"Well played, Huggins!" said Baggy Trimble, going up to the successful marksman. "But please don't be so selfish in future. Didn't you see me waiting for a pass?"

"Oh, ah!"

"Then why didn't you centre the ball?"

"Axin' your pardon, Master Trimble, but I knew you'd bungle it if I did!"

"None of your cheek!" said Baggy wrathfully.

Tom Merry & Co. looked rather gium as the ball was kicked off again from the centre of the field. They were as dwarfs opposed to giants, and they could make very little headway against their hefty opponents.

The Rainbow Rovers did not scruple to use their weight. They bowled their slim opponents over like skittles, mostly by means of vigorous but fair shoulder charging, but sometimes by sheer brutality.

Darrel was keeping his eyes open for a glaring case of fouling, and presently he saw one.

Levison managed to dash away on the wing, and he dodged a number of opponents by means of tricky footwork. Suddenly he cut in towards goal, and found himself in the penalty area, with only the goalie to beat.

Just as Levison was about to shoot, Bill Brewer came charging up, making as much noise as a squad of cavalry, and he deliberately hurled himself upon Levison from behind.

The junior went crashing to earth with a yell of indignation.

"You cad! That was a rotten foul!"

Instantly Darrel blew his whistle, and awarded St. Jim's a penalty-kick.

Talbot, a sure shot, was entrusted with the kick, and he drove the ball into the net, making the scores level.

After this, there was a succession of fouls. Harry Huggins & Co., who had been ejected from the Wayland League, for persistent foul play, were incapable of playing clean football. They employed the most shady tactics, and Darrel grew very angry.

He awarded four more penalties to St. Jim's, at different times. Three were converted by Talbot, and the other was saved by George Grubb, the burly lout who kept goal for the Rainbow Rovers.

Tom Merry's team now led by four goals to one.

The St. Jim's players were in sorry plight by this time. Most of them were bruised from head to foot. Two of them, Figgins and Harry Noble, had to leave the field owing to injuries.

Darrel beckoned to Baggy Trimble.

"I don't know where you managed to dig up this team from," he said. "I am sick and tired of cautioning these bullying louts. If there is one more case of fouling, I shall order the match to be abandoned."

Baggy told his men what Darrel had said, and urged them to "go steady." But his words were wasted on Harry Huggins and the others.

The climax came when Tom Merry was badly brought down when in the act of shooting. It was a particularly bad foul, for which the burly Bill Brewer was responsible.

Darrel blew a shrill blast on his whistle, and ordered hostilities to cease.

"The match is abandoned!" he declared. "If I allowed it to proceed, I've no doubt there would be some broken limbs."

Baggy Trimble was simply furious with his men. He had paid them five shillings apiece, and purchased their equipment, and they had let him down like this! By their brutal tactics they had given away four goals, and caused the match to come to an untimely end.

Baggy flourished his fist in the faces of his fellow-players.

"You beastly low-down hooligan!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "I'll sack the whole jolly lot of you! You're not footballers at all. You're a set of hobbledehoys! I don't want anything more to do with you. You can quit!"

These remarks roused the hooligans to anger. They had looked upon their engagement with Trimble as a good thing. Five shillings a match was a sum worth having. And now they were sacked, and their player-manager had washed his hands of them.

Harry Huggins turned to his followers.

"Collar 'im, mates!" he shouted hoarsely.

Baggy Trimble was obliged to flee for dear life. He dashed away in the direction of the School House, his fat little legs going like clockwork, and the footballers in full cry after him.

"Arter 'im!"

"Clump 'im!"

"Thump 'im!"

"Bump 'im!"

Baggy Trimble, not wishing to be clumped and thumped and bumped, ran as he had never run in his life before. Fortunately, he was well acquainted with the geography of St. Jim's, and his pursuers were not. Baggy rushed breathlessly into a convenient hiding-place, and there he remained until the hue-and-cry was over.

When Baggy crawled out of his retreat, he found that Harry Huggins & Co. had taken their departure. And he fervently hoped that he had seen the last of them.

The fat junior's first attempt to bring about the discomfiture of Tom Merry & Co. had ended disastrously.

But Baggy was not finished yet. Not by any means. He still had money, and he still believed that money could accomplish everything. There were more ways than one of making Tom Merry & Co. sing small; and Baggy Trimble retired thoughtfully to his study, in order to map out a fresh plan of campaign.

THE END.

(There will be another magnificent new long tale of the famous chums of St. Jim's in next week's issue.)

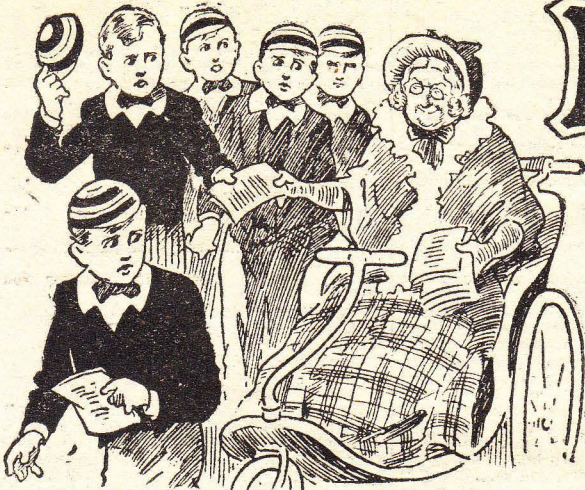
A Magnificent Free Real Autographed Photo of CHARLES PRINGLE

is given away with this week's issue of the "GEM" LIBRARY.

PRICE 2d. 28 PAGES.

The Title That is on Everybody's Lips—"Stand and Deliver!"

A SHOCK FOR ROOKWOOD! Dealing with the sensational arrival at Rookwood of Arthur Lovell's Great-Aunt Georgina!



Lovell's Visitor!

A Splendid, Long Complete Story, dealing with the adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood. By OWEN CONQUEST.

(Author of the Rookwood Tales appearing in the "Boys' Friend" every week.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Rough on Lovell!

"Oh crumbs!" Lovell of the Fourth Form at Rookwood uttered that exclamation in a dismal tone. He was sitting in the end study, the famous apartment which he shared with Jimmy Silver, Newcome, and Raby, the leaders of the Fourth Form at Rookwood.

Lovell had an open letter in his hand, which he was perusing with a decidedly doleful face.

"My only hat! She's coming!" Jimmy Silver looked up from the Latin grammar which he was conning over hastily before going over to morning classes.

"What's up, Lovell?" "Phew! My only aunt!" Lovell's face was long as he gave a lugubrious whistle, and his chums looked at him with some concern.

Arthur Edward Lovell was a sunny-natured fellow, and it was not like him to be down in the dumps.

"What's up, fathead?" repeated Jimmy Silver. "Nothing wrong, I hope?" "My only Great-aunt Georgina!"

"No bad news from home?" inquired Newcome.

"Oh crumbs! She's coming!" Jimmy Silver exchanged exasperated glances with Newcome and Raby.

"What on earth are you talking about, idiot!" he exclaimed warmly.

"My—my only aunt—"

"What do you mean, ass?"

"My only Great-aunt Georgina!"

The chums of the Fourth laid down their grammars wrathfully, and gathered threateningly round the muttering Lovell.

"You—you dummy! Will you tell us what's the matter?" roared Jimmy Silver, shaking his chum by the arm. "Out with it!"

"Go ahead, old son!"

"On the ball!"

Lovell looked round somewhat absently at the expectant faces of his three chums, almost as if he had only just noticed them.

"I—I—She's coming!"

"Who's coming?" roared Jimmy Silver, shaking his chum's arm more violently.

"Tell us who's coming, and what's the matter, anyway, you frabjous cuckoo, or—or we'll jolly well bump you!"

"Hear, hear!" chorused Newcome and Raby, in a breath.

"Mum-m-my only Great-aunt Georgina!"

"You silly chump!" shrieked Jimmy Silver.

"If you can't talk sense, we'll jolly well teach you! Gather round, chaps!"

"What-ho!"

Newcome and Raby gathered round, and laid violent hands on Arthur Edward Lovell, and there was a heavy bump on the floor of the end study.

Bump!

"Ooooh! Ow! Wharrer you up to?" yelled Lovell. "What's the matter with you, you silly duffers?"

"Why don't you talk some sense, then,

dummy?" demanded Jimmy Silver heatedly. "What are you grousing at—tell us, can't you?"

"I keep telling you, you frabjous chumps!" he gasped. "She's coming—" "Who's coming?" roared Jimmy Silver & Co., with one voice.

"My great-aunt is!" howled Lovell. "Wha-at!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. fell back and gazed at their chum blankly. Lovell sat up on the floor, dusty and rumped, his face crimson with indignation and exertion.

"My Great-aunt Georgina's coming!" he hooted. "She's coming here to-day! Haven't I been telling you chumps so all along?"

"M-my hat!"

"You—you imbeciles! I kept telling you—"

"Well, I'm blessed!"

"You—you utter dummies—"

"Jumping Jupiter!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. gazed at their indignant chum with a blank stare that was almost idiotic in its dismay.

Lovell rose to his feet slowly, dusting his nether garments, and attempting to readjust his collar and tie.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The study literally rang with mirth in which Lovell could not help joining.

"You—you villains!" gasped Lovell, at last. "I'm sore and I'm fearfully dusty, and it is only five minutes to classes! Come along and help me to clean myself up in the bath-room!"

Jimmy Silver, wiping his eyes, clapped him on the shoulder.

"Right-ho, old scout! And you can tell us all about your Great-aunt Georgina in the Form-room."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Fistical Four, still chuckling, scudded down the passage to the bathroom for a quick clean-up.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Caught Out!

AS it happened, Mr. Bootles was a little late in getting into the Fourth Form-room that morning, and Lovell had time to explain matters to his chums.

The letter which had so perturbed him had conveyed the information that his great-aunt was arriving that very morning on a visit to her "dearest Arty."

"Miss Muffelbury—that's my great-aunt, you know—is an old dear, really, but she doesn't quite understand boys," exclaimed Lovell, with a rather rueful smile. "She thinks we ought to be treated like infants in arms, and expects all schoolboys to behave like the giddy hero in 'Eric; or, Little by Little'."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"She'll probably bring a lot of little

pamphlets with her, telling us how to be good boys, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"She's rather a funny-looking old lady, too, with side-curls and—and things," pursued Lovell, colouring somewhat. "Of course, I have to play up to her; I'm awfully fond of her, really, you know."

"Quite so! But you are afraid she may create a bit of a sensation at Rookwood," grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha, ha."

"Rely on us, old man!" said Jimmy heartily. "We'll back you up, and help you entertain the old lady—won't we, chaps?"

"Rather!" came from Raby and Newcome heartily.

"And it any duffer has the awful cheek to try to rag Lovell's aunt—great-aunt, I mean—we'll snatch him baldheaded!" went on Jimmy Silver, looking round warningly at the Fourth-Formers, some of whom had gathered round curiously to hear about Lovell's great-aunt.

"Hear, hear!" said Newcome solemnly. "We don't allow jokers to take any liberties with our great-aunt!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We shall have to run down to the station directly after morning lessons to meet her train," said Lovell to his chums.

"We'll all come down and escort her up, old man," said Jimmy Silver heartily.

"Yes; better all come down to help shove the bathchair," said Lovell.

"Wha-wha-a-a-at!"

"The—the bathchair!"

"The—the which?"

Lovell turned red under his chums' accusing eyes.

"Ye-e-e-s; you—you see—"

"Is your aunt—sorry, great-aunt—coming in a bathchair?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

Lovell nodded apologetically.

"Yes, old man. You see—"

"All the way from London in a bathchair!" said Raby. "My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, ass!" said Lovell warmly. "She's bringing it with her on the train to this station. She's a bit lame, you see, chaps."

"Oh!"

"Then it's up to us to pull her up to Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver cheerfully. "We'll do it in style, too!"

"What-ho!"

"He, he, he!"

It was a snigger from behind Jimmy Silver, and Jimmy swung round sharply, to find Peele, Lattrey, and Gower—the three black sheep of the Fourth Form—with ill-natured grins on their faces.

They had evidently been listening to the tale of Lovell's great-aunt with all their ears, and it seemed to amuse them.

Jimmy Silver frowned.

"What are you sniggering at?" he exclaimed sharply.

Peele sniggered again. "He, he! It's funny!" he grinned. "If you three little Erics are going to bring in an old geyser—and in a bathchair, too—Yaroo!"

Peele broke off with a howl, as Jimmy Silver's grasp fell on his shoulder and yanked him away from his two friends.

Jimmy Silver was frowning, and Raby and Newcome gathered round the wriggling Peele with dark faces.

"Here—Ow! Leggo, you rotter!" shouted Peele. "What the—"

"You can't help being a cad, Peele!" said Jimmy Silver. "But we can teach you to speak respectfully of Lovell's aunt—"

"Great-aunt!" breathed Lovell. "Leggo!" howled Peele, struggling in Jimmy Silver's grasp. "I didn't—I wasn't—"

"Bump him!" said Raby.

Bump!

Violent hands were laid on Peele by the angry chums, and he went to the floor with a bump.

"Ow! Oh! You rotters—"

"Cave!"

It was a sudden warning call from Putty Grace, and there was a general scramble of the Fourth-Formers to their seats.

Jimmy Silver & Co. released Peele as if he had suddenly become red-hot.

But it was too late.

"Boys!"

As the stern voice fell upon their ears, Jimmy Silver & Co. bethought them, somewhat belatedly, of the fact that they were in their class-room, and they almost shivered.

For the voice was that of Dr. Chisholm himself—the headmaster of Rookwood, who stood at the door with Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth Form.

"Boys!"

The Head's tone was almost awful as his stern gaze took in the disorderly scene. Mr. Bootles blinked at his Form through his spectacles, in horrified amazement.

"Silver! Lovell! Raby! Newcome! What does this mean?"

"Ahem!"

"You—you see, sir—"

"It—it's like this, sir—"

Jimmy Silver & Co. tailed off lamely under the Head's terrific gaze.

"I'm surprised—surprised and displeased, Silver," said Dr. Chisholm severely. "You four boys will each write out the following sentence one hundred times: 'I must be more circumspect in regard to my conduct in the Form-room.' You will stay in after morning lessons until you have completed the task."

"Oh, sir!"

"You may go to your seats."

"But—but if you please, sir—" stammered Jimmy Silver and Lovell together, looking at one another in dismay.

"Go to your seats at once!" snapped Dr. Chisholm. "Mr. Bootles!"

The sharpness of the Head's tone made the flustered Form master jump.

"Sir—h'm!—yes, Dr. Chisholm!"

"Will you be kind enough to see that the imposition I have given these boys is properly written out?"

Mr. Bootles bowed nervously.

"Certainly, sir! By all means, Dr. Chisholm!"

"Thank you!"

And with a stern glance at the Fourth-Formers, who were now sitting very quiet indeed, Dr. Chisholm rustled out.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked at each other blankly.

Their feelings were too deep for words. Their luck was out, with a vengeance! Dr. Chisholm had spoken, and it was only too evident that he was not to be argued with. The imposition he had so generously handed out to them would have to be done, and Jimmy Silver & Co.'s kindly plan of meeting Lovell's Great-aunt Georgina at the station and conveying that lady up to the school in her bathchair was evidently "off"—very much so.

Lovell gave Jimmy Silver an appealing glance.

Jimmy leaned towards him.

"You'll have to get someone else to go. THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

old man," he said, in a cautious whisper.

"Perhaps Putty—Ahem!"

He broke off short as Mr. Bootles fixed his eye upon him.

"Silver!"

The little Form master was somewhat on edge that morning; not unnaturally, and he was evidently keeping a sharper eye than usual upon his Form. He rapped out Jimmy Silver's name with quite unvoiced sharpness.

"Sir!"

Jimmy Silver's expression was quite lamb-like in its innocence.

"You are talking to Lovell, Silver!"

"Oh, sir!" murmured Jimmy.

Mr. Bootles eyed the innocent-looking junior severely.

"If I have to speak to you again this morning, Silver, I shall have recourse to the cane! You have already caused trouble enough—and more than enough!"

And Jimmy Silver subsided—wherein he was undoubtedly wise.

But Lovell had taken his hint.

Under cover of his exercise-book, and keeping a wary eye on Mr. Bootles the while, he hastily scribbled a note and managed to toss it, unobserved, into the hands of Putty—otherwise Teddy Grace. Grace was a comparatively new junior in the Fourth Form at Rookwood, but he had already made his mark, as it were—principally in the direction of practical jokes, at which he was an adept. But he was always cheery, and good-natured, too, and Lovell felt little doubt that Putty would do his best to help him, in view of the unfortunate circumstances of the imposition by going to meet Great-aunt Georgina at the station.

Putty read the note carefully, and then gave Lovell a grin and a cheery nod. He evidently accepted the commission, and Arthur Edward Lovell felt a little comforted. If he and his chums worked hard at their imposition, they would get it done by dinner-time, he reflected; and Putty, with Great-aunt Georgina's bathchair to propel would not be likely to arrive at Rookwood much before then. So all might yet be well.

If Lovell had not been quite so occupied with his own worries and with avoiding the eye of Mr. Bootles, he might have noticed that Peele, too, was busy writing a note, which he passed over first to Lattrey and then to Gower, his two cronies in Study No. 1. And by the way the precious trio nodded and grinned over that note, it was pretty safe to assume that there was some ill-natured mischief afoot between them.

But Lovell did not observe these signs. Had he done so he would probably not have felt quite so easy in his mind as to the reception of his Great-aunt Georgina when she arrived on her visit to Rookwood!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Putty Grace Gets the Sack!

"GOT the sack, Lattrey?"

"Yes."

"Get the string, Gower?"

"What-ho!"

"Good!" grinned Peele. "I've got the key of the wood-shed, so now we sha'n't be long!"

Morning lessons had been over five minutes, and Peele, Lattrey, and Gower, having bolted at once from the Fourth Form class-room, were now gathered together behind the wood-shed, evidently waiting for someone.

A footpath led along the back of the school buildings at Rookwood, and ran past the wood-shed, and on across the fields in the direction of Coombe Station. In dry weather it was often used as a short cut to the station by the Rookwood boys.

Peele & Co. were evidently expecting it to be so used on this occasion.

They had not long to wait.

A cheery whistle sounded along the path from the direction of the school, and the sound of footsteps approaching at a steady trot.

"Look out—here he comes!" breathed Peele. "Have that sack ready, Lattrey!"

"What-ho!"

Nearer and nearer came the whistle, and the footsteps to the place where the precious trio were lying in wait behind the wood-shed.

Peele and Gower stood crouched, ready to spring; and Lattrey stood by with a large and dirty sack. Lattrey had a grin on his face.

There was another moment of tense waiting, and then the owner of the cheery whistle

and of the footsteps suddenly appeared round the corner of the wood-shed.

It was Teddy Grace, his hands in his pockets, and proceeding at a steady trot down the path.

"Now!" hissed Peele.

"On to him!"

Peele and Gower sprang on to the unsuspecting Grace like a whirlwind, and that junior, sturdy as he was, went down like a ninepin, the whistle frozen on his lips.

Struggling violently, he rolled on the ground, his two assailants on top of him.

"Sit on him!" panted Peele. "Hurry up with that sack, Lattrey!"

"Here it is!"

"Jam it over his head!"

There was a muffled howl from Teddy Grace as the dirty sack was dragged over his head, while his arms were pinned closely to his sides.

"Ow! Yaroo! Geroooh! Wharrer you at?"

"Pull it over him!"

"Yowp! Takeitoff! Ooooh!"

"Now the string!" panted Peele

"Here you are!"

"Grooh!"

"Tie the beggar up!"

Peele & Co. had jammed the sack well over the unfortunate Teddy Grace's head, and pulled it right down to his feet. And they now proceeded to wind the whole—junior, sack, and all—round and round with stout twine until they had produced a passable imitation of an Egyptian mummy.

"Into the wood-shed with him—quick!" panted Peele.

The three rascals lifted the mummy—which was kicking and wriggling and gurgling in a very un-mummylike fashion—and rushed it into the wood-shed, where they deposited it, with a bump, on a pile of faggots.

"You stay there a bit, young feller-melad!" grinned Lattrey.

"Ooooh! Lemme gerrout!"

"Some other time, old son! Ta-ta!"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peele & Co. ran out of the wood-shed and slammed the door, and took the path towards Coombe Station.

"All serene, so far, I think!" grinned Lattrey, glancing hurriedly round. "No one about to notice anything."

"All very well for you to grin!" grumbled Peele. "The young rotter caught me a fearful whack in the eye!"

"And me on the nose!" mumbled Gower. "Ow!"

"Never mind, we've dished him and those asses, Silver & Co., too, I think," said Lattrey, suppressing his grins. "We must buck up, though, and get down to the station. We don't want to be late meeting our dear Great-aunt Georgina!"

"He, he, he!"

And the three young reprobates broke into a trot.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Miss Georgina Muffebury Arrives:

"PORTER!"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"Is this Coombe Station, porter?"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"Then I will alight! Pray assist me, porter!"

"Yes, ma'am; certainly ma'am!"

"And, oh, porter!"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"There is my bathchair in the guard's van; please get it out at once!"

"Certainly, ma'am!"

"Please make haste, porter!"

"Yes, ma'am!"

"And be very careful of my bathchair, porter!"

"Oh, yes, ma'am!"

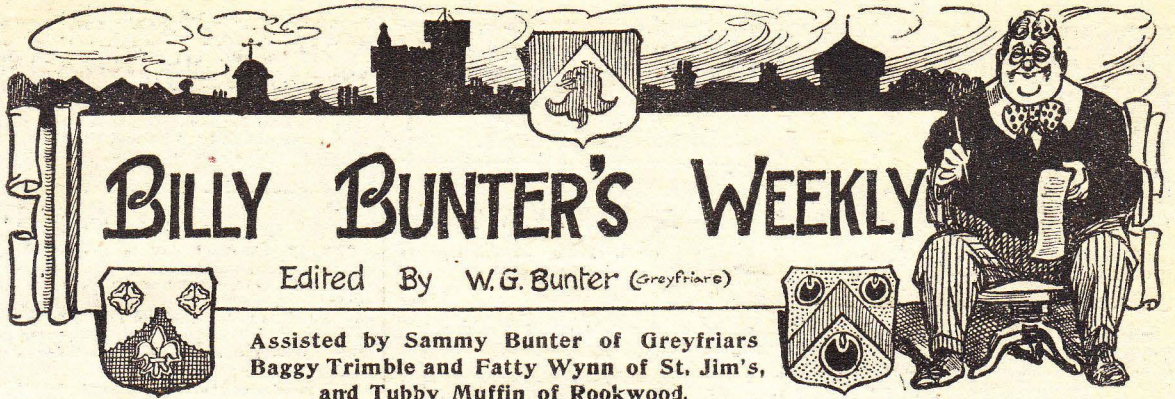
And the obliging porter of Coombe Station—the only one the little station possessed—hurried off to obey as many as possible of these instructions, with his head in a whirl!

The twelve-twenty train from London had arrived at Coombe Station, and almost the only passenger to alight was an old lady—a little old lady, with a pleasant face surrounded by the old-fashioned side-curls, who walked with the aid of a stick.

Peele & Co., who walked on to the platform just as the train came in, spotted her at once.

(Continued on page 16.)

"Borrowed Glory!" is the Title of 'Next Week's Rookwood Yarn!



BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

Edited By W.G. Bunter (Greyfriars)

Assisted by Sammy Bunter of Greyfriars
Baggy Trimble and Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's,
and Tubby Muffin of Rookwood.

Supplement No. 112.

Week Ending March 3rd, 1923.

EDITORIAL!

By BILLY BUNTER.

My dear Readers,—One of the first men to set the fashion in keeping diaries was Samuel Pepys (pronounced Peeps).

From the time of Sammy Pepys to the time of Sammy Bunter, lots of people have kept diaries. I keep one myself. My diary is a complete record of all the ups and downs, the joys and sorrows, and the thrills and spills of school life. Later on, when I become famous, my diary will be sold for a substantial figger. I can imagine it being "knocked down" at a public auction; though I can't help thinking that a fellow who knocks a harmless diary down is a beastly bully.

This Special Diary Number is my own bright brain-wave. I asked young Sammy what he thought of it, and he said it was too tame. So I was natcher-ally wised!

No issw of my "Weekly" can possibly be tame, bekwase I infuse so much life and larfter into week by week. Now, if Harry Wharton were to publish a Special Diary Number of the "Greyfriars Herald," it would be as dry as dust, whereas my own productions are always full of vim and vigger.

At Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's, there are lots of fellows who keep diaries, and I have persuaded several of them to publish eggstracts in this issew. There are comic eggstracts and serious eggstracts, and you will agree that I have made a jolly interesting collection.

I will now quote you a little Limmerick I have made up off my own bat. In reading it, you must not forget that "Pepys" is pronounced "Peeps."

"There's many a modern young Pepys,
Who a neat little diary keeps,
Each feud and each fight,
He records every night,
In his little brown book ere he sleeps!"

After this brilliant spasm on my part, Dick Penfold will have to look to his lorrels!

Your poetic pal,
YOUR EDITOR.

KEEPING A DIARY!

By DICK PENFOLD.

Said I, "On January the First,
I'll keep a diary, if I burst!"

But when it got to Jan. the Second,
It was a fearful fag, I reckoned.

My page was blank on Jan. the Third,
Nothing of any note occurred.

The Fourth, the Fifth, the Sixth, the Seventh,
Were blank—so on, till the Eleventh!

And after that, I jotted down
Entries that fairly made me frown.

"Got up this morning with the lark,"
"Retired this evening after dark."

"Ate eggs-and-bacon for my brekker,
Then pulverised a study-wrecker."

"Played footer in a shower of sleet,
And now I'm suffering from 'cold feet.'"

"Received a hundred lines from Hacker
For telling him a fearful 'cracker.'"

"Battled with Bunter in the gym,
And very nearly finished him!"

"Wrote yards of verse for our plump Editor
(For fifty shillings I'm his creditor!)"

"I dotted Skinner on the nose
For cheating me at dominoes."

Entries like these, so tame and sordid,
For quite a fortnight I recorded.

To "carry on" I've no desire:
I've put my diary on the fire.

My wrath I vainly strove to smother,
And vowed I'd never keep another!

SAMMY BUNTER'S DIARY!

MONDAY.—I awoke in a fever of egg-site-ment. I was egg-specting a postle-order from my Aunt Prue. Would it arrive? Could it arrive? Should it arrive? I ducked my head in a pair of trousers, and pulled on a basin of water; then, drying my boots with a towel and putting on my face, I hurried down into the Close. The postman came staggering along with a sack of letters. I dashed up to him, and threw my chubby arms around his neck. "Anything for me?" I cried eagerly. "Not this morning, Master Bunter!" was the reply. And I sank down on to the flagstones with a grone of despare!

TEWSDAY.—Aunt Prue having failed me yesterday, I felt sure she would turn up trumps to-day. I washed and dressed in fifteen seconds—half a second for washing, and fourteen and a half for dressing—and again hurried down into the Close. The postman shook his head sorrowfully as I approached. "Nothin' doin', Master Bunter," he said. "Better luck necks time!" So once again I was compelled to chew the cud of bitter disappointment.

WENSDAY.—"Ah, this is the morning!" I said to myself, as I sprang out of bed. "I sha'n't be disappointed three times running." I raced down the stairs twenty at a time (there are only twenty steps), and dashed out into the Close. But the postman's brow was sad, and a tear stood in his eye. "There's nothin' for you, lad; but there might be by-and-by!" (This is poerty.) I retired in deep distress. Aunt Prue's postle-order must have gone astray. I will write at once to the Dead Letter Offis.

THURSDAY.—Still nothing doing! I am the most mizzerable fellow at Greyfriars! This morning Mister Twigg eggscused me from lessens, bekwase I kept bursting into tears. When—oh, when shall I get my postle-order?

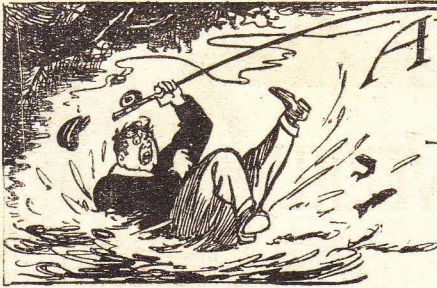
FRIDAY.—Had a printed postcard from the offisuals at the Dead Letter Offis: "Dear Sir—Your complaint has been received, and will be investigated in strict rotation, so you may confidently expect to hear from us some time in 1923."

SATTERDAY.—The last stor! My Aunt Prue writes to say that she can't send me any more munney this term, bekwase I squander it at the tuckshopp. Of course I do! What's a tuckshopp for, if not to squander munney at?

THE POPULAR.—No. 215

Supplement I.]

Merry and Bright, and Always Something New!



A Sportsman's Diary!

By **FATTY WYNN**
(New House, St. Jim's.)

MONDAY.—Got up an hour before rising-bell and went fishing in the River Rhyll. Caught two small minnows and a baby tadpole. Better luck next time! Had a friendly spar in the gym with Figgins after brekker. Figgy complained that there was too much of me to hit; and I complained that there was too little of him! He was always able to dodge my blows, but I'm too fat to be able to skip out of the way of a straight left. Too wet for footer this afternoon, so stayed indoors and played ping-pong, at which game I am becoming an expert.

TUESDAY.—Went fishing again, and in my eagerness to land a plump trout I slipped off my perch and tumbled into the river. I'm very fond of swimming, but not in February! Sorted myself out somehow, and had to sprint like fury to St. Jim's to avoid catching a chill. The fellows simply roared when they saw me come in looking like a drenched porpoise. Figgy says that next time I go fishing I ought to wear a bathing-costume, and have a lifebelt handy. Sarcastic beast!

No more sport to-day. I didn't feel up to it.

WEDNESDAY.—The day of the great inter-House football match. I kept goal for the New House, of course. Ye gods, 'twas a thrilling game! Tom Merry scored for the School House in the first minute. He sent in a fast high shot that I couldn't quite get to. Five minutes later Dick Redfern equalised for the New House with a long shot. After this it was a ding-dong tussle. Nothing else was scored up to the interval. On the resumption, Talbot put the ball past me at lightning speed, giving the School House the lead. This they kept till the very last minute of the game, when Lawrence raced away on our left wing, and scored with a mighty drive from twenty yards out. Result: School House, 2; New House, 2. A draw was a fitting result, on the run of the play. Harry Hammond kept goal finely for the School House. Our "star" performer was Dick Redfern.

THURSDAY.—Played a round of golf with

Figgins and Kerr in the Head's garden, much to the detriment of a bed of spring-onions and a plot of daffodils. Old Taggles came on the scene, and saw what we were up to, and the crusty old buffer reported us to the Head. Result—a licking for three! Never again shall we use the Head's garden as a golf links. I suggested to Figgy and Kerr that we collected a number of cheap German alarm-clocks, and biffed them round the quad with our golf-clubs. This is known as "clock" golf!

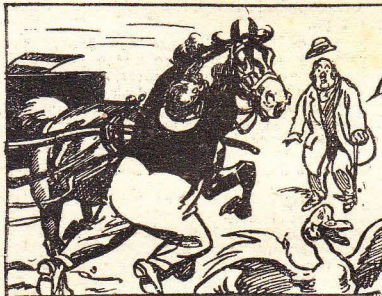
FRIDAY.—A great day in the world of sport. The Marbles Championship of the Third and the Hopscotch Tournament of the Second came off to-day. The fags also held a Regatta in the school fountain. They painted walnut-shells and used them as boats. Wally D'Arcy's good ship Neverfloat got home first.

The Dominoes Championship of the New House was won by Koumi Rao, and Pratt proved himself to be the battledore and shuttlecock champion. No victory fell to my lot, I'm sorry to say—though I came within an ace of winning the Noughts and Crosses Championship of St. Jim's!

SATURDAY.—Another thrilling day in the world of sport. The inter-House cross-country race was won in gallant style by Figgins. Trust the New House to provide the merry winner! There was also a five-mile cycling race; but in this event the honours went to a School House fellow—Jack Blake.

This afternoon we played Rookwood at footer, and defeated Jimmy Silver & Co. by four goals to two.

On the whole, a great week's sport—but I'm not going fishing or golfing any more!



A Brave Boy's Diary

By **BAGGY TRIMBLE**
(Of St. Jim's.)

MONDAY.

I have made a rezzerlution to save at least one person's life each day. It's rather a tall order, but I mean to carry it through.

This afternoon, I saved the life of Skimpole of the Shell. He was about to drink a bottle of turpentine, under the impression that it was soothing sirrup. Skimmy had got the two bottles mixed up on his studly mantlepeace. I pointed out the error in the nick of time. And what do you think Skimmy gave me for saving his life? Not a bean! Of all the mean beasts, Skimmy's about the meanest I've ever struck! (For I did strike him. I gave him a punch on the nose for his ingratitude!)

TUESDAY

To-day's life-saving stunt was a really wonderful piece of heroism on my part. Knox of the Sixth, who was punting on the river, happened to capsize. He would have sunk to the bottom like a toan, if I hadn't plunged in after him. Wipping off my jacket and boots, I dived in on the instant. Knox fought and struggled, and tried to drag me under, he was in such a pannick. But at last I toed him safely to the bank. Did he go down on his bended neeze and thank me? Not he! All he said was: "You clumsy idiot! I should have swum to the shore in a couple of seconds, but for your interference. Take a hundred lines!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

Alas! A life saver's eggsistence is not a bed of roses!

WEDNESDAY.

A fire broke out in a small hut at the back of the woodshed. Bernard Glyn was in the hut at the time, working on an invention. Before he could realise that the place was on fire, he was overcome by the fumes. He had locked the door on the inside, but I battered it down and rushed in to the rescue. There was a miffy cheer when I came staggering out of the blazing hut, with the unconscious form of Bernard Glyn in my arms. Everybody realised what a gallant hero I was—eggscept Glyn. When I asked him for five bob, in consideration of having saved his life, he biffed me on the boko! Perhaps it was rather tackless of me to value Glyn's life at five bob. I ought to have asked for fifty quid!

THURSDAY.

I distinguished myself to-day by stopping a runaway hoarse in Wayland. Hundreds of people would have been killed, and the pavement would have been stroom with victims, but for my timely action. I took a flying leap, flung my arms round the neck of the terrified animal, and brought him to a standstill. I eggspected the Mare of Wayland to make me a presentation in public, but up to the time of writing there is nothing doing. I am really beginning to wonder whether it is worth while to go round saving people's lives!

FRIDAY.

There was a big escape of gas at St. Jim's. (By this I don't mean that there was a meeting of the Debating Sossociety!) Everybody was afraid to go down to the sellers and investigate. "If anyone strikes a match," said Tom Merry, "we shall all be blown into eternity!" "My dear fellow," I said cuttingly, "you are not of the stuff of which heroes are made. There is a yellow streak in your dictation—I mean composition. I will go down into the sellers, and ascertain where this escape of gas is."

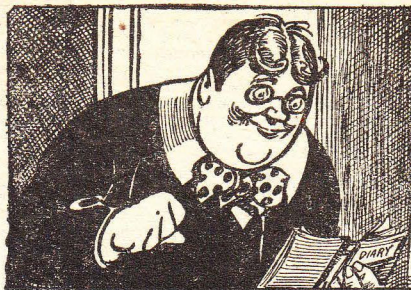
"It is madness!" cried Merry. "Come back, Baggy, you idiot! You'll be blown to smithereens!" But I went boldly down to the basement of the bilding—a Trimble knows no fear—and having found where the escape was, I mended the leakage in the pipe, thereby saving the lives of my three hundred schoolfellows. Did the Head come to me with outstretched eyes, and tears of grattitude in his hands? Not a bit of it! My plucky action has, I regret to say, gone unrekkenised.

SATURDAY.

Saved quite a number of lives to-day. A tiny fag in the First would have been drowned in his bath this morning, if I hadn't fished him out. The suction was taking him through the plug-hole. I heaved him out, and resorted to artificial perspiration, and he was as right as rain. As I was proceeding downstares, I saw Monty Lowther doing gymnastics on the banisters. He toppled clean over them, and fell as clean as a wissle into the hall below. All his bones were broken, but I re-set the whole lot inside five minnits, and he was able to walk about without any discomfort. I then heard that the Head was being attacked in the quad by a gang of rough 'uns, so I clenched my fists and hurried to the spot, just in time to save the Head's life. I struck the skoundrels senseless, and tellyoned for the peocee. I then heard that Kildare of the Sixth was in deadly peril—

(That's enuff, Baggy! If you think the readers of my "Weekly" are going to swallow all this, you're jolly well mistaken! The whole article is a pack of fibs, and you know it jolly well.—Ed.)

[Supplement II.]



The Fateful Entry!

BY
GEORGE BULSTRODE.

BILLY BUNTER tapped on the door of Mr. Quelch's study, and entered. The fat junior had an impot in his hand. He had had to write out a hundred times.

"Please, sir, I've brought—" began Bunter. Then he stopped short on finding that he was addressing the study furniture. Mr. Quelch was not there.

The fat junior blinked around the empty apartment in annoyance.

"Gone out golfing, I suppose!" he growled, hundred lines.

Bunter's inquisitive little eyes continued to rove round the study. Presently they alighted on a diary, which lay on Mr. Quelch's table, beside his typewriter.

A powerful sense of curiosity impelled Billy Bunter to take a peep at the diary.

"Silly of Quelch to leave his diary lying about like this," he muttered, "Somebody might nose into his private affairs."

Which was precisely what Bunter himself proceeded to do. He opened the diary at the latest entry, glanced at the written words, and then gave quite a jump.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated the fat junior.

There was good reason for his astonishment. For the latest entry in the diary was as follows:

"Hid old Prout's Winchester repeater to-day, for a lark."

Billy Bunter could scarcely believe his eyes. He had never suspected the stern and austere master of the Remove of being a practical joker. He knew that there was no love lost between Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth. But to think that Mr. Quelch should conceal his colleague's rifle—"for a lark!" It was amazing—it was well-nigh incredible!

But there was the entry, in black and white. There was no getting away from it.

Billy Bunter was about to continue his investigations, when the sound of footsteps in the corridor caused him to beat a hasty retreat.

It was Mr. Prout who happened to be coming along. The master of the Fifth was in a state of great agitation and excitement. His eyes gleamed; his hair—what little he possessed—was ruffled.

The master of the Fifth stopped short suddenly, and glared at Billy Bunter.

"I am looking for my gun! It has been abstracted from the wall of my study!"

Mr. Prout's voice fairly boomed along the passage. He glared accusingly at Bunter, as if he expected the fat junior to produce the Winchester repeater from his pocket.

"It has been taken—stolen—purloined—appropriated!" Mr. Prout hurled the words at Bunter's head as if they were missiles.

"Oh, really, sir—" gasped Bunter.

"Do you know anything about this, boy? I have no doubt that one of the young rascals in the Remove Form is responsible for this outrage! My gun—my Winchester repeater—is missing from its accustomed place. If you are able to throw any light on this matter, Bunter, speak at once!"

"I can tell you all about it, sir," murmured Bunter.

"What! Can you give me the name of the boy who has removed my gun?"

"It wasn't a boy, sir."

"Not a boy!" gasped Mr. Prout, in astonishment. "Then who—"

"It was a master, sir."

"Good gracious!"

Mr. Prout regarded Billy Bunter in blank amazement.

"Do you realise what you are saying, Bunter?"

"Perfectly, sir. Mr. Quelch has hidden your gun—I can't say where, but I know for a fact that he's taken it."

Billy Bunter spoke so convincingly that Mr. Prout could not doubt his sincerity. Bunter would not have dared to bring an accusation of this sort against a master unless he had good grounds for it.

Mr. Prout started to prance to and fro like a cat on hot bricks. He was as flustered and excited as ever. Now that he came to think of it, Mr. Quelch had never approved of the Winchester repeater. He had referred to it as a dangerous firearm; he had urged Mr. Prout to get rid of it.

The two masters had had many vehement arguments on the subject of the Winchester repeater, and Mr. Prout had generally ended up by declaring that no one should ever deprive him of his treasured gun, which had sent so many lions, tigers, and crocodiles—to say nothing of rabbits—to their doom.

It now seemed only too probable that Mr. Quelch had taken the law into his own hands—and the gun into his own hands at the same time—and hidden it somewhere. For the master of the Remove was genuinely afraid of that gun.

Mr. Prout suddenly stopped his prancing, and spun round upon Billy Bunter.

"How do you know that Mr. Quelch has appropriated my gun, Bunter?" he demanded.

"There's an entry in his diary, sir, to that effect. Of course, I didn't pry into Mr. Quelch's diary, or anything like that, sir. I'm above that sort of thing. But I found the diary lying on the floor in Mr. Quelch's study, and when I stooped and picked it up I couldn't help noticing—"

"Quite so—quite so," said Mr. Prout. "I will take this matter up without delay. To think that Mr. Quelch should have the audacity to tamper with my property! I—"

Mr. Prout was stumped for words.

At that moment a gentleman in "plus fours" appeared on the scene. It was Mr. Quelch, fresh from his exertions on the golf-links.

Mr. Prout rushed to the attack at once—metaphorically, of course.

"My gun!" he roared. "My valuable Winchester repeater! Where have you hidden it? Why have you hidden it? Answer me—I insist—"



Mr. Prout rushed at the Remove master. "Where is my gun?" he cried. "Where have you hidden it?"

Mr. Quelch staggered back before that torrent of words.

"Sir! Mr. Prout!" he gasped. "Have you taken leave of your senses, sir?"

"My gun!" thundered Mr. Prout.

"My—my dear sir—"

"My gun!" hooted the incensed master of the Fifth. "Lead me to it at once!"

"It is in your study, is it not?"

"No, sir, indeed it is not, as you know full well! It was you, sir, who purloined it, and made off with it—"

"How dare you, Mr. Prout!"

The master of the Remove was as angry as his colleague. The two glared at each other like tigers, and Billy Bunter stood in the offing, enjoying the fun.

"It is idle for you to deny that you have removed my gun, Quelch!" said Mr. Prout.

"According to this boy Bunter there is an entry in your diary, to the effect that you have hidden it."

"But I do not keep a diary!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "If you will endeavour to control yourself, sir, and accompany me to my study, we will get to the bottom of this business. I fear that Bunter has misled you. He is a notorious teller of falsehoods."

The two masters stepped into Mr. Quelch's study. Billy Bunter was ordered to follow.

"Now, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "where is the diary to which you refer?"

"There, sir," said Bunter, pointing to the book which lay on the desk.

Mr. Quelch picked up the book, and glanced at the entries. Presently he gave a violent start.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "The matter is already cleared up, Mr. Prout. It was Skinner who removed your gun!"

"Skinner!"

"Yes. This is his diary. I had occasion to confiscate it this morning, during lessons. Skinner has apparently hidden your gun for a 'lark,' as he calls it. Bunter, you will find Skinner, and bring him here at once."

Billy Bunter departed on his errand. He was back inside five minutes with Skinner, who was pale and quaking.

"Boy," thundered Mr. Prout, "where is my gun?"

"Ahem! In—in the coal-cellar, sir," stammered Skinner. "I hope you won't take offence, sir. It was only a lark."

Unfortunately, Mr. Prout's sense of humour was not so keen as Skinner's.

"I will ask your Form master to chastise you severely!" he exclaimed. "Your conduct has given rise to a good deal of misunderstanding and unpleasantness. By the way, Mr. Quelch, the handwriting in this wretched boy's diary is very similar to your own."

Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Skinner is a very skilful penman," he said, "and he has so often tried to imitate my writing that he has quite got into my style. You will fetch Mr. Prout's gun at once, Skinner, and I will then administer a thrashing which will deter you from playing such pranks in future."

Mr. Quelch kept his word. Skinner received four stinging cuts on each hand, and Billy Bunter stood by and gloated. But he didn't gloat a little later on, when he was called in turn, for meddling with things which did not concern him.

The two young rascals staggered out of Mr. Quelch's study together, moaning and groaning in a dismal chorus.

And the burden of their plaint was:

"Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"



"LOVELL'S VISITOR!"

(Continued from page 12.)



"Aunt Georgina Muffebery, for a quid!" muttered Lattrey.

The little old lady's beady eyes rested upon Peele & Co., and the three juniors came forward, lifting their caps.

"Are you Great-aunt—I mean, are you Miss Muffebery?" inquired Peele politely.

The little old lady blinked at him.

"I am Miss Muffebery. But where is little Arty?" she said anxiously. "You are from Rookwood School?"

"Yes, ma'am, but—"

"Then where is little Arty? He has not been run over? Or fallen into the river? Or succumbed to this dreadful influenza?" cried the little old lady, in a flutter.

"Something dreadful has happened to little Arty, I am sure of it!"

"Not at all, ma'am!" said Lattrey solemnly. "Little—ahem!—little Arty is quite well, but—"

"Yes, yes?"

"But he has been a naughty little boy. I am sorry to say!" said Lattrey gravely, shaking his head.

"Very naughty indeed!" said Gower.

"Dear, dear me!" said the little old lady, in distress. "That is terrible!"

"He has been kept in by his kind teacher, so he had to ask his friends to come and meet you instead, and—explain matters," said Peele, with the utmost gravity. "He—he hopes you won't be angry with him, Miss Muffebery."

"The poor little boy!" said Miss Muffebery, shaking her curls. "I am so sorry he has been kept in! I remember he was once naughty before, when he was a tiny little bud!"

"Go hon!" murmured Lattrey.

"Yes, indeed! He refused to take his cod-liver-oil after he had had the measles!" rattled on the old lady. "Fancy that now!"

"Ah, ah! Ahem—gug-good gracious!" gasped Peele.

"Yes; no wonder you are surprised, my dear little fellow!"

Peele turned crimson, while Lattrey and Gower tried to hide their grins. But Miss Georgina Muffebery did not appear to notice anything.

"On that occasion, you know, I actually had to punish the dear little mannie," she continued confidentially; "I had to stand him in the corner!"

"Dud-dud-did you, ma'am?" stammered Peele.

"Oh, help!" murmured Lattrey faintly.

"Yes. I hope your teacher never has to stand you in the corner, my little man!"

"Nunno!" gasped Peele.

"I am glad to hear it!" said the little old lady, smiling. "Now, here is the porter with my bathchair. Are you kind little boys going to take me up to the school in it?"

Peele & Co. exchanged glances and covert grins.

"Yes, ma'am; that's what we came down for," said Lattrey, with great politeness.

"That is very sweet of you, dears!" said Lovell's great-aunt, hobbling into her bathchair. "What are your names? You seem to be such kind-hearted little boys!"

Peele & Co. almost choked, but Lattrey recovered himself with a great effort.

"I am Snooks," he said gravely. "This is Hookey, and this is Walker," indicating the almost paralysed Peele and Gower with a wave of his hand. "We are pleased to meet you, Great-aunt—I mean, Miss Muffebery!"

Miss Muffebery beamed.

"That is kind of you! And you are great friends of little Arty's, Snooks?"

"Absolute bosom friends!" said Lattrey solemnly. "I am sure he would like us to be near him now!"

Lattrey felt pretty sure that he was speaking the strict truth in the last sentence, anyhow!

"That is nice! And are you quite sure the bathchair will not be too much for your strength, my little men?"

"Kit-quite sure, ma'am, thank you!" gasped the "little men," in chorus.

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

"Then shall we get on? I am anxious to see my dear little Arty again."

"Right-ho, ma'am!"

And with Gower pulling in front and Lattrey and Peele pushing behind, the bathchair proceeded out of the station yard and along the road towards Rookwood at a pace that was exceedingly sedate—as yet!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Rookwood!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. sat in the Fourth Form class-room at Rookwood and wrote away for dear life. There was

silence except for the ticking of the clock and the scratching of four pens as they traced out again and again the odious sentence: "I must be more circumspect in regard to my conduct in the Form-room."

Jimmy Silver & Co. were alone in the class-room. They had given their promise to Mr. Bootles to remain there until they had finished their task, and the Form master had readily accepted their words. He had

RESULT OF MIDDLESBROUGH PUZZLE-PICTURE COMPETITION.

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

W. BLACKHALL,
76, Pleasant Street,
West Bromwich.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following five competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

Albert Woodcock, 9, Warton Terrace, Bootle, Liverpool; A. R. Barnard, The Bungalow, Chapel Farm, Braintree, Essex; Jack Bird, Bonds, Chumleigh, Devon; Douglas Whiteman, 4, West Street, Sutton, Surrey; Maud Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2.

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

Wm. Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2; Percy Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2; Blanche Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2; S. Daft, 25, Fairmile Avenue, Streatham, S.W. 16; Ben McMahon, 50, Clyde Street, Belfast; Charles H. Morton, 8, Brunton Terrace, Howarth Street, Sunderland; H. Judge, 141, Brettenham Road, Edmonton, N. 15; F. Apps, 67, Craigen Road, Blackheath, S.E. 3; E. Rushton, 19, Clarence Street, Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent; W. Cousins, 5, Toppfield Par., Crouch End, N. 8; Fred Cave, 59, Edward Street, Grimsby, Lines; T. Topping, 62, Ivor Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; Eric Nunn, 19, New Road, Sawston, Cambs; W. M. Hole, 60, St. Edmunds Road, Plainmoor, Torquay; James Brook, 17a, Corporation Street, Halifax; Mrs. Lucy Roshier, 146, Thornley Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs.; James A. Parker, 34, Corporation Street, Walsall, Staffs.; Arthur Butters, 245, Roberts Street, Grimsby; Albert Brue-ton, 73, Stanforth Street, Birmingham; Olive Knowles, 9, Burton Street, Brixham, Devon; E. Ashworth, 750, Oldham Road, Fallsworth, Manchester.

SOLUTION.

Middlesbrough is regarded by large numbers of football supporters as a fairly modern club, but its record goes back a long distance. Middlesbrough has had some hard times, and when it was compelled to find a fresh ground, the bill ran into thousands of pounds. But it has a splendid fighting record.

promised to return just before dinner to see if they had completed their imposition, and he was just about due when Jimmy Silver broke the silence at last.

"Finished, thank goodness!" he exclaimed, throwing down his pen. "Time Bootles came back, too. Hope he'll take my writing."

"Shurrup, Jimmy!" growled Lovell, scribbling away as if for a wager. "I've got two more to do yet—circumspect in regard to my conduct—What rot this is!"

"Awful!" agreed Jimmy. "The Head was a bit rough on us, I must say. Hallo! What's up, I wonder?"

Jimmy Silver broke off as a sudden chorus of yells and shouts of laughter floated up from the quad through the open windows of the Fourth Form class-room.

The chums of the Fourth looked at one another inquiringly. There was another louder yell from below.

Lovell shrugged his shoulders, causing the last line of his imposition to be decorated with a large blot.

"Some of our fellows chivvying the Modern cads, I expect," he said carelessly. "I've finished, anyway! Wonder if Grace has got my great-aunt up here yet?"

A terrific roar rose up from the quadrangle outside, and Jimmy Silver sprang up on to the desks—for the windows of the class-room were high up in the wall—in order to get a view of the quad.

An awful thought had struck all four of them simultaneously.

"My hat!" yelled Lovell. "If that's—"

"Your Great-aunt Georgina!"

"Great Scott!"

"It is!" yelled Raby. "It's your great-aunt! Look! The—the rotters!"

"Peele & Co.! The—the cads! The rotten cads!" shouted Lovell passionately.

The four juniors were almost petrified by the sight that met their gaze as they looked down into the old quad at Rookwood.

Across the quad, from the direction of the gates, was speeding the strangest equipage. It was an ancient bathchair occupied by an ancient lady with old-fashioned side-curls, who could be none other than Lovell's Great-aunt Georgina!

But it was the pace at which the ancient vehicle was proceeding that was attracting so much attention—it could only be described as terrific!

The motive-power was being supplied by three grinning juniors—none other than our friends Peele, Lattrey, and Gower, of course.

Gower was pulling the chair by its steering-lever, like a runaway horse; while Peele and Lattrey were shoving behind for all they were worth!

All three juniors were tearing along as if on the cinder-path, and the ancient vehicle rocked and bounded as it flew over the ground, leaving a cloud of dust in its wake.

There was a roar from all sides of the crowded quad as the bathchair tore on, followed by a racing crowd of excited and amazed juniors.

"What is it?"

"It's a bathchair Marathon!"

"The finish of a chariot race!"

"Hurrah!"

The swaying, bumping bathchair swept on past the window of the Fourth Form class-room. The little old lady sat quite quiet in the rocking vehicle, her face pale and her hands clutching the arms of the chair.

Jimmy Silver & Co. at the window caught a glimpse of her pale face amid the shrieking crowd of thoughtless juniors, and they raved in impotent fury.

"The—the cowards! The cads!" choked Lovell. "Oh, wait till I get at them!"

"Come on this way!" breathed Jimmy Silver sulphurously. "We'll teach 'em!"

"What-ho!"

The four juniors jumped down from the window and made a rush for the door.

"Bless my soul! What's the meaning of this?"

Mr. Bootles was coming in at the door, and the rush of the four furious juniors almost carried the little gentleman off his feet. He blinked dazedly at the chums through his spectacles.

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Lovell. "My—my aunt, sir! My Great-aunt Georgina!"

"Bless my soul!"

"Those cads are ragging her! I'm going to smash them!" panted Lovell. "I'm—"

"But your impositions—"

"We've finished them, sir!" explained Jimmy Silver hurriedly. "We're just going to rescue—"

Introduce Jimmy Silver & Co. to All Your Pals!

"What—what! Boys!"
 "Sorry, sir—"
 And, almost pushing the little Form master aside, the four juniors rushed on.
 Mr. Bootles gasped in fluttered amazement.
 "Bless my soul! Boys, come back at once!"
 But the little Form master's command fell for once upon deaf ears.
 Jimmy Silver & Co. rushed on, breathing vengeance, and Mr. Bootles was left alone, to waste his sweetness on the desert air, o to speak.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Reparation—and Retribution.

THE flying bathchair slowed down at last.
 After circumnavigating the quad at such terrific speed, Peele & Co. began to get blown. The pace had been too hot to last, and the bathchair finally drew up in front of the gym, and was immediately surrounded by a crowd of laughing, cheering juniors.

A dozen voices hailed the grinning Peele & Co.
 "What's the game, Peeley?"
 "Is it a bet, or what?"
 "Are you the winners?"
 "Who's your lady friend?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Peele & Co. mopped their streaming brows, while the little old lady gazed faintly round in great bewilderment.
 "Where am I?" she exclaimed faintly, scanning the innumerable strange faces.
 "Dear me! Am I dreaming? Is little Arty here?"

There was a hush as some of the crowding juniors caught the old lady's words, and stopped laughing. It began to dawn on some of them that the little old lady had been made the victim of a rag by Peele & Co., and that thought made them feel not a little uncomfortable.

For the idea of making deliberate sport of an old lady did not appeal to Rookwood boys, with the exception of a few black sheep of the kidney of Peele, Lattrey, and Gower.

But Peele & Co. did not seem to notice the changing sentiment of the crowd.
 Peele grinned round triumphantly. He felt distinctly elated at the success of what he regarded as a distinct hit at Jimmy Silver & Co.

"We went to meet the old lady at the station," he grinned. "She said she was in a hurry—"

"He, he, he!" giggled Gower.
 "So we did our best for her!" finished Lattrey. "Allow me to introduce you, gentlemen, to Lovell's Great-aunt Georgina!"
 And Lattrey stepped back, with a mock bow to the bewildered old lady.

There was an angry murmur from the crowd, and a burly fourth-former pushed his way forward. It was Conroy, the usually good-natured Colonial junior, and there was a stern look on his handsome face. His chums, Van Ryn and Pons, were close behind him.

"I guess I don't quite understand you, Lattrey!" he said, in a hard voice. "Do you mean to say—"

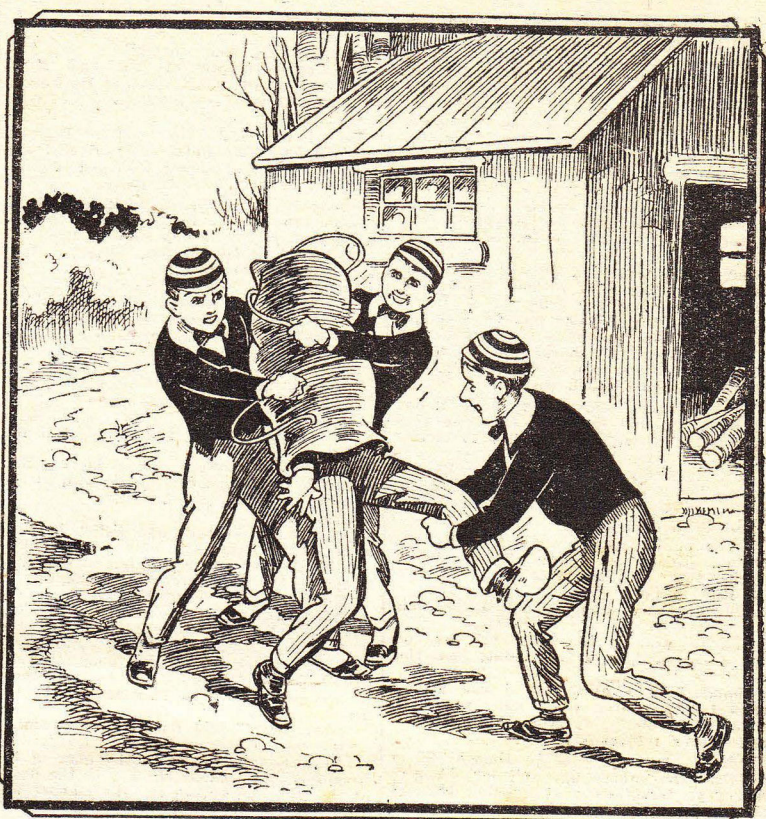
"Here they are, the cads!"
 There was a violent eddy in the crowd, and Lovell burst furiously into the circle round the bathchair, followed by Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome. The burning indignation on the faces of the famous Pistical Four of Rookwood caused some of the near-by juniors to realise suddenly just how matters stood. And a good many of them began to edge furtively away.
 They saw ructions ahead—and they were right.

"You cads!" shouted Lovell, in a voice trembling with passion, as he laid his hand on the arm of the little old lady in the bathchair. "Cads and cowards! You have been ragging an old lady—Miss Mufflebury—my great-aunt—"

"Steady, I say, old man!"
 It was Conroy who spoke, amid the dead silence of the crowd of juniors.

"You cowards! I—"
 Conroy put his hand quietly on Lovell's shoulder.
 "Steady, I say, old man!"
 Lovell made an impatient gesture, almost choking.

But Conroy did not move. Jimmy Silver, seeing how matters were going, exchanged glances with Raby and Newcome. The three



THE KIDNAPPING OF PUTTY! There was a muffled howl from Teddy Grace as the dirty sack was dragged over his head, while his arms were pinned close to his side. "Into the woodshed with him!" cried Peele.
 (See Chapter 3.)

chums stepped quietly over to where Peele & Co. were standing, and closed round them unostentatiously.

Peele & Co. had stopped grinning by now. Indeed, they looked quite uneasy.

"I guess we did not understand rightly what was happening, Lovell," Conroy said, in a level voice. "We saw these galoots totting the bathchair round at a great pace, and I guess we thought it was some sort of a joke!"

"Yes, yes!" came in an eager chorus from the now thoroughly repentant crowd.
 "So we just naturally gave 'em a cheer, and gathered round to investigate."

"Hear, hear!"
 Conroy glanced round.

"I, for one, beg to offer Miss Mufflebury my very humble apologies," he continued, raising his cap to the little old lady. "I feel real mean about it, and I hope you will forgive me, ma'am!"
 "And we say the same!" said Van Ryn and Pons together. "Please forgive us, ma'am!"

"And I!"
 "And I!"
 "We all apologise!"
 "Hear, hear!"

There was a perfect chorus of apologies. The thoughtless juniors were quick to recognise the discourtesy they had been guilty of, as soon as they understood how the matter stood. They were in as great a hurry to apologise as they had been to cheer the racing bathchair.

Lovell's face cleared somewhat as he turned to his great-aunt and kissed her affectionately—a thing he would have shrunk from doing in public at ordinary times.

"Are you hurt, aunty dear?"
 Miss Mufflebury gazed at him fondly, and some of the colour came back into her old cheeks.

She smiled and shook her head.
 "I am so glad to see you, my dear little Arty! No, I am not hurt in any

way. Those little boys were a little rough, perhaps—"

"Yes—the cads?" said Lovell fiercely. "I'll make them pay for that!"
 "My dear little Arty how can you say such a thing?"

"Eh?"
 "You would not hurt your little school-fellows, surely?"

"But—but they—" stammered Lovell.
 "I am surprised at you, Arty dear," said Miss Mufflebury, shaking her curls reprovingly at the dumbfounded Lovell. "I shall not allow such a thing for a moment!"
 "I—I—"

"You will promise me you will not touch those thoughtless little boys?"

"Th-thoughtless!" grasped Lovell.
 "You must promise me, Arty dear!"
 Lovell looked across at Jimmy Silver. That youth did not return his glance. He looked straight in front of him, and winked solemnly.

Lovell turned back to his great-aunt.
 "I promise I won't touch them, then, aunty!"

"That's my good little Arty! And all these other little boys—"
 "You will accept our apologies, ma'am?" said Conroy anxiously.

"Why, bless me, of course, my little man! There is nothing to forgive! And I should like to give each of you dear little boys a little present!"

And the little old lady beamed round on the crowd of astonished juniors.

"A—a present, ma'am?" stammered Conroy.

"Yes: a little present each!" beamed Miss Mufflebury, diving her hand into the foot of the bathchair and producing a fat hand-bag. "I have here, fortunately, a good supply of splendid little pamphlets or tracts—"

"Tut-tracts, ma'am!"
 "Certainly! Here you are! How a

Well-Brought-Up Little Boy Should Behave! By Dr. Cuthbert Coddle. You may take one each."

"Oh, my hat—I mean, th-thank you, ma'am!"

And the sturdy Colonial junior gingerly picked up one of Dr. Coddle's valuable pamphlets, and, politely lifting his cap again, walked away as if in a dream."

The crowd of juniors, looking thoroughly sheepish now, formed up in a regular queue and shuffled past the bathchair, each taking one of the precious pamphlets and politely lifting his cap to the beaming old lady.

One or two showed a disposition to melt away unostentatiously, without joining the queue, but finding the grim eye of Jimmy Silver upon them, gave up the attempt, and took their pamphlets like lambs.

As Jimmy Silver remarked to his chums afterwards, it was a sort of penance, and they had to go through with it.

Lattrey, Peele, and Gower, with Jimmy Silver, Raby, and Newcome marching very close behind them, were the last to receive their pamphlets.

"I'll take my great-aunt along to the Head's house for lunch now," said Lovell, now quite cheery again. "See you in the study after, Jimmy!"

"Right-ho, old man! We have a little business to do first!" said Jimmy Silver significantly, with a glance at the shrinking Peele & Co.

"Ahem! Come along, aunty dear!" said Lovell hastily.

And he wheeled the little old lady off across the quad, at a very sedate pace this time.

Jimmy Silver's grasp closed like a vice upon Lattrey's arm, while Raby and Newcome were equally affectionate with Peele and Gower respectively.

"Now, Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver grimly, "the game's up, isn't it? You've had your 'fun,' as you probably thought it, and now you must pay for it."

Lattrey was a sturdy fellow, and the best man with his fists of the black sheep of Study No. 1. But he knew Jimmy Silver, and he quailed at the grimness in his voice. Nevertheless, he made an attempt at bluster.

"Lemme go, Silver! I'm not going to be bullied by you! If you touch me I'll complain to a prefect!"

Jimmy Silver sighed, with an air of patience.

"You don't quite understand your position, I'm afraid, Lattrey," he said. "I'll try to explain it to you. But first, where's Teddy Grace?"

"Lemme go! I'm going in to dinner!"

"Where's Grace?" roared Jimmy.

Lattrey gave up his attempt at bluff.

"In the wood-shed," he said sullenly.

"Have you got the key?"

"Yes!"

"Good! Then come along."

The three chums of the end study marched the three black sheep of the Fourth Form to the wood-shed. Peele & Co. went like lambs.

They found Grace there, where Peele & Co. had left him. Putty had wriggled and wriggled, and had almost managed to work the sack off him, but not quite.

Jimmy Silver whipped it off in an instant, and Putty's crimson face, coated with dust and grime, glared at him sulphurously.

"Oooh! You—rou ass, Silver! Why didn't you come before?"

"My dear kid—"

"Geroooh! I'm suffocated! My hat!"

Putty broke off with a yell of fury.

"There's that cad Lattrey—and Peele—and Gower—"

"Hold on, Putty!"

"Lemme gerrat them!" howled Putty.

"The beasts! They tied me up—"

"Wait half a mo—"

"They laid for me and half-choked me, the—the beasts!"

Putty made a furious rush at his foes, but Jimmy Silver caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, I tell you, Putty!"

"Lemme go, Silver!"

"Chumme it, old son, and listen to your uncle! Peele & Co. are going through it!"

Putty growled wrathfully, but he ceased to struggle. He only glared at Peele & Co.

"Honest Injun!" he growled.

"Honest Injun!" said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"You see, Putty, they've played a caddish trick on Miss Mufflebury—Lovell's great-aunt, you know. They ragged the poor old lady, and Rookwooders don't rag ladies—especially if they happen to be relations of the old firm."

"Hear, hear!" said Raby and Newcome.

"Oh, rot!" muttered Lattrey uneasily.

Jimmy Silver stepped to the door of the wood-shed, and placed the key in the inside of the lock and turned it. His manner was deadly cool.

"You'll find it isn't rot, Lattrey! There are four of us here, including Grace; and there are three of you. As a matter of fact, any three of us could lick you three, and you know it. You are going to take a licking—all three of you!"

"No fear!" said Lattrey, as boldly as he could. Inwardly, he was feeling decidedly quailish.

"You don't understand—this is a serious matter, Lattrey," said Jimmy Silver patiently. "You have behaved like out-and-out cads, and you have got to be punished!"

"If you do—you wouldn't dare! I'll jolly well complain!" blustered Lattrey, in a panic. Jimmy Silver's unnatural calm, and his manner of deadly earnestness, quite unmoved Lattrey.

"Hold on a minute!" said Jimmy Silver. "Conroy dropped a word to me in the crowd just now. He proposes a Form licking for you three cads if we don't give you one."

Lattrey & Co. shivered. A Form licking was something to be dreaded.

"If you complain to a prefect," went on Jimmy Silver relentlessly, "I shall go to Bulkeley and tell him the whole story, and you will get a flogging from the Head, at least."

The three black sheep shivered again. The prospect of a flogging from the Head was as little pleasing to them as that of a Form licking. And they knew that a flogging, or worse, would await them if the Head were once in possession of the whole story.

"So don't you think, on the whole, you would do better to take a licking from us?" went on Jimmy Silver, in honeyed accents.

"Unless, of course, you would like to fight the lot of us?" he added generously.

Peele and Gower whimpered openly.

"It—it's not fair play, Silver—you know it's not!" stuttered Lattrey, with dry lips.

"It is not a matter of fair play; it's a matter of punishment—just punishment for a caddish trick, Lattrey," explained Jimmy Silver gently.

Lattrey lost his nerve entirely. He could not stand against Jimmy Silver in this grim, relentless mood.

He shrugged his shoulders hopelessly.

Lattrey gave it up.

"Then you will take a licking, Lattrey?" almost cooed Jimmy Silver.

"Yes—hang you!" muttered Lattrey.

"And you other two beauties?"

"Ye-es!"

"Good!"

There was a large pile of sticks of all sorts in the corner of the wood-shed. Jimmy Silver stepped over to the corner and carefully selected one of them—a stout one, but limber. He wished it through the air, in the manner of a professional executioner.

The unhappy trio watched him with a fearful fascination.

"Ready, Lattrey?" he inquired cheerfully.

"We'll each give you three—that's just a dozen; a good round number."

"I—I—"

"Are you ready?" snapped Jimmy.

Lattrey gave a wild glance round. The door of the wood-shed was locked, and the key was in Jimmy Silver's pocket.

The window was shut, and he noticed that Raby and Newcome and Teddy Grace were slowly approaching him. One glance at the faces of Peele and Gower showed him that he could expect no help from them.

Lattrey surrendered ignobly.

"Ye-es, I—I'm ready!"

"Then bend over!"

And the avenging juniors proceeded to deal faithfully with the three black sheep.

Jimmy Silver & Co. spent quite a pleasant afternoon, on the whole, in showing Lovell's Great-aunt Georgina round Rookwood. They squirmed somewhat, it is true, when Miss Mufflebury persisted in referring to them as "dear little boys" in front of a crowd of solemn Rookwooders. And they had to accept a good many pamphlets, mostly written by the worthy Dr. Cuthbert Coddle, for whose works Miss Mufflebury apparently had the greatest admiration.

The Rookwooders turned out to give Miss Mufflebury a hearty cheer when the chums wheeled her bathchair down to the station after tea in the study, thereby somewhat making up by their hearty farewell for the unintentional inhospitality of their welcome.

The Fistical Four were in quite a contented mood as they walked back across the fields from the station, after seeing the little old lady off.

"All's well that ends well!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell, as they came in sight of Rookwood again. "I think I shall remember to-day for the rest of my natural life, though!"

"So will Messrs. Lattrey, Peele, and Gower, I think!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Ha, ha! Yes!"

Indeed, all Rookwood would be likely to remember for some time to come the visit of Lovell's great-aunt!

THE END

(There will be another grand long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co. in next Tuesday's POPULAR, entitled: "Borrowed Glory!" by Owen Conquest. Do not miss this story on any account.)

SCHOOL	BEST BOYS' BOOK!	FOOTER
THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY. Fourpence Per Volume.	No. 657. THE WONDER CRAFT. The Further Exploits of Nelson Lee and Nipper v. The Green Triangle are related in this Breathless Narrative.	
	No. 658. WORDS ON THE GREAT NORTH ROAD. A Thrilling Romance of Fighting and Adventure in the Days of the Young Pretender. By D. E. Barry.	
	No. 659. THE QUICK CHANGE MILLIONAIRE. An Entrancing Story of Mystery and Adventure, featuring Don Darrell, the Schoolboy Millionaire. By Victor Nelson.	
	No. 660. CAPTAIN JACK. A Splendid Story of Footer in the First Division. By A. S. Hardy.	
THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY. Fourpence Per Volume.	No. 275. THE CASE OF THE ISLAND PRINCESS. A Fascinating Romance of Mystery and Stirring Adventure, introducing DR. FEBERARO.	
	No. 276. A LEGACY OF VENGEANCE. A Thrilling Story of Sexton Blake and Tinker versus GEORGE MARSDEN PLUMMER.	
	No. 277. THE OYSTER-BED MYSTERY. A Tale of Adventure and Clever Detective Work, featuring ADRIAN STEELE, Journalist, etc., etc.	
	No. 278. THE CASE OF THE CABARET GIRL; or, The Serjeant's Inn Tragedy. A Wonderful Story of London and Vienna, introducing GRANITE GRANT (King's Spy) and MELLE JULIE	
MYSTERY	ORDER TO-DAY—OUT ON FRIDAY!	ADVENTURE

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

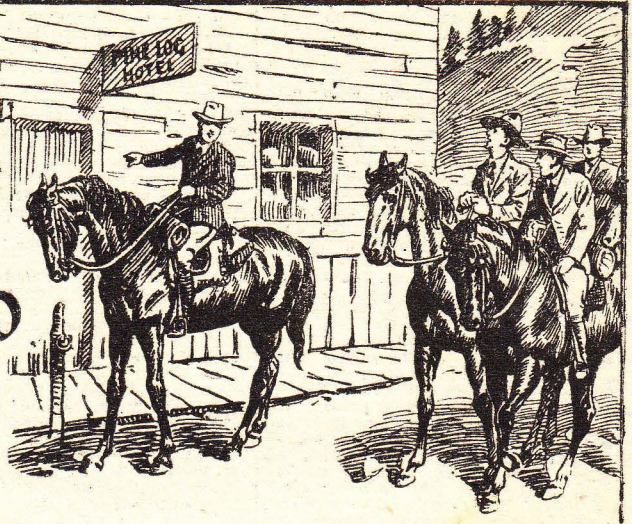
Once You ORDER the "Popular" You'll Always Be Sure of Getting It!

BEARDING THE LION!

In which Frank Richards & Co. track their enemy down to his lair, and Handsome Alf makes his last stand against the chums!

AT LAST CHANCE!

The "Sport" of Last Chance Camp



Being the further adventures of FRANK RICHARDS & Co., the Cedar Creek Chums, on their journey into the North-West.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Last Chance Camp!

POSY PETE, proprietor of the Pine Log Hotel, of Last Chance, was standing in his doorway in his shirt-sleeves when Frank Richards & Co. rode into camp.

Posy Pete wore a cheerful smile upon his fat, rubicund face.

The sun was setting on the Cascade Mountains, and the "boys" were coming in from the gulches after a day's work on the placers.

There was a tramp of feet in the rugged, unpaved street as brawny miners passed, pick on shoulder.

Posy Pete nodded genially to the "boys" as they rode by.

He was in a cheery mood.

After the day's quiet the Pine Log was about to wake up to its usual evening liveliness, when the miners came in from the claims with "dust" in their pockets.

Behind the fat landlord, as he stood smiling into the street sounded the musical clink, clink, as the Chinese bar-tender washed the glasses in the bar.

Down the middle of the street came Frank Richards & Co., riding, followed by their pack-mule, and Posy Pete glanced at them curiously.

"Halt!" sang out Bob Lawless, as they reached the hotel.

"Hotel" the Pine Log was, and the only one in camp; but it was only a rough structure of log and lumber of the most primitive kind.

Guests at the Pine Log had to do their own washing and sweeping, and to provide their own bedclothes if they wanted any.

Frank Richards & Co. dismounted, eyed by the fat landlord.

A schoolboy party was unusual enough at the mining-camp in the mountain wilds of North-Western Canada.

There were five in the party—Frank, Bob, and Vere Beauclere, Chunky Todgers, and Yen Chin, the Chinese, all on holiday from Cedar Creek School, in the far-off Thompson Valley.

"I guess this is the hotel," remarked Bob Lawless.

"I guess you've hit it," said Posy Pete. "You're a new outfit in these parts. What are you children doin' hyer?"

Bob Lawless grinned.

"I guess we're on holiday, and doing the North-West," he answered. "Business, too. We want to know where to find the sheriff. I reckon there's a sheriff in this camp?"

"Correct!"

"Where does he hang out?"

"Hyer."

"In this hotel?" asked Frank Richards.

"Yep."

Posy Pete chuckled. "You see, I'm the sheriff," he explained. "Likewise, landlord of the Pine Log. Do you want the landlord or the sheriff?"

"Both," said Bob, smiling. "We want the landlord to give us a couple of rooms, and fodder for our horses; and we want the sheriff to take down a charge against a rustler namer Carson, otherwise Handsome Alf, who belongs to this camp. I guess."

"Right!" answered Posy Pete. "This is Handsome Alf's home, if anybody wants him. But I guess I'd advise you youngsters not to quarrel with him. He's a bad man to quarrel with."

"We've done that already," answered Bob. "We charge him with trying to steal our horses, and some other things."

Posy Pete whistled. "That's your business, as sheriff of the camp," said Vere Beauclere.

"Correct! But—" The sheriff paused. "Take your hosses round, my sons," he went on. "You'll find fodder for them. I guess I can give you two rooms, and I reckon there's grub for you inside. About Handsome Alf. You'd better think it over again, and call another time."

"But—" began Frank Richards. "Coming!" called out Posy Pete, in answer to an imaginary call from within; and he disappeared into the hotel.

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank. "That galoot don't want trouble with Handsome Alf," remarked Chunky Todgers sagely.

"Look likes it," agreed Bob. "But we've come here for trouble with the rascal, and we're going to have it. Bring along the gees."

The party led their horses round to the corral at the back of the lumber hotel, the corral answering the purpose of a stable.

The schoolboy adventurers had not expected "Eastern" refinements in the mountain mining-camp, and they were prepared to look after their mounts themselves.

The horses and the mule having been rubbed down and fed, and looked after generally, the chums washed off the dust of the trail at the pump in the yard—that being the place where residents in the hotel performed their ablutions in public.

Then they entered the Pine Log. A Chinese servant showed them to their room, a large apartment on the ground floor at the back of the house.

There was no choice about being on the ground floor, as the Pine Log had only one storey.

The "beds" consisted of planks, and any covering had to be provided by the guests themselves; but they were prepared for that.

"Well, there's room for the lot of us," said Bob Lawless; "and it's just as well to

keep together. If Chunky snores we'll get up and brain him!"

"Look here—" began Chunky Todgers warmly.

"Me hungry!" murmured Yen Chin.

"I'm jolly hungry!" remarked Chunky. "I hope they've got something decent to eat. I don't mind roughing it so far as accommodation goes, but I do want a square meal."

"This way," said Bob. The five schoolboys proceeded to the dining-room.

There were a good many guests there, and a meal was going on.

Frank Richards & Co. secured places at the long board table, and found that the meal, though roughly served, was decidedly "square."

There was enough and to spare, and even Chunky Todgers was fully satisfied.

A good many glances were cast at the schoolboys by the other diners, most of whom wore red shirts and big, muddy boots, and had their hats on the back of their heads.

They did not stand on ceremony in Last Chance Camp.

A good many inquiries, too, were directed to them, all of which they answered cheerfully, and they found the mountain miners friendly enough.

After the meal, Frank Richards & Co. looked for the sheriff.

But the sheriff had vanished, and the landlord had taken his place, so to speak.

Posy Pete was only playing one half of his double-turn at present.

He was in the bar-room, busy helping his Chinese bar-keeper to serve his many customers, the "boys" apparently having come in from the gulches with a very powerful thirst on them.

But the chums of Cedar Creek were determined to interview Mr. Posy Pete in his capacity of sheriff, and they waited for an opportunity.

When, in a lull of business, the landlord went into his own room, and they saw him through the half-open door, eating his supper, they followed him in.

"Can we speak to you now?" inquired Bob Lawless.

"I guess you can, if you like," answered the landlord. "Ain't you satisfied with your room?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Ain't you satisfied with the price?"

"Certainly."

"Then I guess there's nothing to be said." "It's about Handsome Alf—"

"Think again!" urged the sheriff. "Carson's a bad man to run against. I'm warning you."

"Look here," said Bob Lawless warmly. "I suppose there's some law in this town, isn't there?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 215

Another Ripping Roaring Wild West Yarn of the Cedar Creek Chums Next Week!

"Heaps!"
 "And you're the sheriff?"
 "Yep."
 "Then you're bound to take our charge against that rascal."
 "I guess you can run on, if you won't learn sense," answered Posy Pete. "Go ahead, my son!"
 "Well, then—"
 "And cut it short—"
 "I'll cut it as short as you like," said Bob. "We ran on Carson in the foothills, and saved him from being chewed up by a grizzly bear. He owed us an old grudge, because we prevented him from robbing a miner named Bill Lomax, who belonged to this camp, a while back. He attacked us, tried to kill two of us here present, and steal our horses. We're prepared to swear it in court. We want the villain arrested and tried."
 Posy Pete wrinkled his brows.
 "You ain't dreamed all that?" he asked.
 "No."
 "You're all witnesses?"
 "Yes."
 "I guess Handsome Alf will deny it."
 "Most likely he will," agreed Bob. "But something's got to be done."
 "I guess you can leave it in my hands," said the sheriff, after a long pause. "I'll see what Handsome Alf has to say in the morning. I reckon you never expected to find law courts, lawyers, an' judges, all complete, in this camp, sonny! Galsots generally settle their little differences between themselves; excepting horse-thieves and claim-jumpers, who generally get stretched on the branch of a tree. I guess I'm the only law-officer in this hyer town, and I guess I was set up by the boys. I ain't appointed from New Westminster!" Posy Pete grinned. "But I'm taking notice of what you say, and I reckon I'll see what can be done. That's your way out."
 And, leaving the worthy landlord-sheriff to finish his supper, Frank Richards & Co. left him.
 "But Bob turned in the doorway.
 "I think you said Carson is in camp now?"
 "Yep."
 "Where's he to be found?"
 "He runs the faro-bank at the Flare-Up," answered Posy Pete.
 "Where's the Flare-Up?"
 "Across the way. I guess the naphthalamps are alight now, and you'll find it easy."
 "Right-ho!"
 "But it won't be healthy for you youngsters to call on that galoot," added Posy Pete warningly.
 "We shall see."
 And the chums of Cedar Creek left.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Handsome Alf at Home!

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. emerged from the Pine Log Hotel into the street. Darkness had now fallen. Across the street a flare of naphthalamps lighted up the dusk, and they easily picked out the saloon which bore the expressive name of the "Flare-Up."
 That evidently was the headquarters of Handsome Alf, the "sport" of Last Chance. Frank Richards & Co. were a little puzzled how to proceed.

"Well, I guess this lets out!" remarked Bob Lawless. "I reckon that fat galoot is more landlord than sheriff, and he don't want trouble with a rustler of Carson's kidney."

"That's plain enough," agreed Vere Beauclerc.

"You see, there isn't any court in camp, except when the sheriff calls the boys together to deal with a case," said Bob thoughtfully. "He don't feel inclined to do that on the strength of our yarn of what happened in the foothills. If he did, I guess Handsome Alf's got friends of his own sort, who'll swear that he was in camp at the time he was tackling us in the hills. But"—Bob's brow grew grim—"we're not letting up on Carson."

"Certainly not!" exclaimed Frank Richards warningly. "He's got to be prevented from doing any further harm, anyhow!"

"We go killee!" suggested Yen Chin, whose ideas were extremely Oriental, in spite of his having lived most of his days in Canada.

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

Frank Richards & Co. Continue Their Journey Into the Great North-West!

"Fathead!" answered Frank.
 "Me tinkee killee!" persisted Yen Chin.
 "Shoottee—oh, yes!"
 "Do you want to be strung up, you young ass?" growled Bob Lawless.
 "I say—" began Chunky Todgers.
 "Well, what do you think, Chunky?"
 "Why not go to bed?" asked Chunky, with the air of a fellow propounding a really brilliant suggestion.
 "What?"
 "We're tired, you know—at least, I am. Let's go to bed."
 "You silly jay!" howled Bob. "What about Handsome Alf?"
 "Oh, never mind him! I'm sleepy."
 "Chunky had better go to bed," said Beauclerc, laughing. "And Yen Chin had better go with him."
 "Me sleepee allee light," assented the Chinese.

"Vamoose, then!" grunted Bob. Chunky Todgers very willingly made for the bed-room, where his resonant snore was soon added to the other noises of the Pine Log Hotel.

Yen Chin went with him. But Frank Richards, Bob, and Beauclerc remained in the street, debating what was to be done in the affair of Handsome Alf.

"I guess we're going to call on the galoot!" said Bob Lawless at last. "Come on!"

And the three chums crossed the street to the Flare-Up Saloon.

They had their rifles on their backs and their hunting-knives in their belts; but that equipment was not at all unusual or remarkable in the street of Last Chance.

Passing through the flare of the naphthalamps, they entered the saloon.

Frank Richards looked round him with a great deal of interest. It was the first time he had set foot in a place of the kind.

In the unsettled mountains of the North-West matters were on a very different footing from that he had been accustomed to. The camp of Last Chance had grown up like a mushroom round the claims when a "gold-strike" had been made in the valley.

Cabins stood here and there with hardly any attempt at order.

The main street itself was simply the old trail that had run through the valley, marked only by trampling hoofs and heavy boots.

After the gold-seekers had come those who lived by ministering to their wants—the hotel-keeper, the Chinese laundryman, and the "sport" or professional gambler.

The Flare-Up Saloon was built of lumber from the nearest timber, thrown together, as it were, to last but a little while.

There was a goodly crowd in the Flare-Up when Frank Richards and his chums entered.

At the end of the long room was a bar, where two Chinese were kept very busy serving out the potent fire-water.

A good half of the patrons of the establishment were collected there.

But there was a good crowd, too, round a table in the middle of the room, where Handsome Alf kept the faro-bank.

The Californian was seated at the table. The schoolboys recognized at once the dark, rather handsome face and the gold earrings of their old enemy.

Carson did not observe them as they mingled with the crowd round the table.

He held a silver box in his hands, containing the cards, and was pronouncing the familiar formula of the faro-banker:

"Make your game, gents!"
 Coins, notes, and little bags of gold-dust dropped on the table as the "gents" made their game.

The Californian proceeded to deal the cards.

Frank Richards & Co. watched the scene curiously enough.

It was the first time they had seen a faro-bank in operation.

The Californian was dealing the cards. The result of the deal was profitable to the sport, who raked in a good many of the coins and notes on the table.

As he was doing so he glanced over the crowd, and started as his eyes fell upon Frank Richards & Co.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Face to Face!

WE'VE run you down, Alf Carson!" said Bob Lawless quietly.

The gambler stared at him, his black eyes gleaming.

Then he shrugged his shoulders.

"What do you mean? I don't know you,

I guess!" he answered. "If you're here to play, put your money on the table, and don't chew the rag!"

"I guess we're not here to play," said Bob Lawless.

"Then vamoose the ranch!"
 "Not just yet. We're here to settle with you, you scoundrel!"

The Californian's swarthy face became almost livid.

His hand for the moment strayed to the six-shooter that was strapped to his side.

Frank Richards shoved his rifle forward at once.

Across the corner of the faro-table the barrel was directed straight at Alf, with Frank's finger on the trigger.

"Don't touch that pistol, Carson!" said Frank very quietly.

There was a buzz in the crowd round the table.

The startling interruption of the faro game caused a sensation in the Flare-Up Saloon, where startling interruptions, however, were not infrequent.

Handsome Alf sat with a face like a demon, but he did not venture to drop his hand upon the revolver.

A bullet would have been through his arm before he could have drawn the weapon, and he knew it.

His black eyes were scintillating at the chums of Cedar Creek.

"Look hyer, what's the rumpus?" exclaimed a big-bearded miner. "You're stopping the game with this hyer."

"Let up!" said several voices.

There was a movement forward of several fellows, whom it was easy to see were friends, and probably confederates, of Handsome Alf.

Bob Lawless faced them coolly, while Frank's rifle never faltered for a moment as he watched the Californian.

"Gents and citizens," said the raucher's son, in a clear, cool voice, "we've come here to look for Handsome Alf Carson, and we've found him at home. We accuse him of attempted murder and horse-stealing!"

"I've never seen you before!"
 "You rascal!" exclaimed Frank Richards indignantly. "It's only three days since you tried to kill me by rolling down a rock on the mountain trail!"

"I've never seen you before!" said the Californian doggedly. "You've mistaken me for some other man, I guess."

"Let that be tried before a camp jury!" said Bob Lawless. "Gentlemen, that man is a horse-thief and a rustler!"

There was a buzz of voices.
 The word horse-thief was quite enough to cause excitement.

Handsome Alf was a little pale now under his dusky skin.

His glance wandered over the crowd, and he was making almost imperceptible signs to several men of his own stamp, who gathered about him at the head of the faro-table.

There was every prospect of a lively "shooting-match," and the three chums were on the alert.

They had taken a bold step in denouncing Handsome Alf in public before a crowd of the citizens of Last Chance, but they had only the choice between that and letting the matter drop.

"We're ready to swear to the truth of what we say, and there are other witnesses," continued Bob Lawless. "This man has got to answer to the charge. Isn't that fair play?"

"You bet!"

"I guess that's so!"

"It's the sheriff's business to call a jury and try the case," went on Bob Lawless. "That's what we want. You don't want horse-thieves walking round free in Last Chance."

The Californian rose to his feet. His teeth were hard-set.

"I guess I'm ready to face the sheriff, and any man in Last Chance," he said. "I say that these boys are lying, or else they're making a mistake. I'll ask Posy Pete myself to call a jury in the morning, and have it out before all the camp. I can't say more than that."

"That's all we want," said Bob Lawless. "I guess you'll have what you want, and afterwards I'll call you to account!" said Handsome Alf between his teeth. "Now let up, and let the game go on."

Bob Lawless exchanged glances with his chums.

The crowd of miners round the table evidently agreed with the Californian, and they were anxious for the faro to be resumed.

Bob nodded. "That's good enough," he said. "I've had my say, and all the camp knows what you're accused of, Carson. If you don't stand your trial they'll know what to think of you, anyhow."

He stepped back. The three chums moved off from the table, keeping a wary eye open, however.

Handsome Alf dropped into his seat again, and took up the silver box containing the cards.

"Make your game, gents!" he said. Some of the onlookers laughed, and the game of faro continued.

But Handsome Alf's eyes, calm as he looked, were burning.

His glance rested once or twice on the chums of Cedar Creek, and the gleam of them told of the rage within.

Frank Richards & Co. quitted the saloon. There was a grim smile on Bob Lawless' sunburnt face as they came out into the naphtha glare in the street.

"I guess that does it!" he remarked. "It'll be the talk of the camp, and Mr. Posy Pete will be bound to take the case in hand, whether he wants to or not. I half expected that gang to begin a row. But I guess they saw we could give as good as they could send."

"The rotter will have to stand up to his trial now, or else clear out of the place overnight," said Frank.

"Yes; or else—"

"He can't do anything else," said Beauclere. "He might," answered Bob quietly. "He don't want to leave Last Chance. He seems to be doing good business here. And I guess he don't want to stand up before a jury who'll hear our evidence. We're not going to sleep to-night, my pippins!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Frank. "Unless I'm jolly well mistaken, Handsome Alf's thinking of a third way out of the trouble," said Bob. "We shall see."

The three chums returned to the Pine Log Hotel in a thoughtful mood.

They were satisfied, so far; but the matter had not ended yet, by any means.

Last Chance was a lawless place, but not lawless enough for Handsome Alf to use his revolver recklessly, as he would have liked to do.

But in the dark hours of the night, when the camp was sleeping, it was only too probable that he would take measures to silence the awkward witnesses who had turned up against him.

Posy Pete met the three schoolboys as they came in, and gave them a fat grin. They could see that he had already heard of the scene in the Flare-Up.

"I guess you young antelopes have been looking for trouble," he remarked.

"And we've found it!" smiled Bob.

"Want your hosses?"

"Eh? No!"

"You ain't leaving camp?"

"I guess not!"

"You'd better," said the landlord-sheriff. "You take my advice, and light out. I tell you Handsome Alf's a bad man to have trouble with."

"Thanks!" said Bob. "We're going to bed. Good-night!"

And the chums of Cedar Creek went to their room.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Caught in the Act!

CHUNKY TODGERS was snoring serenely when Frank Richards & Co. came in.

Yen Chin was fast asleep, too. A single candle was guttering in the room, shedding a dim light.

Bob Lawless closed the door and shot the bolt.

Then he crossed to the window and examined it.

A wooden shutter closed the window, which was quite innocent of glass.

The window was secured by a single wooden bar, which kept the shutter fastened.

"I guess that's easy enough to open from the outside," remarked Bob, in a low voice; "and I guess we'll make it easier."

He removed the bar.

"What's that for?" asked Frank, in surprise.

"In case of visitors," said Bob coolly. "You want them to come in?"

"I reckon so."

"Phew!"

Bob Lawless tapped the coiled trail-rope, which he had taken into the bed-room. "I shall be awake," he whispered; "and a galoot who gets in at that window won't get out so easy."

"Oh!" said Frank.

"It's a bit close in here," went on Bob, in a louder voice. "I guess we'll have the window open."

He blew out the candle, and threw the wooden shutter wide open.

The window was only a couple of feet from the ground outside, and Bob stood in the darkness, looking out.

Behind the hotel stretched the waste ground as far as the claims on the creek, two or three hundred yards distant.

Beyond lay the dark mountain, clothed in pine, with a glimmer of starlight here and there breaking the gloom.

The night was warm, high up in the mountains as they were, and a soft breeze brought the scent of the pines in at the open window.

Bob Lawless turned from the window, and in the darkness of the room examined the rifles and placed his rope handy.

"I guess you galoots can snooze," he remarked. "I'll wake you up if I want you."

"I guess not!" answered Frank.

"No fear!" said Beauclere quietly.

And the three schoolboys stretched themselves on their beds to rest, but not to sleep.

The open window and the patch of glimmering starlight without were quite sufficient to banish all desire of slumber.

Anyone who chose could reach the room easily enough, and to enter it from without was equally easy; and if Handsome Alf chose to pay them a visit, he would have no difficulty in learning which room had been assigned to them.

A few words with the Chinese servant, and

a tip, would get him all the information he wanted about the Cedar Creek party.

The night grew older, and the many noises of the Pine Log Hotel died away.

In the street of Last Chance the lights of the Flare-Up Saloon were extinguished at length, and darkness reigned.

To a still later hour footsteps could still be heard, as some belated pilgrim wandered home to his cabin.

But the latest footsteps died away, and Last Chance Camp lay in silence and slumber under the stars.

But there were three at least who did not sleep.

It was two hours past midnight, but Frank Richards & Co. had not closed their eyes.

They had removed their boots in order to be able to move without sound, and that was all.

Frank Richards felt a soft touch on his arm in the darkness, and started.

"Onlee lill' Chinese," murmured Yen Chin. "Me thinkee heal something. You wakee. Bad manee comee!"

"Quiet!" whispered Bob Lawless.

Chunky Todgers was still deep in slumber, and his deep snore was audible in the silence of the night.

Frank Richards & Co. made no sound.

Invisible themselves in the darkness of the room, they watched the faintly glimmering square of the open window tensely.

A dark shadow blotted the starlight.

Frank felt his heart throb.

Outside the window a man was standing, his head and shoulders silhouetted clearly against the glimmer of starlight.

He was peering into the room.

But within there was complete darkness, and he could see nothing.

Several minutes passed without a movement.

Then a faint whisper was heard without; but, faint as it was, the listening chums recognised the tones of Handsome Alf.

It was the Californian.

"It's a cinch, I reckon. Sleeping sound!"

"I guess so," came another whisper.

The sport was not alone; Still the chums of Cedar Creek made no



THE LAST OF CARSON! Three or four brawny men grasped the rail, and Alf Carson was forced to sit astride it. Shoulder high above the ground the rail was borne along. "I guess we've seen the last of that galoot!" said Bob Lawless, as the chums watched the procession down the street.

(See Chapter 5.)

movement, no sound. They waited grimly for the Californian to proceed.

The two figures receded cautiously, and the silhouette disappeared from the window.

Bob Lawless, rope in hand, stepped a little nearer to the window, and bent his ear to listen.

There was a faint whispering without. He counted five dim forms in the starlight, close by the lumber wall near the window.

"No noise!" It was the Californian's sibilant whisper. "We don't want the whole camp buzzing round us. There's five in the crowd. I guess the Chinese don't amount to much, but he's got to go with the rest. Follow me in without a sound, and when I turn on the lantern each of you collar your man. Knock them on the head if they try to yell!"

"You bet!"

"Rope them up and gag them," went on the soft whisper. "We can carry them as far as the creek, and get the horses there. Last Chance will find them gone in the morning. The boys'll reckon they lit out because they were skeered. Nobody will look for their bones at the bottom of the canyon a mile away, I reckon."

There was a whisper in return which Bob did not catch.

He smiled grimly in the darkness.

The Californian's rascally scheme was not likely to work out according to programme, cunning as it was.

The minutes passed, and there was a faint sound without, and several dark heads were visible outside the window.

The chums were still as mice.

A swarthy hand was laid on the window-frame, and with the stealthy softness of a panther the lithe Californian drew himself in to the room, his companions waiting till he was inside before they attempted to follow.

Handsome Alf stepped down inside the window.

All was dark and still.

The Californian, cautious as a cat, stood inside the room, listening intently, before he made his comrades a signal to follow.

In the darkness, only a few feet from him, Bob Lawless' hand was already raised, with the noosed rope in it.

Whiz!

The sudden sound in the gloom made the Californian start and quiver; but before he knew what was happening the noose was over his head, and Bob Lawless was dragging fiercely on the rope.

Handsome Alf went to the floor with a crash, the noose tight round him, and Bob Lawless dragging it tighter.

A gasping cry left his lips as he fell.

There was a sudden buzz without, and a dim figure clambered in at the window, to receive a fierce thrust from Frank Richards' rifle-barrel, and fall with a crash outside, and a loud yell.

The next instant Vere Beauclerc slammed the wooden shutter, and jammed the bar into its place.

There was loud exclamations of surprise and rage outside, and a heavy blow was struck on the shutter.

The chums did not heed it.

Handsome Alf was rolling on the floor, struggling furiously to escape from the grip of the rope, but struggling in vain.

His arms were pinned by the tightened noose, and Bob Lawless was on him, knocking the rope.

Frank Richards struck a match and lighted a candle.

Fiercely as he struggled, Handsome Alf was a prisoner, and he had no chance of escape.

His black eyes blazed as he rolled and wriggled.

Crash!

Outside, heavy blows fell on the shutter.

"Give them a shot, Franky!" called out Bob Lawless, without even looking up from his prisoner, whom he was securing.

Frank Richards put his rifle muzzle to a crack in the shutter, and pulled the trigger.

Crack!

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

There was a wild howl outside, and a sound of hurrying footsteps.

The crashing blows and the shot had awakened the whole building, and voices could be heard on all sides.

Handsome Alf's gang evidently did not consider it prudent to remain longer, and one of them carried away Frank's bullet in his arm as he ran.

"They're going!" panted Frank. "Gone!" smiled Beauclerc. "All except this beauty?"

The Californian was still struggling breathlessly, and uttering savage curses.

Unheeding his wild words, Bob Lawless knotted the rope about his legs as well as his arms, and then his struggles ceased.

There was a loud knock on the room door.

"What's this hyer rumpus?" demanded the voice of Posy Pete. "Open this hyer door, you galoots!"

Frank Richards threw open the door.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Last of Handsome Alf!

BOB LAWLESS rose breathlessly from the Californian, who lay on the floor a helpless prisoner, bound hand and foot.

Posy Pete, who held a candle in the neck of a bottle in his hand stared blankly into the room.

Behind him appeared several guests of Pine Log Hotel, in shirt and trousers, and with weapons in their hands.

All eyes were turned upon the Californian. "Waal, I srow!" ejaculated Posy Pete. "I reckon this hyer beats the hull deck! What sort of a circus do you call this hyer?"

"Can't you see for yourself?" asked Bob Lawless. "What do you think Handsome Alf is doing here at this time of night?"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" was the sheriff's reply.

"The rest of the gang have got off," said Bob. "We don't want them. But this galoot walked into the trap as pleasant as you please. He didn't calculate that we were sleeping with one eye open."

The Californian did not speak.

There was despair now in his haggard face.

He had been outwitted by the chums of Cedar Creek, and it was of little use for him to speak.

"There was a gang of them," said Bob. "They've got the horses by the creek all ready to run us out of camp—if we'd been asleep, as they reckoned. And Mister Carson thought nobody would look for our bones at the bottom of the canyon. I guess our bones won't ornament the canyon bottom just yet."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" repeated Posy Pete. "Sport, I reckon the game is up for you. I allow you can't play these hyer games in Last Chance, nohow! Boys, you keep that galoot tied up till morning!"

"We're going to," said Bob.

Posy Pete, with a last look at the bound man, turned away, and tramped back to his room.

Frank Richards closed the door.

The Pine Log Hotel was soon quiet again, but the chums of Cedar Creek did not think of slumber.

Even Chunky Todgers, who had been awakened by the uproar, did not close his fat eyelids again.

Needless to say, there was no sleep for Handsome Alf.

He lay on the floor, bound hand and foot, able to use only his tongue, and he used that until a cut from the trail-rope put an end to his oaths.

After that he lay in sullen silence.

Frank Richards & Co. were watchful for the remainder of the night, lest the Californian's "pard" should attempt a rescue.

But those worthies did not return.

An open attack was a little too desperate a venture for them, and they were content to leave their leader to his fate.

The schoolboy chums were glad enough when morning dawned on the valley and the sunrays stole into their room.

Bob Lawless threw open the shutter as the daylight strengthened.

In the early sunshine miners were already turning out to tramp down to their claims.

A goodly crowd, however, turned in at the Pine Log for breakfast.

Breakfast was later than usual that morning at the Pine Log; there was another matter to be attended to first.

Posy Pete and a couple of bearded miners came to the room, and the Californian's legs were released, and he was marched out into the street before the hotel.

With his arms still bound, the wretched gambler stood in the midst of a buzzing crowd.

The proceedings were short and simple.

Legal proceedings in Last Chance were quite innocent of formality or red tape.

A dozen men were called up by Posy Pete—who was all sheriff for the nonce, and had dropped the landlord half of his character—to act as jury.

Round them a thick crowd gathered to look on, and to take a hand in the proceedings also, if the spirit moved them to do so.

Posy Pete, seated on a cask in his shirt-sleeves, called upon Frank Richards & Co. to make their charge.

There was a deep murmur from the crowd of miners as the accusation was made. Handsome Alf stood in sullen silence.

He had no defence to make, having been caught red-handed.

He could only thank his good-fortune that he was in Canada, where lynch law was not in favour.

"I guess the case is clear," was Posy Pete's comment, when the accusation had been made. "This hyer galoot is charged with loss-stealing, attempted, and murder, also attempted; and he's caught moseying into the boys' room in the middle of the night. There ain't no doubt what he meant to do. Gentlemen of the jury, guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!"

"Lynch him!" shouted a voice.

"I guess there won't be any lynching hyer," said Posy Pete. "Handsome Alf is sentenced to be rid on a rail out of town, with the warning that he'll be strung up on the nearest tree if he shows his nose within ten miles of Last Chance ag'in. You hear me yap, Mister Carson?"

The sport did not answer.

He had no defence to make, and he was fortunate to escape so cheaply. Only his black eyes glittered at Frank Richards & Co.

Sentence having been pronounced, it was carried out without delay.

A rail was brought from the nearest fence, and the Californian was freed from the rope, and ordered to take a seat upon it.

Frank Richards & Co. looked on quietly. It was the first time they had seen that peculiar Western punishment, of riding on a rail, carried out.

Three or four brawny men grasped the rail, and the sport was forced to sit astride of it, grasping it with both hands to keep his position.

Shoulder-high above the ground the rail was borne along in the midst of a shouting, boozing crowd.

To keep a seat on the rocking rail was impossible, and Handsome Alf was soon clinging to it like a cat, with arms and legs, to save himself from a fall.

From the Pine Log, Frank Richards & Co. watched his progress down the street, and he disappeared from their sight at last.

The crowd returned at last, without Handsome Alf.

He had been set down half a mile outside the limits of Last Chance, with the stern warning to "hoof it" for new quarters, on pain of being "strung up" if he was seen again.

"I guess we've seen the last of that galoot!" remarked Bob Lawless, as the chums went in to breakfast.

And the chums of Cedar Creek were glad enough to know that they had seen the last of their bitter enemy.

Far away in the foot-hills, Handsome Alf was tramping away, his face set southward, not again to trouble Frank Richards & Co. during their holiday in the North-West.

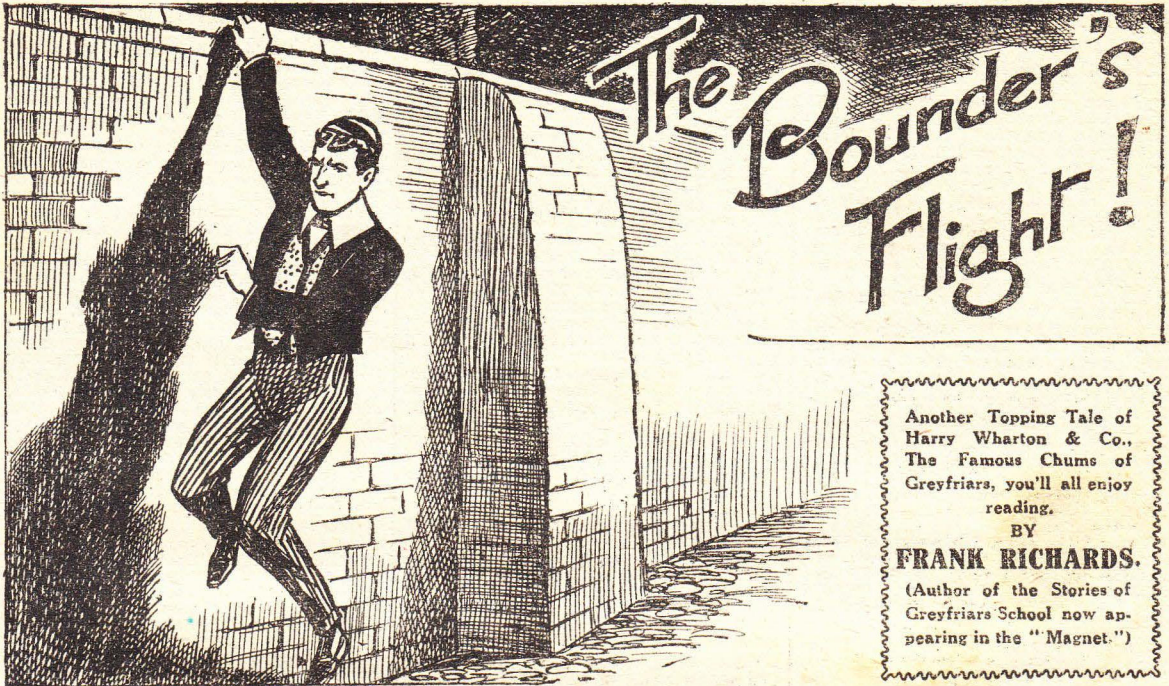
THE END.

(You simply must not miss next week's stunning story of Frank Richards & Co.'s holiday adventures in the Great North-West.)

"SMITHY HAS KILLED LODER!"

Mad with rage and partly in self-defence, the Bounder fells Gerald Loder. Then, to avoid the terrible consequences, he flies in horror from Greyfriars!

THE BLOW AND THE BOLT!



Another Topping Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., The Famous Chums of Greyfriars, you'll all enjoy reading.

BY **FRANK RICHARDS.**

(Author of the Stories of Greyfriars School now appearing in the "Magnet.")

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Trouble Ahead!**

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the matter with Smithy?"
"What's wrong?"
Harry Wharton & Co. all spoke at once.

They were coming along the Remove passage at Greyfriars, when they met Vernon-Smith of the Remove—the junior who was known at Greyfriars as the "Bounder." There certainly was something amiss with Smithy.

He was striding along the passage at a great rate, his hands clenched hard, his eyes glinting, and his brows contracted. The Bounder was not good-tempered, and sometimes his passionate nature had caused trouble to himself and to others; but the chums of the Remove had seldom seen him in so savage a temper as he evidently was now.

The Bounder did not reply to their questions; he did not seem even to hear them. He strode right on, scowling blackly; and would have passed the juniors had not Bob Cherry caught him by the arm and forcibly brought him to a halt.

"Smithy—"
The Bounder gritted his teeth.
"Let me go!"
"But what's the matter?"
"Who's been disturbing your noble serenity, old chap?" asked Frank Nugent.
"Blessed if you don't look like the heavy villain in a giddy melodrama!"

"Let me go!" said Bob Cherry calmly, keeping a tight grip on the Bounder's arm.
"Tell your uncle all about it!"
"You silly ass—"

"That's what I call gratitude!" said Bob indignantly. "Here we are, all ready to sympathise and to give you good advice—"
"I don't want your advice!" growled the Bounder, shaking his arm to free it—not an easy matter, for Bob Cherry had a grip that was like a vice.

"Never mind, you shall have it all the same," said Bob cheerfully. "It is more blessed to give than to receive—especially advice. What's happened?"
"Get it off your chest, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton kindly. "We're all your pals now, you know."
Vernon-Smith paused.

From the end of the passage at the stairs came a piping voice—the voice of Tubby of the Third, Loder's fag.

"Loder's waiting for you, Smithy. Don't say I didn't tell you!"

And Tubby scudded downstairs.
"So it's Loder?" asked Harry Wharton.
"Yes," muttered the Bounder. "It's Loder—and I'm fed up! There's going to be trouble—and you fellows had better keep out of it!"

"My dear chap, we're always looking for trouble," said Bob Cherry. "If it's Loder, we'll back you up. But what's the matter? You used to be on very chummy terms with Loder of the Sixth; is there a rift in the lute?"

The Bounder hesitated, and Harry Wharton & Co. regarded him curiously. Time had been when they were on the worst possible terms with the Bounder, but that was no longer so. Vernon-Smith had earned that name by his reckless ways—when he had first come to Greyfriars he had been a "bounder" with a vengeance. He had been very thick with Loder, the black sheep of the Sixth, and with other fellows of the same kidney. But of late there had been a change in the Bounder—he was on more friendly terms with his old foes—and apparently on more hostile terms with his old friends. That, perhaps, followed as a matter of course.

"Chuck it out, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "Is Loder down on you? If you're up against Loder, you can rely on us to back you up!"

"Yes, rather," said Harry Wharton.
And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh chimed in with the remark that the rafterfulness was terrific.

The Bounder set his teeth savagely.
"You can't do anything," he said.
"Loder's been down on me for a long time now—ever since I chucked going to his little parties. Not that he made a lot out of me. I play nap better than he does, and I've got more capital. But he didn't like my giving him the go-by, you see."

"I suppose he wouldn't," said Wharton reflectively.

"And, as he's a prefect, he can make things pretty warm for any chap he dislikes," said the Bounder. "You know that. He's made things pretty warm for you!"

"He has—he has!" sighed Bob Cherry.
"Very warm sometimes. But we've warned him as well, once or twice!"

"He reported me to-day to Quelchy for bullying, as he called it," said Vernon-Smith.
"I only cuffed young Tubby for being cheeky."

"Ahem! You cuffed him rather hard, didn't you?" said Bob. "I saw him blubbing in the Close afterwards."

"Well, he checked me!"
"Ahem!"

"You are a bit of a bully, Smithy," remarked Nugent. "You see, you give Loder a chance at you when you do these things."
"You were a bit rough on Tubby," said Harry Wharton. "As a matter of fact, I was going to speak to you about it myself." The Bounder sneered.

"Well, speak away!" he said. "I'm ready to answer for anything I've done—with or without gloves, just as you like."

Wharton frowned a little. He had been on much better terms lately with the Bounder, and the Bounder had certainly shown himself to be a decent fellow in many respects. But there was no doubt whatever that he was an exceedingly difficult fellow to get on with.

"I won't quarrel with you now, Smithy, as you're in hot water with Loder," said Harry quietly. "Never mind that now. Only bullying fags is a rotten thing. Not that Loder cares about it—he's the worst bully in the school himself. But that's what gave him a chance at you, you see."

"And he took it!" said Vernon-Smith.
"Quelchy licked me hard!"

The Co. were silent. They could not help thinking that the Bounder had deserved that licking; but they did not want to say so at the present moment.

"I saw Loder afterwards, and told him what I thought of him," said Vernon-Smith. "He never found fault with me for bullying when I used to play cards with him."

"You bet he didn't!" said Bob Cherry.
"But if you always play the game now, Smithy, Loder can't touch you. Don't bully the fags—don't break bounds—don't play the giddy ox at all, in fact—and it will be like drawing Loder's teeth. He won't be able to get at you at all!"

Vernon-Smith laughed sneeringly.
"I shall do just as I choose, and hang Loder—and hang you, too, Bob Cherry, for the matter of that!"

"Ahem!" coughed Bob. He felt a strong impulse to knock Smithy's head against the wall, but he nobly refrained. After all, the Bounder was in trouble because he was trying, upon the whole, to do the decent thing, and so it was up to the Famous Five to back him up as well as they could, and avoid taking offence.

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

Has Vernon-Smith Killed the Bullying Loder? See Next Week's Dramatic Tale!

"What did Loder do when you told him what you thought of him?" asked Harry.

"He gave me two hundred lines, to take to him at tea-time."

"And you're taking them?"

"No fear! I told him to go and eat coke!"

Wharton whistled softly.

"You told a prefect to go and eat-coke? Ahem!"

"He's not going to come the prefect with me, considering what I know about him!" growled the Bouncer. "I could tell the Head a good many things if I chose!"

"That would be sneaking."

"And Loder would deny it all, so it wouldn't be much good," Bob Cherry remarked.

"I know that. Anyway, I haven't done the lines. He's just sent Tubb to tell me he's waiting for the lines. If they're not done, he's going to lick me!"

"Well, prefects always do, if you don't do the impots."

"He's not going to lick me!" said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth. "If it were any other prefect—Wingate, for instance—it would be different. But Loder is only going for me because I've chucked him! I'll go and see the cad!"

The Bouncer stamped away down the lower stairs, and made his way to Loder's study. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged dubious glances.

"Looks like trouble!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"All the same—"

"Yes, all the same, it's rotten of Loder. And if Smithy will only be decent, we'll back him up, and I think we should be a match for Loder," said Harry. "We've downed him before, and we can down him again."

And the Co. agreed heartily.

THE SECOND CHAPTER Loder Comes Down Heavy!

LODER of the Sixth was not alone in his study when Vernon-Smith arrived there. His pal Carne was with him.

Both the Sixth-Formers were evidently waiting for Vernon-Smith. They exchanged a quick glance and a grin as the Bouncer entered.

The Bouncer did not come in with the respect due from a junior to members of the high and mighty Sixth. He threw the door roughly open, and stalked in, with his brow clouded and defiant. He did not close the door.

Loder fixed his eyes upon him.

"Shut the door!" he rapped out.

"Rats!"

"What!"

"Shut it yourself!" said the Bouncer.

Loder set his teeth. He crossed to the door, closed it, and turned the key in the lock.

Vernon-Smith watched him sullenly.

"Have you done your lines, Smithy?" asked Loder, with ominous quietness.

"No."

"Then you know what to expect."

"And I am not going to do them, either," said the Bouncer.

Loder took up a cane.

Vernon-Smith clenched his hands harder, and backed away a little.

"We'll have this out!" he said, in a low and concentrated voice. "First of all, Loder, you're not going to come the prefect over me."

"Indeed!" said Loder.

"Yes, indeed! Do you think I don't know the whole game?" the Bouncer exclaimed passionately. "You're down on me because I've chucked you and your set. You're going to make things hot for me unless I come round. Well, I'm not coming round. I'll never play nap in this study again. I'm going to keep clear of that betting gang in Friardale. I've done with the whole bizney."

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Loder calmly. "If you hint that cards are ever played in my study I shall punish you for insolence!"

The Bouncer stared at him.

"Oh, I'm not going to tell the Head, if that's what you're afraid of!" he exclaimed bitterly.

"You can tell the Head what you choose, THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

Smith. If you made any accusation of that kind against a prefect, you'd have to prove it, that's all, or else be expelled from the school. I think you would find it a little difficult to prove."

"Just a little!" grinned Carne.

The Bouncer's lip curled.

"Oh, I know you cover up your tracks pretty carefully," he said. "But whether I could prove it or not, I'm not going to sneak. But considering how much I know about you, I'm not going to let you come the prefect over me. Let me alone, and I'll let you alone. That's all I want."

"It is necessary for a prefect to put down bullying among the fags, and to punish a junior for insolence," said Loder, swishing the cane in the air.

"Oh, chuck that! I'm putting it to you plainly," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm not going to do any lines you give me, and I'm not going to be caned. That's flat!"

"We shall see," remarked Loder.

"That's what I've come here to tell you," said the Bouncer. "Now I've told you, I'll go. I'm finished here."

He made a movement towards the door. Carne, at a sign from Loder, stepped between the junior and the door of the study.

"No, you don't!" he remarked.

Loder swished the cane again. "Hold out your hand, Vernon-Smith!" he said.

"Rats!"

"Do you refuse to obey me—a prefect?"

"Yes."

"Very well," said Loder, his eyes glittering. "Then I shall use force. Collar him, Carne, and lay him on the table, and he shall have the licking of his life!"

"What-ho!" said Carne

Vernon-Smith backed away again as the two seniors closed in upon him. He cast a quick glance round, and caught up a chair by the back, and swung it into the air. His white, desperate face startled the bullies of the Sixth, and they paused involuntarily.

"Hands off!" said the Bouncer thickly. "If you lay a finger on me, I'll brain you! I mean business!"

"Put down that chair!" shouted Loder furiously.

"I won't!"

Loder sprang forward, his temper was up now. To be openly defied in his own study by a junior of the Lower Fourth was a little too much for Loder.

Vernon-Smith kept his word. He did mean business. He brought the chair down with a sweep, right at the prefect as he sprang upon him. The Bouncer, when his blood was up, was utterly reckless, and his blood was up now.

Loder threw up his hands, and caught the downward sweep of the chair upon them, and gave a yell of pain.

The next moment he had wrenched the chair away, and hurled it aside, and his grasp closed with the Bouncer.

Vernon-Smith struggled desperately.

Junior as he was, he was muscular and wiry, and able to put up a good fight, even against a big Sixth-Former. But Carne was rushing to Loder's aid, and he seized the Bouncer from behind and held on to him. Between the two of them Vernon-Smith was quickly reduced to helplessness.

"Now," panted Loder, "chuck him across the table!"

The Bouncer, kicking and struggling frantically, was dragged to the table, and thrown across it, face downwards.

Carne held his legs, and Loder gripped his collar and held him there, and, with his free hand, Loder raised the cane.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

Loder had been considerably hurt by the chair, and he was furious. He had said that he would give the Bouncer the licking of his life, and he kept his word. It had been Smithy's fate to be flogged more than once, but his floggings had been nothing to this.

The cane rose and fell like lightning, with all the force of Loder's powerful arm.

Vernon-Smith writhed and struggled and panted under the rain of blows.

Swish, swish, swish!

"My hat!" gasped Carne, as he grappled with the junior's writhing legs. "Blessed if I can hold him much longer! Lay it on!"

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

The Bouncer, choking with pain and rage,

made a desperate effort and freed one leg from Carne's grasp. He kicked out furiously and caught the senior under the chin with his boot, and Carne staggered away with a howl of agony.

Vernon-Smith curled round on the table like a cat, and kicked at Loder, and the prefect caught his boot full on the chest, and reeled away.

The Bouncer was off the table in a twinkling then, and making for the door. But he had to pause to unlock it, and in that second Loder was upon him again.

Vernon-Smith dragged the door open and bounded out, and the cane came lashing upon his shoulders as he went. He staggered across the passage, and the cane lashed again and again, till he fled.

Loder did not pursue him. He did not want the rest of the Sixth to see him chasing a breathless junior down the passage. He turned back, panting, into his study. Carne was holding his jaw and groaning.

"Has he hurt you?" asked Loder.

"Ow—ow! Yes! Groogh! The infernal little beast!" groaned Carne. "Ow—ow!"

"Well, he's had it pretty thick!" panted Loder, throwing down the cane. "I fancy he'll think twice before he checks me again! And this isn't the end. I'll make the young cad feel that life isn't worth living at Greyfriars before I've done with him!"

"He's had it a bit too thick, I fancy," said Carne, after a pause. "Suppose he goes to his Form master and complains? Old Quelch wouldn't allow that kind of a licking, you know."

Loder shrugged his shoulders.

"That's all right. Bullying the fags, and refusing to obey a prefect. Pretty serious things, you know. That will make it all right for me. Must keep cheery juniors in order, somehow. He won't go to Quelch. He'll try to think out some dodge for getting even with me. And he's just the fellow to do something desperate, and then I'll get him socked from the school and finish with him!"

Carne rubbed his chin ruefully. He had a big bruise there, and it felt far from comfortable.

"The sooner the better," he agreed. "He knows too much about us, and I should be jolly glad to see the last of him."

The two black sheep of the Sixth did not know what was to happen before they saw the last of Vernon-Smith.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Planning a Surprise.

HARRY WHARTON knocked at the door of Vernon-Smith's study in the Remove passage.

He had heard the Bouncer return there, and he was anxious to see him. Several fellows had seen the Bouncer bolting from the Sixth Form passage, and there was a great deal of discussion in the Remove about it.

"Who's there?" came a muffled voice from the study.

"I am," said Harry, turning the handle of the door. "Can I come in, Smithy?"

The door was locked on the inside.

"What do you want?"

"Only to know how you got on with Loder."

The key turned, and the door opened. Wharton stepped in.

The Bouncer was alone there. His face was white, and his eyes were gleaming. Whenever he moved his face showed a twinge of pain.

He fixed his eyes upon Wharton.

"Well?" he snapped.

"Did you have it bad?"

"I've been licked—thrashed like a dog!" said the Bouncer, in a suffocated voice.

"But I'm going to make Loder pay for it!"

Wharton looked uneasy.

"That's really what I was thinking about, Smithy," he said abruptly. "Look here, what is it you've got in your mind?"

"That's my business!"

The Bouncer's manner was intensely disagreeable, but Wharton was determined not to take offence.

"You remember the time you rowed with Skinner, Smithy," he said. "You remember how you went too far that time, and got yourself into trouble. If you want to make Loder sit up, we're all willing to help you."

"I don't want your help!"

"But don't think of doing anything rotten," went on Wharton quietly. "You can get your own back without that. You don't want to do anything that would get you the sack. That's just what Loder would like."

Vernon-Smith ground his teeth. "I'm going to give him worse than he's given me—I know that," he said.

"You can't lick a prefect, you know." "Can't I?" The Bounder sneered. "I'll do worse than lick him. You'll see."

"But the consequences—" "Hang the consequences!" "The Head—"

"I don't care a rap for the Head!" Wharton made an impatient gesture.

"Look here, Smitty, you don't want to be sacked from Greyfriars, do you?" "I'll risk that."

"Tell me what you're thinking of doing," said Harry uneasily. "That's my business."

"But—" "Look here, let me alone," said the Bounder gruffly. "I don't want your help, and I don't want your sympathy. I can look after myself. I don't want any fellow meddling in my affairs. That's plain English, isn't it?"

Wharton coloured. "Quite plain enough," he said quietly. "I was only speaking to you as a friend. I shouldn't like to see you ruin yourself, that's all. I'll get out, if you want me to."

The Bounder made no reply, but he watched Harry Wharton with lowering brows as the captain of the Remove left the study. The key clicked in the door again as Wharton took his departure.

Harry returned to Study No. 1 with a troubled brow. He was really concerned about the Bounder. Hard and reckless and cynical as he was, with too many disagreeable traits in his character, it seemed decidedly "rotten" that Vernon-Smith should be victimised in this way just when he was beginning a new and better way of life. It would be still more "rotten" if he should do some reckless thing that would cause him to be expelled from the school, at the time when a new and better prospect was opening before him. But that was what Wharton could not help thinking was very likely to happen. But it was impossible to act as a friend to a fellow who refused all offers of friendship.

The Co. were in Study No. 1 having tea when Wharton came back. They looked inquiringly at the captain of the Remove as he came in.

"Seen Smitty?" asked Bob Cherry. "Yes. He seems to have been through it pretty badly," said Harry, with a clouded brow. "Loder has been pretty rough on him."

Bob Cherry nodded. "Temple of the Fourth saw him bolting out of Loder's study, and Loder whacking him as he went," he remarked. "All the fellows are talking about it. If I were Smitty, I think I'd go to Quelchly about it. Loder has no right to treat him like that."

"I saw Carne a little while ago," said Nugent. "He's got a big bruise on his chin. Smitty must have given them a tussle."

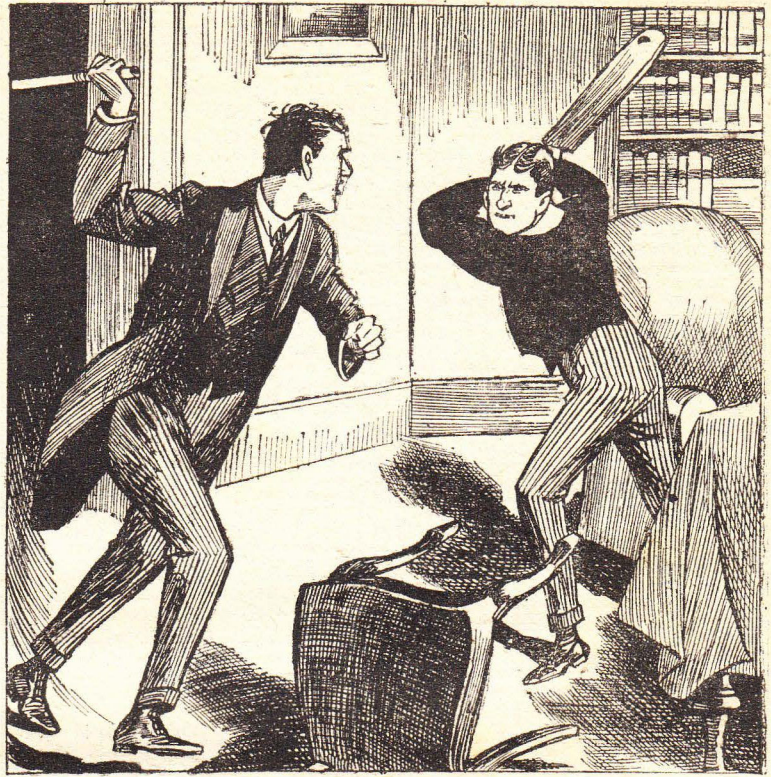
"He can't complain to Quelchly," said Harry. "It all came about through his bullying young Tubb, and he was in the wrong there. The duffer has put himself in the wrong, and Loder has the pull over him. What I'm afraid of is that he's going to do something stupid that will have serious consequences for him."

"What can he do?" "I don't know. But he has got some scheme or other in his mind, and he might do Loder some real injury," said Harry uneasily. "He looks capable of it."

Bob Cherry whistled. "That would mean the sack!" he said. "Yes; and we don't want Smitty to be sacked. He's been turning but quite a decent chap lately, and that's really why Loder is down on him. I think we ought to look after Smitty a bit, and see that he doesn't make a fool of himself."

"Good. He'll cool down when he's got over the licking, and then it will be all right," agreed Johnny Bull. "We'll keep an eye on him."

The study door opened, and Peter Todd of the Remove looked in. There was a broad grin on Todd's face.



CORNERED—AND DESPERATE! The Bounder swung back the bat. His eyes gleamed and glinted over it with a deadly light. "Stand back!" he said. "If you come nearer, Loder, I'll lay you on your back!" Loder did not reply—he ran straight at Vernon-Smith. (See Chapter 4.)

"I suppose you fellows have heard about Smitty?" he remarked.

"Yes. Nothing to grin about in that that I can see," said Wharton, a little gruffly.

"Not at all; but I'm taking the matter up," explained Peter. "Loder is going too strong, and as my study is top study in the Remove—"

"Oh, chuck it!" "As my study is top study in the Remove," said Todd calmly, "I regard it as being up to me to give Loder a little reminder that he can't handle Removeites in this way. Smitty is simply wriggling now. I heard him gasping when I passed his study. He's too blessed proud to blub. I'm going to take the matter up, and I've looked in to borrow your cake-tin—that big tin you make cakes in, you know. The cakes are rotten, but the tin is just what I want."

"What on earth do you want it for?" demanded Wharton. "To fill it up with liquid glue and ink," said Peter calmly. "Then I'm going to lodge it on top of Loder's door—ajar. When Loder goes into his study, he will meet with a sudden surprise. He's in the prefects' room now, but he will be going back to his study presently. Mum's the word, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Can I have the tin?" asked Peter Todd. Harry Wharton handed over the tin.

"And if you've got any ink to spare, you can shove it in," said Peter. Nugent cheerfully emptied a bottle of ink into the tin. Wharton, with equal cheerfulness and generosity, added the contents of a jar of treacle.

"It's beginning to look nice already," said Peter, surveying the horrible mixture with satisfaction. "It will be quite a surprise for Loder, won't it?" "I should jolly well say so! There will be trouble if Loder gets that on his napper!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Well, there's a risk in everything," said

Peter Todd cheerily. "We're bound to remind Loder that the Remove stand together. This will remind him."

And Peter Todd walked off with the tin. He returned to his own study, No. 7, with his prize. His study-mates, Billy Bunter and Tom Dutton and Alonzo Todd, were there, and they all stared at the tin in surprise.

"What on earth's that for?" asked Bunter. "Loder!"

"My dear Peter," began Alonzo Todd, in great surprise, "what can Loder possibly want with what appears to me to be a mixture of ink and treacle?"

"He doesn't want it," said Peter. "But he's going to get it, all the same—and some more nice things with it. Study No. 7 is going to give Loder a lesson."

"Look here," began Billy Bunter, blinking at Peter in alarm through his big spectacles, "I'm not going to have a hand in this, Todd. It's too jolly dangerous laying booby-traps for a prefect—especially a prefect like Loder. You know what he's done to Smitty."

"That's why!" said Peter. "But suppose he licks us the same way?" roared Bunter indignantly. "I tell you, it's not jolly good enough. I'm off!"

And Bunter made for the door. Peter Todd inserted his fingers in the fat junior's collar, and jerked him back again.

"Study No. 7 always stands together," he said severely. "You are going to have a hand in it, Bunter, if only to keep you from chattering about it afterwards. Get the bottle of red ink from the cupboard, and pour it in."

"Look here—" "Get that ink!" roared Peter.

Bunter jumped, and brought the bottle of ink. Peter Todd ruled in Study No. 7 with a rod of iron. He always kept a cricket-stump handy, for the purpose of impressing upon Bunter, when occasion required, that he, Peter, was head of the study. Billy Bunter groaned dismally as he poured in the

red ink; but he realised that it was better to chance a licking from Loder in the future than to get one on the spot from Peter. "Now stir it up with the poker," said Peter.

"But, I say, you know—" "Stir it up!" thundered Peter. Bunter snorted, and stirred it up. Dutton was sent for some liquid glue, and it was added to the mixture. Billy Bunter stirred away industriously.

"There, I think that will do!" said Peter. "I'll take it to Loder's study. Can't trust any of you fellows to do that; you'd make a muck of it!"

And Peter Todd bore the tin away with its fearsome contents. It was getting dusk now, but the lights were not yet on, and it was a favourable moment for Peter's little plan. He reached the Sixth Form passage, and as there was no light under Loder's door, he knew that the prefect was still absent from his quarters. He opened the door quietly.

"Good egg!" murmured Peter. "Loder will be surprised! Uncle Benjamin would approve of planning pleasant surprises for one's dear schoolfellows—Ahem!"

He fetched a chair along the passage, mounted upon it, and carefully arranged the tin. One edge of it rested on top of the door, the other edge on the ledge above the doorway inside the study. It was quite safely perched there—until the door was opened. As soon as the door was pushed open there would be a catastrophe. Peter Todd chuckled as he carried the chair away, and he lost no time in returning to his own quarters. He would have liked very much to be on the scene, to see Loder's face when he received that pleasant surprise—he felt that it would be worth seeing. But considerations of prudence prevented that; it was much safer to be off the scene. Peter Todd sat down to tea in Study No. 7, feeling that he had deserved well of his country.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Blow!

L ODER of the Sixth lounged out of the prefects' room, and walked along the Sixth Form passage with Walker. He was going back to his study, little dreaming of what was awaiting him there. He left Walker at his door, and went on to his study. The door was six inches open, and Loder pushed it with his right hand, feeling in his pocket at the same time with his left for a matchbox.

Then—
Swish! Splash! Squelch!
Loder staggered.
Something—he did not know what it was—came swooping down from above as he stepped into the study, and settled over his head like a bonnet.

It was a large tin!
And from the interior of the tin came a swamping of sticky mixture, swamping his hair, his ears, his face, his neck, his chest. He was blinded, choked, almost suffocated. He let out a gasping yell, which was throttled by the sticky stuff over his face and his mouth, and staggered out into the passage.

"Grooh! Groo-hoogh! Hooh!"
Walker came out of his study again hurriedly, startled by those wild, mad ejaculations in the passage.

"What the dickens—" began Walker. Then he jumped. He did not recognise the awful-looking figure before his eyes. Ink and treacle, ashes and glue, completely concealed the features of Gerald Loder.

"My hat!" howled Walker. "What's that? Who is it?"

"Grooh! Ow! Oh!"

"Loder!" gasped Walker. "What the deuce—"

"Gerroogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Walker, as he caught sight of the nearly-empty tin lying in the doorway. "It's a booby-trap, is it! My hat! You do look sticky! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Figh! Groogh!"

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, coming out of his study. "What—why, what—Oh crumbs! Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder gouged the sticky mass frantically away from his mouth and eyes.

"There's nothing to laugh at, you silly oaf!" he spluttered.

THE POPULAR.—No. 215.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at me— I—I—" Loder choked. "I'm looking!" roared Walker. "I think you look funny! Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate wiped his eyes. "It was a booby-trap, I suppose," he said. "Rather a rough joke, too. You seem in a bad way, Loder."

"I'll slaughter the young villain who did this!" shrieked Loder.

"Who did it?"

"Vernon-Smith, of course—because I licked him this afternoon," sputtered Loder. "I'll skin him—I'll smash him—I'll—" "You'd better go and get a wash," grinned Wingate; "and you'd better make sure it was Vernon-Smith before you go for him, too."

But Loder did not stay to listen. He dashed away to a bath-room, followed by a howl of laughter from all the fellows who caught sight of him.

Under a steaming tap, Loder rubbed and scrubbed frantically at the sticky mixture clinging to his face and to his hair.

It was half an hour before he was anything like respectable.

Walker, still grinning, brought him a clean shirt and collar, and another jacket and waistcoat, and Loder towelled himself down and donned them, breathing fury.

His flight to the bath-room had been watched by fifty pairs of eyes, and a crowd of juniors were now in the passage outside, howling with laughter.

But when Loder's furious face appeared at the door, they scattered. Loder looked as if he would be dangerous at close quarters.

The prefect strode away through the crowd, and the juniors, keeping at a safe distance, roared with merriment.

The prefect made his way directly to Vernon-Smith's study.

There was not the slightest doubt in his mind as to who had laid the booby-trap for him. He had thought of Vernon-Smith at once—and he would have been disappointed if the culprit had turned out to be someone else. But he was sure of it; and he did not waste time in inquiries.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's coming here!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the enraged prefect was seen stamping up the stairs.

"Better give him a clear berth, Toddy!" whispered Wharton.

And Peter Todd grinned and vanished. Loder certainly didn't know that he was the guilty party; but the lively Peter felt that it was wiser not to catch the prefect's eye just then.

Loder came stamping furiously along the passage, and the Removites bolted for their studies. There was a sound of locking doors all along the passage. There was no telling upon whom Loder's wrath might fall.

The prefect stopped at Vernon-Smith's door, and turned the handle. That door was not locked. Skinner, who shared the study with the Bounder, had gone in a few minutes before, and he was there with Vernon-Smith. The Bounder had not left his study, and he did not even know yet what had happened to Loder. Skinner was beginning to tell him, with breathless chuckles, when Loder's hand was heard on the door.

The door was flung open, and the prefect's furious face appeared.

Skinner dodged round the table.

"Here, you keep off!" he yelled, in alarm. "I wasn't me, Loder!"

Loder strode into the study, and pointed to the door with a shaking finger.

"I know who it was," he said thickly. "Get out, Skinner!"

Skinner was only too glad to get out. He fairly jumped into the passage. Then Loder turned upon Vernon-Smith. The Bounder faced him, his eyes glinting.

"Well, what do you want?" he asked, with grim coolness. The Bounder was in a dangerous temper himself, and he was not afraid of Loder.

Loder's fingers worked convulsively. He was in so deadly a rage that he could scarcely control himself.

"You know what you've done," he said, in a choking voice. "I've come here to thrash you for it!" His eyes wandered round the study—he had not thought of a cane, and he wanted an instrument for punishment. His eye fell upon a cricket-stump in a corner, and he made a stride towards it.

The Bounder's teeth came together with a click.

His cricket bat lay on the table—he had been oiling it earlier in the afternoon, before his visit to Loder. He caught it up, his long fingers closing hard and fast on the cane handle.

Loder swung round, with the cricket stump in his hand.

The Bounder swung back the bat. His eyes gleamed and glinted over it with a deadly light.

"Stand back!" he said; and the words came in a low, concentrated tone through his hard-gripped teeth. "If you come near me, Loder, I'll lay you on your back."

Loder did not even reply.

He ran straight at the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith's eyes seemed to burn. He struck—with savage force and with deadly aim. Loder instinctively threw up his arm, and the blow fell upon it, but with such force that his arm fell away, and the bat crashed upon his head.

Crash!
A low, heavy groan—and Loder dropped on the study floor.

The Bounder panted, and gripped the cane handle of the bat for another blow, if it was needed.

But it was not needed.

Loder of the Sixth lay stretched upon the carpet motionless.

The Bounder, breathing hard, looked at him. Skinner, whose eye was glued to the keyhole, felt his very heart turn sick within him. He had seen the blow—he had seen the fall; he saw now the still form of the prefect stretched at the Bounder's feet—still—terribly still.

The Bounder leaned one hand on the table, feeling strangely giddy. Why didn't Loder move? He lay crumpled, as it were, and without motion. Why didn't he move? The bat dropped heavily from the junior's hand, and clumped dully on the floor.

"Loder!" Vernon-Smith's voice was low and husky. His anger and hatred was gone now; a strange and terrible feeling of fright was coming over him. "Loder! I—I know you're only pretending! Get up, you rotter! Do—do you think you can frighten me? Get up!"

There was no sound.

Vernon-Smith bent down over the motionless form; he raised Loder's head in his hand. A thin stream of red trickled down under the dark hair. The eyes were closed; the face was waxy white. Vernon-Smith shuddered, and allowed the heavy head to fall. It dropped with a soft, dull thud upon the carpet. And Loder did not move.

The Bounder, his eyes fixed upon the senseless form with a strange terror, rose to his feet and backed away, his eyes still fixed upon Loder. He scarcely breathed.

"Loder!" His voice was broken and husky, almost inarticulate. "Loder! Why don't you speak? I'm sorry I hit you so hard! Why don't you speak?"

But Loder did not speak; and upon the Bounder's dazed mind was forced the fearful conviction that Loder of the Sixth would never speak again!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. The Flight of the Bounder!

W HARTON! Nugent! For mercy's sake, come!"

Skinner panted out the words as he staggered into Study No. 1.

Wharton and Nugent were at work at the table at the sight of Skinner's terrified, bloodless face.

"What's the matter?"

"What's happened?"

"It's Loder—Smithy—he's killed him!" panted Skinner incoherently.

"What!"

"He's killed him!"

Wharton and his chum stared blankly at Skinner. The latter held on to the door to support himself; he was almost fainting.

"Killed him?" stammered Wharton. "Whom?"

"Come and see—they're in his study—he's dead!"

Harry Wharton shoved him roughly aside, and ran out of the study, with Frank Nugent at his heels.

The Bounder's door was closed.

Wharton flung it hastily open and ran in. He stopped with a cry at the sight of the still form on the floor, with the black bruise on the forehead, the trickle of blood under the hair. Vernon-Smith was gazing down on his victim with wide, terrified eyes, as if bereft of the power of movement or speech. "Good heavens! What have you done?" panted Harry.

He grasped the Bounder by the arm and shook him, to rouse him from his lethargy. Vernon-Smith turned dull, unseeing eyes upon him.

"Smithy!"

"He—he came for me!" muttered the Bounder thickly. "He was going to lick me with that stump. I warned him!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Nugent. "I warned him—then I hit him. It was his own fault."

Wharton's face was white with horror. He threw himself upon his knees beside the motionless form of the prefect, and thrust his hand under Loder's jacket to feel the beating of his heart.

Then he looked up with scared eyes. "He's dead!" groaned the Bounder. "I know that!"

"He—he can't be!" exclaimed Nugent, horror-stricken. "Oh, you ass, Smithy! But—but it can't be. I—I'll get Mr. Quelch—"

"Ask him to telephone for the doctor," said Wharton.

"Right!"

The Bounder gave a sudden start, and pulled himself together with an effort.

"A doctor!" he said, or rather whispered. "A doctor can't do him any good now. He brought it on himself. I warned him!"

Wharton felt almost sick. A crowd of fellows were round the open doorway by this time. They stared into the study with white, scared faces. All the Remove knew now that something terrible had happened in Vernon-Smith's room.

"The doctor—and the police!" the Bounder went on, his very lips white as chalk now. "Good heavens! What does that mean for me—"

Wharton did not reply. It was only too clear what it meant for Vernon-Smith.

"Prison—a reformatory, at least!" the Bounder muttered. "But—but it was his fault! He—he came for me, you know!"

Wharton could not speak.

"I—I didn't mean to hit him so hard!" the Bounder made another effort; some of his old coolness seemed to return. "But I'm not going to stay here till the police come. I'm not going to be arrested."

He made a movement towards the door. "You'd better stay, Smithy!" muttered Wharton. "Better stay and face it out."

"I'm not such a fool as that! Reformatories are not in my line," said the Bounder, in quite his old manner. "I'd rather get clear till I know how it's going to turn out."

"But I tell you—"

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, looked quickly in at the doorway. Mauleverer's usually calm and serene face was white now and full of horror.

"Quelch's coming!" he muttered.

The Bounder uttered an exclamation, and sprang into the passage. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was hurrying along the passage, followed by Nugent.

His stern eye fell upon the Bounder. "Vernon-Smith, go to my study, and remain there till I come!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir!" said the Bounder quietly. He went downstairs.

But he did not go to the Form master's study. He walked quickly to the door, and went into the quad. There he put on his cap, and he crossed the Close with hurried steps, almost running.

The gates were locked. Gosling, the porter, had closed them at dark. Vernon-Smith did not make for the gates. He hurried to the school wall, and clambered over it hurriedly, and dropped into the road outside.

Then he ran. Sudden and terrible as the happening had been, the Bounder of Greyfriars had recovered his coolness after the first few fearful minutes.

If Loder was dead—and he believed that the blow had killed the bully of the Sixth—then Greyfriars was no place for him. A charge of manslaughter, at least; long years in a juvenile prison, if no worse—that was what the Bounder had to expect now. He had come a "mucker" in his school career—and he had come a mucker with a

vengeance. There was nothing for it now but flight.

At all events, ruined as he undoubtedly was, he could yet escape the penalty of his rash and terrible act, if he kept his wits about him and wasted no time.

He ran along the road in the dusk, heading for Friardale, the railway-station his destination. The millionaire's son had plenty of money about him—ample to pay his way until he could communicate with his father. That his father would stand by him, he knew. Samuel Vernon-Smith, financier, moneylender, millionaire, hard and unfeeling to all others, was devoted to his only son.

To get to a place of safety, beyond the reach of the police—that was Vernon-Smith's only thought now.

He ran on swiftly in the darkness, towards the distant lights of the village. There was terror and something like despair in his breast; but his brain was cool and clear.

He knew that the local train for Courtfield was almost due to leave at that hour, and if he could catch it he would have the start of his pursuers—for that he would be pursued there was not the slightest doubt.

The lights of the village came into sight; he ran on through the old High Street. Strange enough, it seemed to him, to think, as he did at that moment, that this was

the last time he would look upon that quaint old street. There was the Cross Keys, the disreputable haunt he had once frequented in his wilder days; there was Mr. Snook's estate office; there was old Mr. Pentfold, standing at the door of his little shop and chatting with a neighbour. And here was the station; and he could hear the puffing of the train about to start.

He did not wait to take a ticket. He burst past a startled porter, and reached the platform. The train was on the move.

"Stand back, there!" roared the guard, as the Bounder dashed across the platform. The Bounder did not heed.

He caught the handle of a carriage door, and swung it open and leaped into the moving train.

Slam!

The door closed behind him; he lay on the seat, panting. The train whirled on through the darkness, bearing the Bounder swiftly away from the school where his chequered career had so suddenly come to an end.

THE END.

(Will the Bounder be caught and brought back to Greyfriars to face the consequences of his rash and terrible acts? See next week's dramatic and sensational tale of Harry Wharton & Co.)

SOMETHING QUITE EXCEPTIONAL!

This Week's Issue of our Great Companion Paper

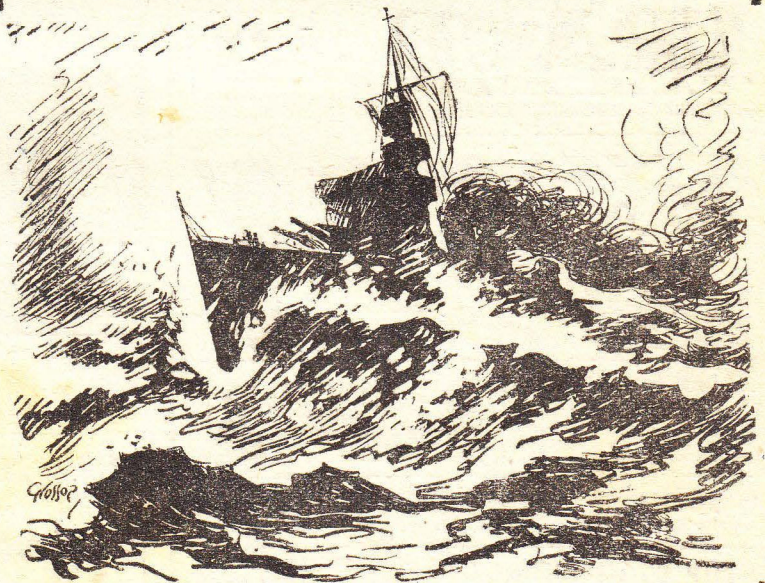
"THE BOYS' FRIEND"

contains

"The Phantom Pirate!"

A Thrilling Story of Modern Buccaneers on the Spanish Main.

By MAURICE EVERARD.



Other Star Features Include:—

"SCUND THE ETERNAL;" The Most Amazing Adventure Yarn of Modern Times.

"THE VOODOO MYSTERY!" An Exciting Adventure of "Bulldog" Holdfast the Amateur Sleuth.

"THE FISTICAL FUNK!" A Grand Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood School.

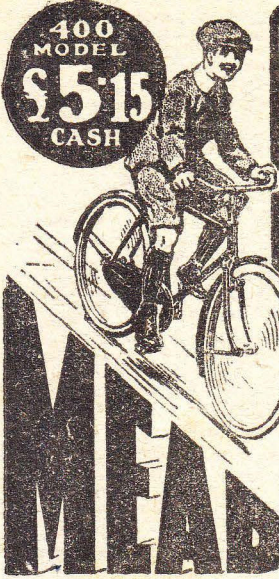
"THE KAFFIR CHAMPION!" A Splendid Yarn of the Boxing Ring.

AND

A Superb Hand-Coloured Real Glossy Photo of TGM LUCAS, the International Full-Back of Liverpool F.C., is given FREE with Every Copy.

Ask Your Newsagent for "THE BOYS' FRIEND" To-day!
Sixteen Big Pages!

Price 2d.



12⁶ a Month

is all you pay for our No. 400A lady's or gentleman's Mead "Marvel"—the finest cycles ever offered on such exceptionally easy terms. Built to stand hard wear. Brilliantly plated; richly enamelled, exquisitely lined in two colours. Sent packed free, carriage paid on **15 DAYS' FREE TRIAL.**

Fully warranted. Prompt delivery. Money refunded if dissatisfied. Big bargains in slightly factory soiled mounts. Tyres and Accessories 33% below shop prices. Buy direct from the factory and save pounds.

How a seven-year-old MEAD which had traversed 75,000 miles, beat 650 up-to-date machines and broke the world's record by covering 34,386 miles in 365 days is explained in our art catalogue. Write TO-DAY for free copy—brimful of information about bicycles and contains gigantic photographs of our latest models.

MEAD CYCLE CO. (INC.)
(Dept. B707)
Birmingham

RHEUMATISM CURED
After Life of Pain and Sleepless Nights.

Dear Sir,—I had no sleep for months, and doctors told me there was no cure. Before I had taken Urace a fortnight I had sleep and rest, and was free from pain. Since taking Urace I have not lost one day's work through rheumatism.



Yours sincerely, **MR. WILSON.**

URACE, and URACE alone, can cure Rheumatism. It directly attacks the cause—uric acid—dissolves and expels it from the system, and prevents its reappearance. That is why it CURES and CURES QUICKLY.

1/3, 3/- and 5/- per box.

From Boots, Timothy White & Co., Taylor's, and all Chemists and Stores, or direct from the URACE Laboratories, 89, Woburn House, Store Street, London, W.C.1.

URACE TABLETS

13, 3/- & 5/-
From Boots and all Chemists.

YOURS for 1/-

This handsome full-sized Gent's Lever Watch sent upon receipt of 1/-. After approval send 1/8 more, the balance may then be paid by 5 monthly instalments of 2/- each. Guaranteed 5 years. Chain given free with every watch. Wrist Watches, etc. in stock on same terms. Cash returned in full if dissatisfied. Send 1/- now to:—**Simpsons Ltd., (Dept. 90) 94, Queen's Road, Brighton, Sussex.**

CHAIN FREE

HEIGHT INCREASED IN 30 DAYS. 5/- Complete Course.

No Appliances. No Drugs. No Dieting. The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS. Full particulars and Testimonials, stamp.—**Melvin Strong, Ltd. (Dept. S.), 10, Ludgate Hill, London, Eng.**

CINEMA FILMS, MACHINES, SPOOLS, SLIDES, etc., CHEAP! Comic and Cowboy Films. 50-foot Sample Film, 1/3. Stamp for Illustrated Lists.—**TYSON & MARSHALL, 83, Castle Boulevard, Nottingham.**

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—**FRANK E. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.**

50 HUNGARIAN STAMPS FREE to applicants for Blue Label Appro's, enc. post. Mention Gift 596. **B.L. COBYN, 10, Ware Crest, Whitstable, Kent.**

CUT THIS OUT

"The Popular." **PEN COUPON.** Value 2d.

Send 7 of these coupons with only 2/9 direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. You will receive by return a Splendid British Made 14-ct. Gold Nibbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6 (Fine, Medium, or Broad Nib). If only 1 coupon is sent, the price is 3/9, 2d. being allowed for each extra coupon up to 6. (Pocket Clip, 4d.) Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. *Special New Offer—Your own name in gilt letters on either pen for 1/- extra.*

Lever Self-Filling Model, with Safety Cap, 2/- extra.

Printed and published every Tuesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription rates: Inland, 13s. per annum; 6s. 6d. for six months. Abroad, 15s. per annum; 8s. 6d. for six months. Sole agents for South Africa: The Central News Agency, Ltd. Sole agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for Canada: The Imperial News Co., Ltd. (Canada).—Saturday, March 3rd, 1923.

YOURS for 1/-

AN EXCEPTIONAL OPPORTUNITY.

Special Offer of—**High-grade Registered Professional Italian Model MELODEONS**

Superfine Solo Melodeon; handsome Polished Cabinet, with 12-fold Metal-bound Bellows; 10 Keys and 8 Bass Chords. This instrument is the acme of perfection in construction, and a magnificent example of carefully studied musical detail, unequalled for excellence of tone and power. 1/- Deposit only is the acme of perfection in construction, and a magnificent example of carefully studied musical detail, unequalled for excellence of tone and power. 1/- Deposit only is required, and we will dispatch this Superb Melodeon to your address, if entirely to your satisfaction, balance is payable 3/- within 7 days, and 4/- monthly until 35/- is paid—or complete balance within 7 days 30/-, making Cash Price 31/- only.

J. A. DAVIS & CO. (Dept. 8B), 26, Denmark Hill, Camberwell, London, S.E. 5.



HOME CINEMATOGRAPHS STOCKTAKING SALE.

SPECIAL CHEAP OFFER of Home Cinematographs at 9/6 and 11/6 carriage paid. Write for free lists of Machines and Films.

FORD'S, Dept. A.P. 3, 13, Red Lion Square, London, W.C. 1

DON'T BE SHORT—If you are under 40 you can easily increase your height by the Girvan Scientific Treatment. Students report from 2 to 5 inches increase. Results quite permanent. Your health and stamina will be greatly improved. You will succeed in business. Over ten years' distinguished reputation. Send P.O. to-day for particulars and our £100 guarantee to **ENQUIRY DEPT. A.M.P., 17, STROUD GREEN ROAD, LONDON, N.4.**

FREE. The "A.B.C." Packet of Stamps containing:— Angola, Bulgaria, Cape, Dahomey, Egypt, Finland, Gold Coast, Hyderabad, Indochina, Jamaica, Kenya, Lourenco Marques, Mauritius, Nigeria, Oceania, Peru, Queensland, Russia, Schleswig, Transvaal, Ukraine, Victoria, W. Russia, Xpress Austria, Yellow China, Zanzibar. Send 11d. postage and ask for Approvals.—**Victor Banoroff, Matlock.**

WIRELESS MAKE YOUR OWN SET

The mysteries of Wireless made clear. **WIRELESS FOR ALL** - - - 6d. and its sequel **SIMPLIFIED WIRELESS** - - - 1/-

At all booksellers or 1/9 post free from **RADIO 3, Devereux Buildings, W.C. 2.**

£2,000 Worth of Cheap Job Photographic Material, Cameras, &c. Sent at Once for CATALOGUE and SAMPLES. FREE.—**HACKETTS WORKS, JULY ROAD, LIVERPOOL, E.**

All you require—Boots, Suits, Costumes, Raincoats, Overcoats, Accor-deons, Watches, Rings, Clocks, etc., from 4/- monthly. Write for free catalogue to **Masters, Ltd., 6, Hope Street, Rye, Sussex.**

IN "THE BOYS' FRIEND" Now on Sale

Grand FREE Real Hand-Coloured PHOTO OF A FAMOUS FOOTBALLER!

FREE in the "GEM" Library On Wednesday!

Real AUTOGRAPHED PHOTO of a Popular Footballer!

See You Have Them!

Printed and published every Tuesday by the Proprietors, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Advertisement offices: The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription rates: Inland, 13s. per annum; 6s. 6d. for six months. Abroad, 15s. per annum; 8s. 6d. for six months. Sole agents for South Africa: The Central News Agency, Ltd. Sole agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., and for Canada: The Imperial News Co., Ltd. (Canada).—Saturday, March 3rd, 1923.