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Week Ending -
March 31st.
1923.

New
Series.

No.
219

Twenty-eight
Pages.

The POPULAR 2^D

The Story Book for Boys.

Money Prizes
Every
Week!



A detailed woodcut-style illustration of a runaway chaise. The chaise is tilted precariously on a rocky path, with its driver leaning out of the front. Two horses are pulling the chaise, and another horse is running alongside it. In the background, two riders on horseback are watching the scene. The illustration is signed 'Glorious' in the bottom right corner.

**FREE
REAL GLOSSY
PHOTOGRAPH
IN THIS
ISSUE!**

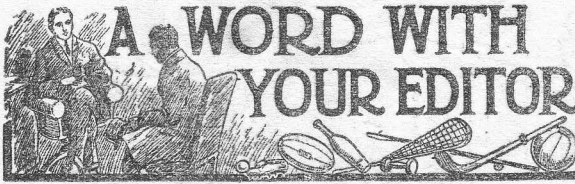
**"Stand and
Deliver!"**

**Our Great Dick Turpin
Story-Inside!**

THE MAD DASH OF THE RUNAWAY CHAISE!

"BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY!"—Our Topping Special Humorous Supplement again this week!

HERE'S THE STORIES YOU'VE BEEN LONGING FOR, CHAPS!



"THE BOXER'S DOUBLE!"
By Frank Richards.

Something which needs explaining; at least, that is the opinion of Harry Wharton & Co., is dealt with in the bright and splendidly told Greyfriars yarn which you will find in next Tuesday's POPULAR. When you tumble into the midst of a mystery the first prompting is, of course, to discover what it is all about, where it leads to, the why and wherefore, inasmuch and all the rest of it. And there is a mystery of the prize sort next Tuesday. A boxer comes to the town, and Harry Wharton and his friends think they recognise the exponent of the Noble Art. Are they mistaken? See next Tuesday's issue of the POPULAR.

"A RANK INJUSTICE!"
By Martin Clifford.

Injustice is just about the most hateful thing in the whole programme. It gives you that tired, peevish feeling when you have to be a spectator of anything so base. The next Cedar Creek yarn describes a terrible state of things at the Backwoods School. The title speaks for itself. Kern Gunten and Keller have been up to their old gambling tricks. Miss Meadows puts her foot down. Kern is expelled—not for the first time, but on this occasion it is for good. Then Mr. Gunten, Kern's father, who is a Governor of the school, insists on his boy remaining. Miss Meadows says 'No.' Gunten senior will not take 'No,' and in his position as Governor gets Miss Meadows dismissed. That's how the matter stands.

"THE NEW CAPTAIN!"
By Owen Conquest.

If anybody knocked at your door one bright morning and told you in cold blood that Tubby Muffin was going to be captain of Rookwood, you would call him a taradiddle, or hint that he was out to rival Esop, the notorious fable merchant. Yet, it is so.

You won't believe me, of course! Then get a copy of this weekly right early next week, and see what comes of cross voting at the polls. You will have the surprise of your life!

"HIS WORD OF HONOUR!"

By Martin Clifford.

Personally, I am always glad to see Redfern on the scene at St. Jim's. I know Dick Redfern is welcome to all readers of the POPULAR. The fellow has the right stuff in him—a thinker and a doer. Thought, as we all know, is the mainspring of action, and Redfern is one of the chaps who think and act. He has had his enemies, and his rough and tumbles, and he isn't out of the wood in next week's dramatic story of the old school. It takes all sorts to make up a world, and there are plenty of the jealous fry who loathe any quality which they do not possess. Such mean chaps don't really want to have such traits in their composition as selflessness, a fine regard for duty and so on, but they simply hate to see these qualities in others; it makes them feel quaint and queer, and itchy. This is the double distilled essence of littleness. The delinquents will learn better in the sweet by-and-by, but they have a long way to go first.

Mr. Ratcliff is well to the fore in next week's tale. He brings an accusation against Redfern. Mr. Ratcliff actually believes that the lad ridiculed him in public, and demands a public apology. Redfern declines to apologise. The fat falls into the fire with a sudden rush. Redfern sticks like glue to his firm refusal, and is locked up in the punishment room. But in the morning when they unlock the door—well, it's the "Mother Hubbard" business over again, but with far more serious import. You will sympathise with Redfern, and start wondering what on earth comes next.

A GREAT EASTER SUPPLEMENT.

Buns and Bunter! These are prominent in the bright and extra lively number of "Bunter's Weekly"—in point of fact all the delights of the Easter Holidays are in the front line. The porpoise has not spared himself. The number bubbles over with Bank-Holiday spirit. "Bunter's Weekly" for the bines!

STAND AND DELIVER!

No need for me to urge the claims of this surprising serial. It is the best the POPULAR ever printed.

COMPETITIONS AND PHOTOS!

These features will be found as usual next week. The photographs are simply magnificent.

MY BIG SURPRISE!

Keep your eye on my Chat. Very, very shortly you will find set down here particulars of a stupendous surprise, surpassing anything the old paper has given in all its triumphant history.

Your Editor.

STOP, YOU CHAPS—WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
Solve the Picture Puzzle below and Win a Topping 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 Foster competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Queen's Park Rangers 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 "Queen's Park Rangers" Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, APRIL 5th, 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 the "Gem," "Magnet," and "Boys' Friend," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

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

Name.....

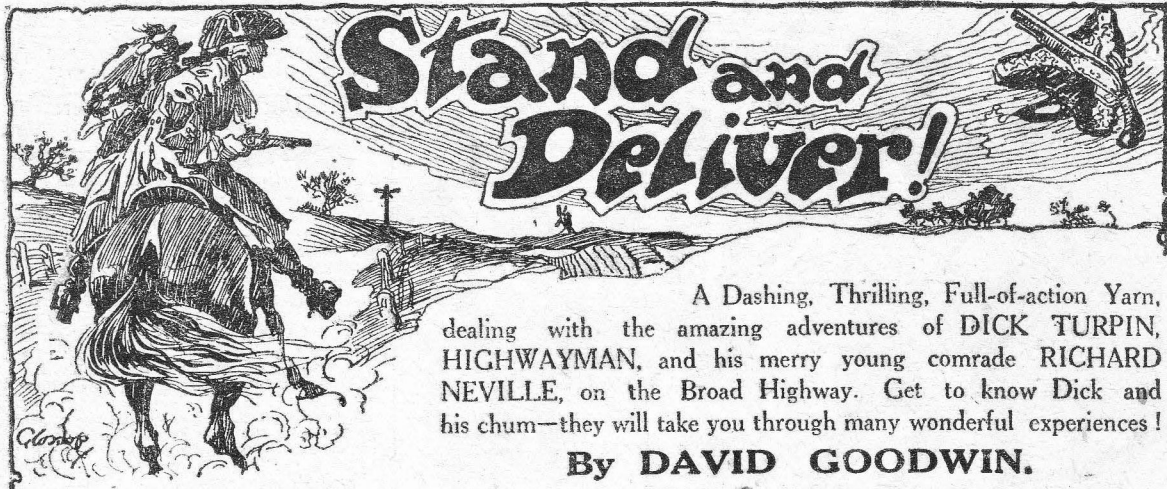
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THE RACE TO DEATH!

Hector Neville's plot against his cousin Ralph is frustrated by Dick Turpin and his dare-devil companion at the eleventh hour!

IN MERCILESS HANDS!



A Dashing, Thrilling, Full-of-action Yarn, dealing with the amazing adventures of **DICK TURPIN, HIGHWAYMAN,** and his merry young comrade **RICHARD NEVILLE,** on the Broad Highway. Get to know Dick and his chum—they will take you through many wonderful experiences!

By DAVID GOODWIN.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

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 Dick Turpin. Turpin is called away suddenly on a secret mission. Whilst he is away Dick falls into the hands of Captain Sweeney, but he escapes serious injury.

Having waited several days for the return of Turpin, Dick Neville decides to set out in quest of his comrade, fearing foul play. He meets Dick Turpin near his old home, and the two pay Hector Neville a surprise visit at Faulkbourne.

The King's Riders are, however, in the neighbourhood, so their stay is short and sweet. The highwaymen leave at last, making a wide detour round the country to avoid their pursuers, and set off for the open.

(Now read on.)

"He has certainly given me endless trouble of late," said Ralph. "I thought it was merely to revenge himself on you, but doubtless you are right. I sent him a challenge to fight, but the cur has no stomach for that."

Dick sat with knitted brows. "You cannot stay here, Ralph," he said. "He will gain his end sooner or later, while you are here alone. You must leave Huntercombe, and get beyond his reach till I can deal with him. The place will take no harm—it is murder you have to fear. What do you say to going back to St. Austell's School, where we had such sport in Vesey's time?"

"Ay, I'd like nothing better!" said Ralph. "This mighty dull here without you, Dick!" "So be it, then. You have money, position, everything to please yourself. You have rare times at St. Austell's, and staunch old Dr. Trelawney will be a good friend to you. Term begins in two days. You have a trustworthy agent at Huntercombe?"

"Yes. Old John Blandford—true as steel." "Right. He is. There's no need for you to go back at all to-night. We'll push right on for Yorkshire. You can ride with us to Bealsford, and stay there the night."

"I've got a post-chaise there," said Ralph excitedly, "at the King's Head! I left it there last week. But no horses."

"Excellent! You'll be able to post all the way, getting horses at each stage. But we mustn't ride with your chaise, Ralph; we're too well known, and might bring danger on you. Who's that among the whips?"

Dick suddenly galloped off to the left, and, after searching among the gorse-bushes for some time, came back.

"I could have sworn I saw some man watching us there," he said—"a tall, lean fellow. But he has disappeared."

"I've seen Samuel Slink, Vesey's old rascally servant, in the neighbourhood once or twice," said Ralph coolly. "He's in Hector's service now. But he wasn't with the fellows who attacked me."

"No. He hasn't heart enough for open ruffianism; but he's all the more dangerous. A treacherous rascal! If I catch him at any tricks, I'll have little hesitation in ridding you of him!" muttered Dick. "Now, Ralph, is your horse fresh? 'Tis more than ours are, but we shall make Bealsford without trouble, and rest there till midday to-morrow."

"The King's Head is no place for us, Dick," said Turpin, as they rode on. "If your young brother stays there, we must quarter at another hostelry, which I shall show you."

Little more was said till they reached Bealsford.

On the outskirts of the town they parted, Ralph going to the inn where his chaise lay, and the two comrades putting up elsewhere for the night. They gave the horses a rest till near noon next day, and Ralph's chaise was some miles in front when they started.

"I have a feeling, Turpin," said Dick, "that our going is known to the enemy. By what

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THE BOLTING MARES OF GRANTLEY!

THEY gained the roadway, and, having put a very wide stretch of country between them and the Riders, breathed their horses at a walk.

"We are close upon Huntercombe," said Dick presently. "I wonder—Hallo! What's yonder? Not our enemies, surely?" "The sound of hoofs and shoutings broke the silence. A little farther down the road, in the direction they were going, and the two comrades halted and peered ahead."

"Nay: 'tis some roadside fracas," said Turpin carelessly. The high roads of the early eighteenth century were far from the peaceable ways they are now, and there was nothing surprising in the sound of oaths and blows. "No affair of ours, Dick. However, let's ride on and see."

They came clear of the hedgerows to the open part of the road, where it crossed a common, and there they saw a single horseman beset by three of four men on foot, and laying about him lustily with a hunting-crop.

"Get to the nag's head, Mat!" cried a hoarse voice. "Pull the whelp down!" "By the road, here's ugly odds!" cried Dick, spurring forward. "Come, Turpin, let's make the game fairer! Four to one, and he but a youngster!"

"Ay; perchance he has something worth our taking, when we've cracked their pates," rejoined Turpin, dashing ahead, "since they're at so much trouble about him."

Dick was already in the midst of the fray, and sent a couple of the rascals flying—one knocked head over heels with a blow from a pistol, and the other ridden down by Satan. Furious yells broke from the other two, but

they turned to fly as Turpin rode into them; and he, not caring to draw a pistol, pricked one of them with his sword in such wise that the ruffian rushed off, screaming like a jaybird.

"I am vastly beholden to you, gentlemen!" cried the horseman, in a clear, boyish voice. "You came very—"

"Od'sol!" cried Dick. "Ralph!" "Dick! Heaven and earth, is it you?"

The brothers gripped hands in delighted amazement.

"Why, young cock o' the woods," exclaimed Turpin, "we meet again, then! You have the family knack of getting into scrapes, pink me!"

"How did it happen, Ralph?" said Dick wonderingly. "Who were those knaves?"

"Faith, I don't know, but I suspect they've something to do with Hector! This is the second time I've been attacked, and, by George, I thought they'd got me, when you came up! I was riding home to Huntercombe when they sprang up from the furze and set upon me. One had a knife and the others bludgeons, and but that my nag was so scared, and reared, and kicked like a young stallion, they'd have made short work of me. I know one of them belonged to Hector's household."

"Zounds," said Dick, smiting his thigh, "I was a fool not to think of this! I should have taken better care of you, Ralph boy. Hector cannot upset your right to Huntercombe, and I thought you would be safe there. But I had forgot that if you died he is next-of-kin, and would succeed to the property now that I am outlawed. The vile knave! He seeks to join Huntercombe to Faulkbourne, and rule all the Neville estates, and one stroke of his knife, which is easily bought, will get them for him."

"I told you you ought to have shot him, Dick," said Turpin, helping himself to snuff with the air of one who proves himself in the right.

HOLDING UP THE CHAISE!



"Stand!" cried Dick, spurring out across the road, as the chaise came up. "Pull up, or you are a dead man!" The post-boy gave a cry of dismay, and hauled the mares in with all his might. The horses reared up and snatched at their bits, lashing the air wildly with their hoofs. (See page 5.)

signs there are, I guess somebody is either close behind or has slipped ahead of us."

"If you and I are not a match for any of Hector's tricks I will eat my pistols, and the powder-horn on top of them!" said Turpin. "But I see no great reason for your suspicions. Here we have been four hours on the road, and pink me, if I've seen anything out of the common."

"You did not see Sam Slink ride by on a sorrel nag when we were halted at the little inn for our hasty meal?"

"There stands one now, with a black-coated man on his back, by the stables of yonder farmhouse, or grange, or whatever it is," said Turpin.

"By the road, yes!" exclaimed Dick. "Here, pull aside, man—pull close under the hedge! Don't let him see us!" 'Tis Samuel Slink, sure enough, as large as life!"

"O'd's!" said Turpin. "Then the proper course, in that case, is to shoot him through the head, since he can be here for no good."

"Nay, not so hasty!" said Dick. "See, he is bargaining with the master of that house—he is giving him money. Now, what should that be for?"

"The man will be no accomplice of Slink's," said Turpin. "'Tis some country horse-cooper or such-like—sharp enough, doubtless, but not a professional ruffler. Slink is not hiring him to bludgeon your young brother, Dick."

"Nay, Slink will go to work in some subtler way than that; he does not lightly lay himself open to the law. Now he rides out, and goes on. Let him out of sight, and then we will proceed slowly. He is not personally dangerous to Ralph, for he has not the courage, and I don't want him to see us, either."

"Well," said Turpin, when they had ridden a mile farther, "there is Grantley ahead, and the man Slink will have stopped there, doubtless."

"Ay, 'tis safe to say already, he has news of Ralph's movements. Who comes behind us? By my hilt, there's a fine couple of chestnut mares—eh, Turpin?"

A groom was journeying rapidly along the

road, leading a pair of large, wild-eyed chestnuts, that gave him much ado to hold.

"That's a pretty brace of yours, ostler!" called Turpin, to the man.

"Ay, plague take 'em!" said the groom. "Steady, ye vixen, will ye!"

"I wonder you don't ride one and lead the other," said Dick, who knew a groom never walked, whatever his orders were.

"Because I don't want to break my neck, master," grinned the man.

"You're no rider—eh?"

"Rider!" said the groom. "I'd like to see the man in Norfolk could beat me! But there ain't no man alive can hold these 'osses. You can sit 'em, but you can't hold 'em. You ain't from these parts, or you'd know 'em. They're shay-'osses, but they're deadly bolters. The first mile they go steady; an' then they'll take the bits an' go till they smash the shay to atoms agin' something!"

"Ah," said Dick, "indeed!"

"They've broke five carriages to match-wood, an' killed a man every time. They're dead certain for it every time they get into 'arness! They're like clockwork, master, for one mile they'll go like lambs, as I said, an' then, off they go, an' it's sudden death to whoever's behind 'em! My governor's had 'em back five times, an' sold 'em to a fresh fool every time! Now some traveller's been an' bought 'em, to go in a shay, I think, what's at the Green Man, at Grantley. I'm to leave them there. Whoever it is will need 'is coffin if he sits behind 'em. It ain't a surgeon's job, when they've wrecked a shay—it's an undertaker's!"

And, chuckling to the mares, in which he seemed to take a gloomy pride, the man hurried on towards Grantley.

Dick looked meaningly at his comrade.

"I told you," he said, "that Samuel Slink would bring forward something out of the common. He knows this district like a book."

"It looks," said Turpin pensively, "as though he proposes to deliver your brother to the mercy of the notorious chestnut mares. What do you intend doing?"

"Ride into Grantley, and learn a little

more about it. It will be better sport than shooting Slink, as you suggested."

They put up their horses at a cottage in the woods near the village, and in the evening Dick went out to learn what he might. He returned in two hours, smiling grimly.

"All is ready, comrade," he said. "Tomorrow, all things favouring, we will give Samuel Slink a ride in his own chaise!"

SLINK TASTES HIS OWN MEDICINE!

THOUGH Turpin, whose curiosity was roused, plied him with questions, Dick would do nothing but chuckle, and finally went to sleep, leaving his comrade none the wiser, which exasperated Turpin to such a pitch that he came near to drawing his pistols on his young companion.

Dick was up betimes next morning, however, and groomed Black Satan with unusual care. He kept a close eye on the time, and after they had broken their fast he called Turpin to horse, and they started forth.

"We must not be late to-day of all days," said Dick. "The jest might take a very ugly turn for Ralph if we are not at the edge of the heath by the time he gets there."

"You are the most irritating young villain I ever knew, keeping all this to yourself!" growled Turpin. "Pink me, if I ride another step until you tell me what's in the wind!"

"Well," said Dick laughing, "you are such a slap-dash fellow with those pistols of yours. The one remedy you keep for all ills is to shoot your enemy through the head, and if you'd had your way yesterday, there would now be no Samuel Slink to show us sport. And yet," he added more gravely, "now we are so close to the business, I begin to doubt now if you are not right. Ralph will run some piece of risk as it is."

"Ay, now things have gone so far, you begin to see which is the wiser head!" grunted Turpin. "I tell you, a leaden pill is the best cure for an enemy—it purges all the ill out of him at one stroke. I have had many enemies, Dick, and I speak as an expert."

"I don't see how one could fire a pistol at Samuel Slink," said Dick, "nor sully good steel on him, murderer though he is! 'Tis such a crawling, wriggling knave, without spirit enough to draw a weapon, unless his opponent were asleep. Yet, look you, his life is forfeit, for he has laid this plot to kill Ralph, and that in the most underhand way."

"When I reconnoitred in the village last night, I found the whole place in a turmoil with the news of you and me, touching our escapade at Faulkbourne. There are many here who know me of old, and I was unable to get word with Ralph, for I did not dare bring danger on him, by seeking him out, nor was there anyone trustworthy whom I could send."

"Nay, I would trust no one at Grantley," agreed Turpin. "A plaguey, low, treacherous place!"

"Yet one thing I found—it is known that those bolting mares are to be harnessed to Ralph's chaise, and the whole village is relishing the joke. They think it a jest that a man should go to his death in ignorance, cooped up in a box on wheels. I have a strong notion that Slink will have the door fastened up—that there may be no getting out."

"Like enough," said Turpin.

"From what I learned, too, the post-boy is in Slink's pay, and as he knows the mares, he will hold himself ready to jump off and let the chaise and its burden go to perdition when the time comes. Slink himself is bound to make sure, and carry the news to his precious master, so he is safe to follow on with that sorrel nag of his, to see that all goes well—from his point of view! Our business, Turpin, is to stop the chaise where the road leaves the hedgerows and comes out upon the open heath and quarry-pits, for there the danger will begin."

"And stop your brother with a 'Stand and deliver!'" chuckled Turpin. "It's to be hoped he recognises you at once, else he may bring you toppling off your horse with a snapshot through the chaise window, if I know the boy!"

"Ralph has too sharp an eye for that," said Dick. "But yonder is the place where we should await the chase, and that little

grove of pine-trees on either side of the road will give us good shelter till it comes up."

They took cover, as they so well knew how, one on each side of the highway, and waited for the sound of wheels. They were less than half a mile beyond the village itself, and Dick knew that the mares could be trusted not to bolt before they gained the open. Up to that point the road ran between tall hedges.

But beyond the pine-wood it ran through an open, stony heath, dotted with old, unfenced quarries, and was as ugly a piece of highway as there was in the country in that day. Dick, as he waited, pistol in hand, felt a sudden qualm of anxiety lest the hour should have been altered.

Then came the sound of wheels, and Ralph's smart, lemon-coloured chaise appeared down the road from the village, trotting along sharply. A big, red-nosed postilion rode the off-side mare, which he sat tightly and uneasily. He was watching both the mares' heads as they bared and shook, their wild eyes beginning to light at the sight of the open. Inside the chaise Ralph's figure could just be seen. As the mares neared the pine-wood, the postilion pulled them in slightly, and shook his feet out of the stirrups. The time had come!

"Stand!" cried Dick, spurring out across the road. "Pull up, or you are a dead man!"

The post-boy gave a cry of dismay, and hauled the mares in with all his might. He made as if to let them go again, but Dick's pistol convinced him. The mares reared up and snatched at their bits, but in a moment Turpin threw himself off Black Bess and had them by the bridles. The red-nosed post-boy fell off with sheer terror.

"So you are in the game, are you, rascal?" said Dick fiercely. "Stand there, and move not a hair, else there'll be a bullet through your skull! Ralph, out with you quickly!"

"Why, Dick? What's amiss?" cried Ralph through the chaise window.

"Come out quickly, I say! You will soon learn."

"I can't. This plaguey door is fastened somehow!" said Ralph, shaking it.

"Ay, I thought so!" said Dick grimly. "Get back upon the seat, Ralph, out of the way. Turpin, hold the mares hard!"

He placed his pistol-muzzle to the lock-handle of the door, fired, and blew the lock clean out. The mares plunged furiously, but Turpin's weight on the bridles held them.

"A very neat way of getting a man out of a chaise," said Ralph, throwing open the door and stepping down. "What's in the wind, Dick, so early in the day?"

"You will very shortly see," said Dick. "There's no time to explain now."

He turned to the postilion: "What did your master pay for this, you cur!"

"I knows nothing about it, sir!" cried the fellow, trembling. "I was to jump off if the mares started to bolt!"

"If!" retorted Dick. "You knew right well they would bolt, scoundrel! Where is Samuel Slink faring this morning—eh? Speak!" he said fiercely, clapping his double-pistol to the man's head.

"He—he was to ride along presently on his nag!" stammered the prisoner.

"Didn't I tell you, Turpin?" said Dick. He shut the chaise door. "Now, you red-nosed rascal, go to the mares' heads, and hold them steady where they are. When you see Samuel Slink coming, beckon to him to ride up, and do it earnestly, hear you?"

"Y-yes, sir!" stammered the postilion, whose knees were knocking together with fright.

"Leave your post, or make any move of treachery, at your peril! Remember that two pistols will be covering you from the pine-wood, and any act of disobedience will be your last! Let him take the bridles, Turpin; do you draw back among the trees. Ralph, come with me!"

In a few moments there was nothing to be seen save a lemon-coloured chaise standing in the middle of the highway, with a dismounted post-boy in front of the mares, holding them by the bridles as though his life depended on it.

In the pine-grove, Dick, watching the road, pistol in hand, told Ralph the scheme, and that volatile young person sat down on the moss and laughed till Dick threatened to stuff some of it into his mouth.

"Keep quiet, you young ass!" hissed Dick. "By the road, here he comes!"

Down between the hedges appeared the

sorrel nag, with the lean, black-clad figure of Samuel Slink, and he pulled up abruptly and craned his long neck forward in surprise, as he saw the chaise standing still.

The postilion, desperately mindful of Dick's pistol, freed one arm and beckoned frantically. Samuel Slink rode forward a dozen yards and stopped again. The post-boy beckoned all the harder.

Slink came within fifty yards of the chaise, and then halted altogether, peering suspiciously about him. He put his hands to his mouth and called nervously:

"What's the matter?"

"Come here!" replied the post-boy in a hoarse howl, meant to be a whisper.

But Samuel Slink did not like it. It was not his habit to take risks, and he began to edge away again nervously. Then, like a thunderbolt, Dick and Black Satan shot out from the wood and dashed at him.

"Halt there, Samuel Slink!" shouted Dick, presenting his pistol.

But Slink gave a shriek of terror, and clapping the spurs to his nag, galloped away frantically for the village.

Dick did not fire. He spoke to Satan, and in a dozen bounds the magnificent black horse overtook the sorrel. Dick bent over and caught the bride, pulling the nag up short, and Samuel Slink shot over its head on to the road.

"Now, Master Slink," said Dick, covering him with the pistol and letting the nag go, "get up and accompany me to the chaise, where I shall require a little explanation of you."

"Spare me! Spare me!" shrieked Slink, clasping his hands.

"If you do not obey," said Dick, "I shall follow my friend Turpin's advice and shoot you through the head. And that will be annoying, because it will prove him in the right and myself in the wrong. Choose quickly—which is it to be?"

Whining and cringing, Slink picked himself up and sneaked towards the chaise, Dick shepherding him along with the pistol. When the man found Turpin and Ralph waiting to receive him, he burst into fresh lamentations.

"Now, Master Slink," said Dick grimly, "as you are still in your old trade, despite Vesey Neville's death, and are now in the service of Hector of that ilk, you must take the consequences. I am no admirer of hired assassins, especially when directed against me and my kin."

"I am but an old and faithful servant!" wailed Slink. "I have never harmed a fly!"

"And yet, after hatching this cowardly plot, you came here to assure yourself that it had succeeded, and that my brother had shared the fate of those who sit behind the Grantley mares!"

"The fate?" wailed Slink. "What fate?"

"The fate of being bolted within a locked

chaise, and being dashed to death in the quarries, you skulking knave," said Dick, "even as you arranged out of that scoundrelly head of yours!"

"I know not what you mean!" cried Slink, trembling.

"Ah!" said Dick innocently. "Have I made a mistake? It was not you, then, that Turpin and I saw buying the mares at the copier's yesterday?"

"Ay, I bought them," said Slink, seeing there was no way out of that, "and lent them to the landlord of the inn. And beautiful, harmless creatures they are, as you may see, sir!"

"Then there is nothing wrong with the mares?"

"Nothing, sir; else I should not have bought them."

"Master Slink," said Dick earnestly. "I have, then, done you great wrong. I must apologise most humbly."

"Indeed, sir, I was pained at your suspicions upon an honest old servitor like myself," cringed Samuel; "but let that pass!"

"Not at all! Not at all!" said Dick. "Every reparation shall be done you. I must make good the wrong. You shall journey on your way in this comfortable chaise, drawn by these harmless creatures, and my brother Ralph must ride your nag on for you to Ensligh Town. You will arrive the quicker."

"Nay, sir; I—I prefer to ride!" stammered Slink. "Post-chaises are not for the likes of me."

"Not a bit of it. You must let me put the matter right," said Dick. "It shall never be said I wronged an honest man. Ralph, open the chaise door, and I will help him in."

"I will not go in! I do not like post-chaises!" cried Slink, and, turning, he tried to make a bolt of it, but Dick caught him by the arm.

"In with you, you rascal!" said Dick. "Enough of this. If you have spoken the truth, you will take no harm. If you have lied, you stand convicted of the attempted murder of my brother, and you shall have the same chance you condemned him to!"

He bundled the yelling Slink into the chaise, and jammed the door hard to with a kick, disregarding the man's frantic protests.

"Up with you there, post-boy! Quick, unless you prefer a bullet! Stand aside, Turpin!"

Dick gave the near mare a smack with his hand, there was a wild squeal, and off dashed the pair of them like a shot from a gun. Before they had gone fifty yards, the post-boy threw himself off skilfully, rolled to his feet, and scampered away among the trees. The mares, fairly on their way, flew like demons along the road.

The chaise tore and bumped after them

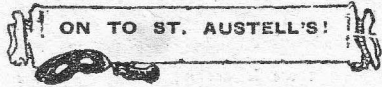
A STUNNING INCIDENT FROM NEXT WEEK'S INSTALMENT!



Dick Neville made a quick dart forward, and throwing one arm round the rascal's neck, dragged him to the table. "Now, Smith," he said, "that napkin!" He dipped the cloth in the hot coffee, and began to scrub vigorously at the captain's face. (See "Stand and Deliver," next week.)

and Samuel Slink's head, thrust through the window and bobbing like a jack-in-the-box with every bump the vehicle made, roared and bellowed lustily.

The three comrades watched the thing as it soared off into a mere speck in the distance, when there was a sudden puff of dust, a far-off crash, and no more was to be seen of the lemon-coloured chaise and the Grantley mares.



TURPIN shut the lid of the snuff-box with a snap.

"So much for Samuel Slink," he said. "You are well rid of him, Dick. Speaking for myself, I would have given him a bullet by way of send off to make sure; but there is no doubt he has met his end. Shall we ride on, and see how it befell?"

"No," said Dick; "Samuel Slink is nothing to me. My only care is to hurry Ralph on to St. Austell's, out of the way of assassins and schemers. Whatever has happened to Slink is no more than he condemned Ralph to."

"I feel no great curiosity myself," said Ralph. "The man was too vile a coward, besides his rascality, to feel any pity for. There is his sorrel nag yonder, and as my chaise is gone, I will borrow the late Samuel's horse, and ride on with you to Pakeley."

"Nay; leave the beast alone, and jump up behind me on Black Satan," said Dick. "It will do you no good to ride a dead man's horse. Did Hector's rascals hear of it, they would get you arrested on some plea or other, and brought into trouble."

Ralph mounted up behind Dick, and the three set out again.

"To be rid of Samuel Slink is cheap at the loss of a chaise," said Dick, "and the knave is well served, since his own horses have killed him instead of you. It is good news, too, that the Grantley mares are also out of the running, for they have certainly broken their necks in the fall in yonder quarry, and they will kill no more unsuspecting purchasers. Yet, pink me, if I wouldn't like to have had the breaking-in of them! I think I could have cured them. They cannot be as bad as Satan was before I broke him in; he killed as many men as the two of them together."

"No matter," said Turpin; "the mares died in a good cause. I only regret that your worthy cousin Hector was not in the chaise as well."

"Nay; I shall rid myself of Hector in a better manner than that," said Dick. "Turn off across the open here, Turpin; I must not ride along the highway with Ralph behind me, lest I bring disaster on him. We will cut across country to Pakeley, where you can get another chaise, and post onward with all speed, Ralph. Sit tight!"

Away went the horses across the open heath, threading in and out among the quarry pits, and skirting the groves of pines. Both Satan and Bess were fresh, and in four hours' time Pakeley Town was neared, and the travellers halted.

"We've left the enemy out of it this time," said Dick. "Jump down, Ralph, and go into the town on foot. You must not be seen with us. You've plenty of money. Go to the chief hostelry in the place, which is the Queen Anne, and order the best chaise and horses they have. Get your meal while they are put in, and then rush on without delay. We shall wait you on the other side of the town, and though you will not see us from the chaise, we will be close at hand should any danger threaten."

"I'll be on the road again in forty minutes," returned Ralph; "but where will you get your noontide meal?"

"Never your mind us," said Dick, with a grin at Turpin; "we have our own ways of doing things. Poor outlaws cannot expect to fare like young landed gentlemen on their travels."

In spite of which, Dick and his comrade, putting up at a small inn on the outskirts known to the latter, fared much better than Ralph, for wherever Turpin and Dick of the Roads went they saw to it that no man neglected their needs.

The two highwaymen then skirted round the town, waited till Ralph's chaise arrived, THE POPULAR.—No. 219.

and then, though never seen by either Ralph or his postilion, guarded it the whole journey through. Dick rode a quarter of a mile behind, and Turpin about the same distance in front, and it would have been a daring and a skilful enemy who eluded those two watch-dogs.

They put up for the night at separate inns. After a long journey, and nothing happened next day worthy of note. At last the old landmarks appeared once more, and as they drew near to St. Austell's, the two highwaymen rode beside the chaise, for their presence there mattered the less.

"We had some rare sport hereabouts last year, Dick," chuckled Turpin.

"I think it will be quieter now," said Dick. "Quieter! With you and that young rip of a brother of yours stirring up everything and everybody! I'll warrant there's trouble enough to scare the fiend himself within a week!"

"Well," said Dick, laughing, "that's as may be. But what I mean is, 'tis the safest place from Hector's plots. In Vesey's time, when Ralph was at the school here, it cost both of us many a tussle to thwart the man's villainies, and besides, he tried to take Ralph away, because I, the outlaw, had brought him here. But you may remember, Ralph found time, among his many deivities at the school, to win a scholarship, which placed him under the care of the school guardians, and, of course, he has it still. So, you see, there is no way for Hector to trick him out by process of law, and you may leave me and Ralph to see he does not do it by force."

"They all know here that Ralph is the brother of Dick o' the Roads—eh?" said Turpin.

LOOK OUT FOR YOUR EDITOR'S GRAND SURPRISE! IT'S COMING SOON!

"Ay, but with the scholarship, that can do him no hurt. The boys all swear by him. It isn't every Fifth Form youngster who has a real live highwayman for a brother! As for Dr. Trelawney, the Head, he is my sworn friend, since, you know, I had the luck to save his life. But see, here we are at the school, and, by the road! yonder comes Trelawney himself out of the gate!"

The chaise pulled up with a jerk, and Ralph jumped out, just as the fine old headmaster came up.

"Good-day to you, doctor!" called Dick. "Here's an old pupil come back to you!"

Dr. Trelawney halted in amazement, then, hurrying forward, he shook hands heartily with Dick and Ralph.

"I've heard of your misfortune, Dick," he said, "and plaguey sorry I am for you! I thought your troubles were over when Vesey Neville died, but it seems this knave of a son of his has ousted you. I fear you have not managed things too well at Faulkbourne."

"And so say I!" cried Turpin; "but the young rascal would take no advice, sir! If he'd done as I told him, and sent a bullet—"

"Gently—gently, comrade," said Dick, laughing; and Turpin stopped short as he saw the doctor looking curiously at him. "I begin to think you're right, Dr. Trelawney; but the time is not far off when I shall make my mistakes good. In the meantime, I shall be glad to see Ralph in such good hands as yours, for he has been, and is still, in no small danger."

"How?" exclaimed the doctor. "I thought he, at least, was safe. His title to Huntercombe is secure."

"Ay, while he lives," said Dick dryly; "but you see, Hector Neville's next-of-kin, since I can inherit nothing as an outlaw, and so he is Ralph's heir."

"Good heavens! Do you mean—"

"I mean that, but for good luck and some small amount of energy on our part, Ralph would not be here now," said Dick quietly. "Huntercombe is left in good hands, and there is no place in the kingdom where I can so well see to my brother's safety as here."

"True!" cried the doctor. "And right glad I am to have him back, though I won't deny he was the most troublesome young rascal in the school, and the pluckiest at that! There are some rare floggings in store for you, Ralph!"

"I know you're strong in the arm, sir!" said Ralph; laughing.

"The scholarship Ralph won put him under your care, and Hector cannot take him from you by law," said Dick.

"I'll see to that!" said the doctor grimly. "I trust you'll be rid of Hector as you were of his father, Dick; but I fear you have a still more dangerous rogue to deal with, Ralph Neville, you know the way into the school. Go and take up your quarters."

"Meet me to-night at the old place in the plantation," said Dick, in a low voice, to his brother as they parted, "and let me know how things are in the school. There are one or two matters to fear yet. I shall have some news for you."

Ralph nodded, and went through into the quadrangle. Immediately his old comrades recognised him there was a rush, a cheer, and the last of the two highwaymen saw of Ralph he was being chaired round the quad by a cheering multitude.

"The young rascal seems mighty popular there," said Turpin, after he and Dick had taken leave of the doctor, and were riding on. "Well, Dick, we're in our own country here. Where shall we quarter ourselves to-night?"

"I was thinking old Sir Henry Stanhope, of Basing Hall, who is one of the governors of the school, might put us up," said Dick. "He was our best friend in the old days, and was my guest at Faulkbourne not two months back."

"Ay, I remember him," said Turpin; "he rode back with us to Faulkbourne after Vesey's death. A jolly old dog, and keeps a rare good table. He is a magistrate, too, and can do as he likes. An excellent idea of yours, Dick!"

"Yonder's the house, not half a mile away," returned Dick. "Whether we'd better put up for the night or not, I don't know—at all events, we'll pay our respects, and dine with the old boy. But there's one thing—your name, comrade, is rather apt to scare people, and besides, it might make things awkward, Sir Henry being a governor of the school. He may have guests. I think the words 'Richard Turpin' might frighten them."

"It may be so," said Turpin. "I have hardly been as careful of my name on the roads as you have, and there are some queer tales told of me. 'Tis hard a man should have his character so taken away; but this is a wicked world. Besides, I am not a friend of the family, like yourself."

"For which reason," said Dick, "I shall take the liberty of introducing you as Mr. Smith. Only mark you, you will have to behave, and not bring discredit on me. I shall be responsible for you, so none of your tricks, such as whipping out pistols at the dinner-table and stripping the company of their purses. Sir Henry might not like it."

"I shall comport myself like a parson," said Turpin, grinning. "Butter shall not melt in my mouth, Dick. You shall observe how prettily Mr. Smith will behave."

"Mind you stick to that," said Dick, rather doubtfully.

"And, look you, Dick, one never knows what one is going to happen upon. If we find any hostility to us, or if too much notice seems to be taken of Dick o' the Roads, we had better not seem on too good terms together. 'Tis a wise precaution. It will be well to appear somewhat quarrelsome, and ill-pleased with each other."

"There is wisdom in looking well ahead," said Dick; "but if I know Sir Henry, we have nothing to fear. Here we are at the door. Od's fish! How neglected the place looks! It used not to be so."

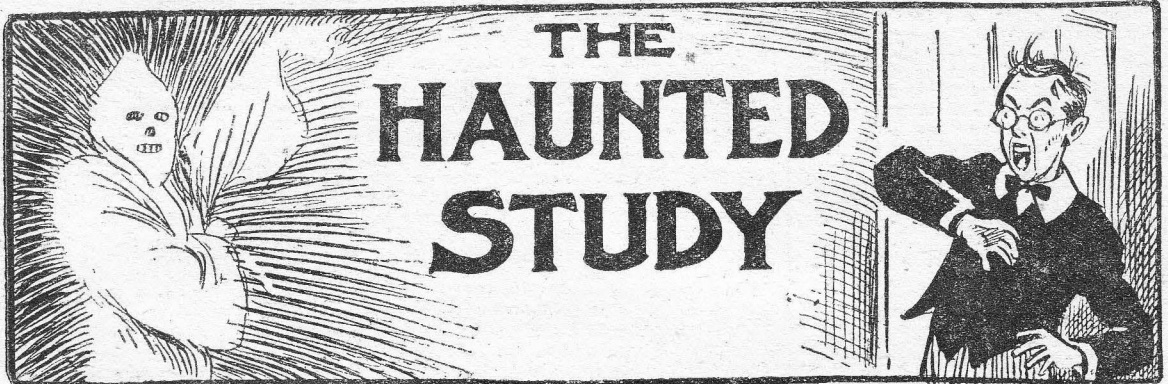
(You simply must not miss next week's instalment of our sensational Highwayman serial. It's greater than ever.)

Next Week's Instalment is Crammed Full of Breathless Escapades!

WHAT DID SKIMMY SEE?

Tom Merry & Co. are startled and mystified by the strange sounds emanating from Study No. 9. What does it mean?

A MYSTERY AND SCHOOL TALE!



A Rollicking Tale of Mystery and Adventure at St. Jim's School.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

(Author of the grand stories of Tom Merry & Co., now appearing in the "Gem.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Very Mysterious!

"FINISHED!" Skimpole of the Shell uttered the word, with a sigh of relief. He blotted the last page of his manuscript, and then leaned back in his chair, looking quite exhausted.

Skimmy had just written a ghost story for "Tom Merry's Weekly." Tom Merry had told him not to exceed a thousand words, owing to considerations of space. But Skimmy had written four times that amount. He had been scribbling all the afternoon in Study No. 9, and he was now suffering from headache, writer's cramp, and exhaustion combined.

"Tom Merry ought to be very pleased with my story," murmured the genius of the Shell. "I've put quite a lot of thrills in it. That chapter where the ghost glides into the duke's bed-room and cries, 'Ha, ha! I am the ghost of thine earliest ancestor!' is simply grand. The duke bolts from the haunted mansion in his dressing-gown, followed by a crowd of shrieking servants. And the ghost pursues the whole lot of them. Tom Merry will simply revel in that part!"

Skimpole smiled as he pictured to himself the effect his ghost story would produce.

Skimmy was not a brilliant author as a rule. He wrote yards and yards of weighty prose, and he used long words which his schoolfellows had never heard before.

On this occasion, however, Skimmy had excelled himself. He had dropped his usual "highbrow" style in favour of simple, forceful diction. And his story, "The Spectre of Moat Grange," was bound to make a big sensation.

Skimpole sat alone in the twilight. Gore and Talbot, his two study-mates, were still on the football-field.

Skimmy was still pondering over his story, with his chin nodding on his chest, and his eyes half-closed, when a sudden wailing sound close at hand caused him to sit bolt upright.

"What was that?" he muttered, turning pale.

The wailing sound was repeated. It was not loud, but faint and low. It almost made Skimmy's flesh creep.

There was something very uncanny about that sound. It was not caused by the wind; Skimmy felt certain of that.

And it didn't seem to be caused by any human being.

Skimpole, sitting there in the twilight, which was rapidly merging into dusk, felt very frightened. His teeth started chattering. He felt half inclined to spring to his feet and rush out of the study.

"What ever can it be?" he muttered, straining his ears to listen.

Then, for the third time, he heard that strange, uncanny sound. It seemed very near, as if actually in the study.

Skimpole blinked around him in great alarm. Then he saw a sight which sent cold shivers down his spine.

On the wall of the study, farthest away from him, appeared an apparition!

Skimpole did not stay to take stock of the ghostly intruder. He gave one wild glance at it, and then, with a yell which echoed through the School House, he rushed pell-mell from the study.

Skimmy fled shrieking down the passage, and he cannoned into the Terrible Three of the Shell, who were coming along arm-in-arm.

"Hellup!" gasped Tom Merry, staggering from the impact. "Can't you look where you're going, you duffer?"

"Let me pass—let me pass!" Skimpole's voice was trembling with fear and excitement. His eyes were wild and staring.

"What the thump——" began Manners, in amazement.

Skimpole struggled to force his way past the Terrible Three.

"Let me pass—quickly!" he exclaimed. "I am being pursued!"

"By Knox of the Sixth?" asked Monty Lowther.

"No; by a fearful apparition!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Skimpole gave a fearful glance over his shoulder.

"It is no laughing matter, my dear fellows!" he gasped. "If you had seen what I have just seen you would be utterly prostrated!"

Tom Merry seized the speaker by the shoulders and shook him.

"Pull yourself together, Skimmy!" he said sharply. "You say you've just seen a ghost?"

"Yes!"

"But ghosts don't exist——"

"I've seen one, I tell you, in my study!"

"Rot!" said the captain of the Shell.

"Your imagination's been playing you tricks. Have you finished that ghost story for the 'Weekly'?"

Skimpole nodded.

"Then I can see what's happened. Your mind was full of spooks and spectres and grisly phantoms, and it was beginning to get dark in the study, and you saw a shadow of some sort, and took it for a ghost."

"That's about it, Tommy," said Monty Lowther. "Was it you who gave that fearful yell just now, Skimmy?"

"Yes. You fellows can laugh at my fears, but I'm positive I saw a ghost!"

"What was it like?" asked Manners.

"Well, I—I can hardly describe it——"

"Because there was nothing there to describe!" said Tom Merry shortly.

"Still, we'll come along to your study and investigate, just to set your mind at rest."

Skimpole, however, declined to accompany the Terrible Three to Study No. 9. Wild horses would not have dragged him there. He hurried away to the brilliantly lighted Common-room, where he felt secure from ghosts.

Tom Merry & Co. stepped along the passage and visited Study No. 9.

Manners switched on the light, and the juniors saw that everything was in order. There was no sign of a ghostly visitant.

Skimpole's story, "The Spectre of Moat Grange," lay on the table. Tom picked it up, with a smile.

"It was writing this yarn that made Skimmy see things," he said. "He's got ghosts on the brain."

"The silly chump must have mesmerised himself into seeing a spook!" growled Manners.

At that moment Talbot and Gore came into the study. They had just had a bath after their exertions on the football-field, and they looked very fresh and ruddy.

"Hallo! What are you fellows after?" said Talbot.

Tom Merry explained.

"Skimmy came dashing out of this study just now in a state of terror," he said. "He was convinced he had seen a ghost. Of course, it was a delusion, but we thought we'd better come along and investigate."

Talbot smiled.

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Redfern is Accused of Ridiculing Mr. Ratcliff in Public!

"We don't go in for ghosts in this study," he said. "Skimmy's imagination has been playing a jape on him. Where is he?"

"He won't come back to the study," said Monty Lowther. "He's quite made up his mind that it's haunted!"

"The silly ass!" growled Gore. "If he doesn't choose to come in to tea, it's his own funeral! All the more for us!"

The Terrible Three retired, Tom Merry taking Skimpole's manuscript with him.

Talbot and Gore sat down to a late tea. The football had given a keen edge to their appetites. There was a new plum-cake from the tuckshop and a dish of delicious doughnuts. If Skimpole chose to miss these good things, it was, as Gore remarked, his own funeral.

"Skimmy's been seeing visions and dreaming dreams," said Talbot. "We shall have to cure him of the habit. When people start seeing ghosts, it generally means that their nerves are in a run-down state."

Gore nodded.

"Of course, there are no such things as ghosts," he said. "But there was a strange lack of conviction in his tone."

"Of course not!" said Talbot. "When you're in a state of nerves it's easy to imagine anything. Any fellow could see a ghost if he concentrated on seeing one. But he wouldn't be seeing an actual ghost. It would be a picture—an impression—created by his own mind. See?"

"Is that really so?" asked Gore.

"Yes. In my opinion, anyway. When Macbeth saw the dagger floating towards his hand, it wasn't a real dagger. It was a false creation, proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain," as Macbeth said himself. And when Skimmy saw this ghost, it was a creation of his own mind. But let's change the subject."

Suddenly Gore dropped his knife with a clatter.

"What was that?" he asked quickly.

"Eh?"

"I thought I heard a sort of wailing noise—"

Talbot grinned.

"This is what comes of talking about ghosts," he said. "You'll be seeing things in a minute!"

Talbot went on with his tea, but Gore sat stock-still. His lips were twitching nervously. He was certain he had not been mistaken.

"There it goes again!" he muttered.

Talbot had heard it this time. And he looked quite startled.

"What the merry dickens——" he began, in amazement.

"It wasn't the wind," said Gore. "And it didn't sound human. It was a queer, supernatural sort of sound."

The wailing was repeated, and the two juniors could no longer doubt the evidence of their ears.

Gore was quite pale now.

Even though the light burned brightly in Study No. 9, and the fire crackled merrily as well, there was something uncanny in the atmosphere.

The wailing continued at intervals.

Talbot's nerves were steady, and he had no thought of rushing out of the study in a panic, as Skimpole had done. But George Gore was already on his feet.

"What on earth is it?" he muttered.

"Ask me another!" said Talbot.

Suddenly Gore gave a violent start and sprang back a pace, knocking his chair over with a crash.

"Look!" he exclaimed, pointing dramatically towards the wall opposite him.

Talbot turned his head, and followed

Gore's gaze. Then he uttered a low cry of alarm.

A strange, spectral figure was outlined against the wall. It was in white, save for a red blotch here and there. Its two arms were outspread, and one of the long, bony hands clutched what appeared to be a dagger.

The figure did not move. Talbot and Gore gazed at it as if petrified. Gore wanted to dash out of the study, but his limbs seemed to be paralysed. He had temporarily lost the power of movement.

Even Talbot, cool-headed and practical though he was, felt himself trembling a little. He could in no way account for the presence of this mysterious phantom. It was vague and unreal.

The apparition was all the more strange, seeing that it did not seem to depend upon the darkness for its manifestations. It appeared in the full glare of the electric light.

There was another wail, which might or might not have proceeded from the motionless figure on the wall.

For some moments the two juniors were tongue-tied, unable to move or speak.

At last the figure vanished.

Gore drew a deep breath of relief.

"It's—it's gone!" he muttered.

Talbot nodded.

"The thing made me feel quite queer!" he murmured.

"What have you got to say about ghosts now?" asked Gore grimly. "Are you going to suggest that we both imagined this?"

"No. It was there, right enough. And did you see what it held in its hand—a sort of dagger?"

Gore shuddered.

"Let's get out of this!" he muttered. "I'm certain this study's haunted."

He hurried out of the study. Talbot remained for a few minutes, then he followed his study-mate, switching off the light as he went. In a very thoughtful mood he made his way to the junior Common-room.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Night of Terror!

"IMPOSSIBLE!" said Tom Merry. "But we saw it, I tell you!" shouted Gore.

"Your imagination, dear man," drawled Cadw.

There was a buzz of voices in the Common-room. Talbot and Gore had related their uncanny experience, but nobody—except Skimpole—was impressed by the story.

"You seriously mean to say that Study No. 9 is haunted?" asked Jack Blake.

"Yes," said Talbot.

"What uttah wot!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "Somebody's been playin' a jape on you, deah boys!"

"We distinctly saw an apparition," said Talbot. "It appeared on the wall, and stayed there for a good five minutes without moving. And then it vanished."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A peal of laughter greeted Talbot's statement.

"You can cackle!" said Talbot, beginning to get angry. "But I defy any one of you to spend the night in Study No. 9!"

This was a direct challenge. And it was taken up at once.

"I'm game!" said George Alfred Grundy.

"Same here!" echoed a dozen voices.

"Grundy spoke first," said Tom Merry.

"Let him go and sample the horrors of the haunted study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you agree to be locked in, Grundy?" asked Gore.

"Yes, rather!"

"Come along, then!"

Quite a procession of juniors went along to Study No. 9. George Alfred Grundy stepped jauntily into the apartment, singing to himself, "Where'er I go I fear no foe!"

"You can have the light on, if you like," said Talbot.

"Thanks, I will," was the reply. "Do you want me to stay here all night?"

"That's what you've agreed to do."

"All serene. Who's the prefect on duty to-night?"

"Rushden."

"Will you be able to account for my absence from the dorm?"

"We'll rig up a dummy figure, and put it in your bed," said Gore.

Grundy switched on the light, and glanced round the study.

"No sign of the merry ghost," he said, with a chuckle. Then his glance wandered to Talbot's bookshelf. "I see you've got some ripping books here," he added. "I shall be able to pass the time in reading. I'll stoke the fire up, and make myself comfy on the sofa."

Talbot closed the study door, and the key grated in the lock. George Alfred Grundy was left alone in the haunted study.

The juniors then retreated. They had not gone a dozen yards when a fearful scream rang out, causing them to stop short in wonder.

Talbot and Gore smiled grimly.

"Grundy's scared stiff already," said the latter. "He's seen the ghost!"

Another scream rang out, and Grundy battered his clenched fists on the locked door of the study.

"Let me out! Quickly!" he yelled.

Talbot sprinted along the passage, and unlocked the door of Study No. 9, and threw it open.

Grundy came forth as if he had been discharged from a cannon. His hair was on end, and there was a terrified expression on his face.

"I've seen it!" he muttered. "Talbot and Gore were quite right, and so was Skimmy. That study is haunted!"

Even now Tom Merry & Co. were not convinced. They laughed incredulously.

The captain of the Shell stepped into the doorway of Study No. 9, and glanced round the apartment.

"Dashed if I can see anything," he said.

"Well, it must have gone," said Grundy. "I not only saw it, but heard it!"

"Gammon!"

"You let your nerves get the better of you," said Jack Blake, "and you started seeing things that weren't there!"

"I wouldn't go back into that study for a pension, anyway!" said Grundy, mopping the perspiration from his brow.

"If any other fellow cares to take it on he's welcome."

Then up spake Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"I am perfectly willin' to spend the night in Talbot's study!" he said. "I'm not afraid of ghosts; in fact, I'm sure there are no ghosts there to be afraid of."

"Well, go ahead, Gussy," said Talbot. "But you'll soon be shouting for us to let you out, same as Grundy did."

Arthur Augustus smiled scornfully.

Like the natives of Wiltshire, he was not afraid of "hog, dog, or—gentleman in black." He would show these fellows that he had nerves of steel.

Gussy stepped into the study cheerfully enough, and Talbot locked the door.

The crowd of juniors waited in the passage, wondering if Gussy would yell to be let out. But the minutes passed, and Arthur Augustus gave no sign that anything was amiss.

"Gussy's all right," said Jack Blake. "Let's go back to the Common-room."

The juniors followed this advice. They trooped along to the Common-room, discussing the haunted study.

Though Tom Merry & Co. refused to believe in the ghost, at the same time, they were frankly puzzled.

It was not surprising that Skimpole had shown fright. Skimmy was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. But Talbot and Gore had plenty of pluck, and so had Grundy. It was strange that these three fellows should have been scared.

The juniors settled down to their books

asked the—the thing to go away, but it wouldn't. It stayed there on the wall, and it got on my nerves so much, dear boys, that I hopped out of the window. I wouldn't have stayed in that study for a term's pocket-money!"

A buzz of amazement greeted Gussy's narration.

"Look here," said Tom Merry. "It's high time this mystery was cleared up. Gussy's the fifth fellow to be scared this evening. Skimmy set the ball rolling; then Talbot and Gore saw this spook; then Grundy was scared out of his wits—"

"Grundy hasn't any wits to be scared out of!" said Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyway, he was jolly scared," said Tom Merry. "And now Gussy comes rushing in, looking like a ghost himself, to tell us that Study No. 9 is haunted. There's a mystery somewhere. And it's up to us to unravel it."

"Hear, hear!" said Manners.

After a good deal of discussion, it was decided that the Terrible Three should visit Talbot's study after lights-out, and pass the night there.

In spite of all they had heard about

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The End of the Mystery

"STOKE up the merry fire!" said Monty Lowther cheerfully. "We've got to stay here all night, so we might as well make the best of it."

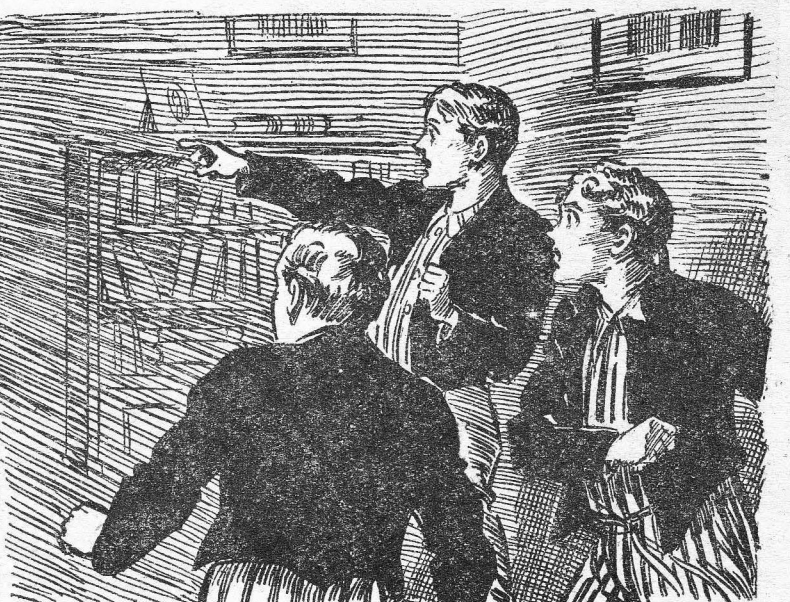
The Terrible Three were in Talbot's study. The light had been switched on, and the blind drawn, so that the rays would not penetrate into the darkness of the quad.

Tom Merry & Co. were not a bit perturbed. They made themselves quite comfortable in the haunted study. Manners amused himself by pasting snapshots in an album. Monty Lowther started to write a humorous article for "Tom Merry's Weekly." And Tom himself lay on the couch and read Stevenson's "Treasure Island." He had already read it half a dozen times, but it was a story of which he never tired.

An hour passed without incident. Midnight boomed forth from the old clock-tower.

"I almost wish we'd stayed in bed," said Manners, with a yawn. "There seems to be nothing doing."

"We'd better stay here all night



and their games of chess. Most of them had forgotten Arthur Augustus D'Arcy and his lonely vigil. But when bed-time drew near they were suddenly reminded of Gussy.

"Let's go and ask him through the keyhole if he's seen anything yet," said Monty Lowther.

"Good wheeze!"

The juniors were about to go along to Study No. 9, when suddenly the door of the Common-room was thrown open, and Arthur Augustus rushed in.

Gussy's clothes were rumpled, and his hair dishevelled. His complexion was the colour of chalk.

There was a shout of bewilderment from the juniors.

"Gussy!"

"What's happened?"

"How did you get out?"

Arthur Augustus threw himself into a chair. He was panting for breath.

The juniors waited amid tense excitement for the swell of St. Jim's to explain.

"I've seen it, dear boys!" gasped Gussy at length.

"You—you've seen the ghost?" exclaimed Jack Blake.

"Yaas. It was awful. It gave me the creeps! I was lyin' on the couch, weadin' a book, when a spectral figgah suddenly appeared on the wall. I spoke to it, but it wouldn't ansah. I could only heah a dweadful wailin' sound, which sent cold shivahs down my spine. I

THE GHOST OF STUDY 9! Just as the last stroke of midnight died away on the night air, a hazy figure appeared on the wall of the study. Manners, who saw it first, uttered a startled cry. "Look!" he muttered. The ghost had at last made its appearance. (See Chapter 3).

the ghost, Tom Merry & Co. were neither convinced nor alarmed. They were, in fact, looking forward to their vigil in the haunted study.

Rushden of the Sixth shepherded the juniors to bed, and eventually saw lights out.

The Terrible Three had planned to wait till eleven o'clock before going down to the haunted study.

Most of the other fellows went to sleep. But three of them were wide-awake when the Terrible Three left the dormitory at eleven. And these three—Bernard Glyn, Clifton Dane, and Harry Noble—rose from their beds and stole quietly downstairs in the wake of Tom Merry & Co. And they chuckled softly as they descended the wide staircase.

though," said Tom Merry, "or the fellows will say we funked it."

"That's so," agreed Lowther. "We'll stay here all night, whatever happens. Even if the merry ghost appears—"

"Hist!" said Manners suddenly.

"What was that?"

"The wind," said Tom Merry.

"No, it wasn't. There it goes again!"

All three heard the sound this time. It was a ghostly, long-drawn-out wail.

A rather startled expression came over the faces of the juniors. They were seized with a nameless dread.

Just as the last stroke of midnight died away on the night air, a hazy figure appeared on the wall of the study.

(Continued on page 27.)

The Sack or a Public Flogging for Redfern? That is the Question!

THE JAPE OF THE TERM!

The Removites find themselves thoroughly outwitted and "dished" by their rivals, the Fourth Form—then Wibley steps on the scene!

WIBLEY AGAIN!



Wibley's Wonderful Wheeze!

William Wibley, the new boy of the Remove, has already proved himself to be a most remarkable actor and impersonator. In this week's story of the Chums of Greyfriars we have further proof of his wonderful powers.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

(Author of the Stories of Harry Wharton & Co., appearing in the "Magnet" Library.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mum's the Word!

EXCITEMENT reigned in the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

Certainly there was good reason for excitement. Things were going very well for Harry Wharton & Co., the Famous Five at Greyfriars.

They were rehearsing a play to be performed by the Remove Dramatic Society—and so were Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth. But the Remove's play was something above Temple's play, for Temple was keen on Shakespeare, and the Remove thought that they could do something better by producing the thrilling drama, "The Red Rover!"

Then again, Temple, Dabney & Co. had raided the Remove in their dormitory the night before, and they had come off second best. At least, that was what Wharton & Co. thought.

As a matter of fact, Temple had evolved a scheme whereby he could get hold of Harry Wharton's copy of the book of words for "The Red Rover!" He had succeeded, and, in trying to replace the manuscript during the night he had been seen.

So the raid was hardly a raid at all, though it developed into a rare tussle between the old rivals. But Temple had succeeded in his plans—plans which would make the hair of the juniors in the Remove stand up on end if they did not know about them.

Thus, the Removites rehearsed their celebrated play in excitement and cheerfulness.

But they would probably not have rehearsed so cheerfully if they had known exactly what was going on in the Fourth-Form room.

Temple, Dabney & Co. had gone there for a preliminary rehearsal, as they called it; but it was not "King John," or "Hamlet," or "Othello," or "Macbeth" that occupied the attention of the heroes of the Fourth. They had given Shakespeare the go-by. Temple had allotted the parts of "The Red Rover" to his friends, and it was "The Red Rover" that the Fourth-Formers were now rehearsing.

Temple was the pirate chief, Dabney was the first mate, and Fry the second mate of "The Red Rover." Scott was the merchant captain. The other parts were distributed among the Fourth, more than half the Form being in the numerous cast. The parts had been written out from the copy possessed by Cecil Temple, and every fellow had been hard at work in every spare moment of the day "mugging" up his lines by heart.

Temple had asked Mr. Capper, his Form

master, to get him permission to use the lecture-room as a theatre for the play on Tuesday evening—the evening preceding the Remove performance.

Mr. Capper fully approved of the Shakespearean efforts of the juniors, though he was disinclined to attend the performances. He could not carry his kindness quite so far as that. He willingly obtained the required permission for Temple; indeed, he was so kind that Temple ventured to request him to attend the performance. Mr. Capper replied to that request that he was sorry, but he had an engagement to play chess on Tuesday evening with the Vicar of Friardale. So Temple had to be satisfied, and to cast about in his mind for some other authoritative personage to be present at the play, to keep the audience in order.

That the audience would need keeping in order was undoubted.

As soon as the Remove learned that the Fourth had "pinched" their play, there was no doubt that they would turn up at the performance in strong force to muck it up, as the juniors elegantly expressed it.

Temple did not mean to have the play "mucked up."

But he was in luck there, too. He thought himself of the fact that Loder, the prefect, was very much down on Harry Wharton & Co. It required only a word to Loder. Temple called on the prefect, explained that he was giving a play on Tuesday evening, and that he feared a disturbance by the Famous Five and their pals. That was enough for Gerald Loder. He cordially promised to be present, and to bring another prefect with him. Loder, of course, did not anticipate much pleasure from the performance, but he expected a good deal of satisfaction from baulking the desire of the Famous Five to muck up the performance. In the presence of prefects, of course, a row would be impossible. Strict order would have to be kept. And Loder grinned as he thought of the feelings of his old enemies in the Remove, when they came on the scene, and, after paying for admission, found that they would have to keep as orderly as if in chapel.

Temple, Dabney & Co. were in high feather now.

They had "boned" the play, they had booked the lecture-room; they had secured the presence of two prefects to keep order. There was nothing for them to do now but to go ahead and triumph over their old rivals.

They plunged into the first rehearsal of "The Red Rover" with great zest.

They stuck at it for a couple of hours, too, with undragging energy. When it was over, Temple professed himself satisfied.

"You fellows will have to mug the thing up, and get letter-perfect," he said. "You have time to do it before Tuesday, if you slog at it."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney; his usual remark.

"Besides, we can gag, if we forget the lines," observed Fry. "It's such blessed piffle that gagging will be as good as the real lines. It doesn't matter if a pirate says: 'Blow my topsails!' instead of 'Shiver my timbers!'"

"And mind you keep the parts dark," went on Temple. "Don't let anybody outside the Fourth get a squint at them, or the game will be given right away."

"What-ho!"

"Put in every spare minute learning up the lines. I'm seeing about the costumes now," said Temple. "We shall have to hire them from the costumier at Courtfield; we've never done a pirate play before, and we haven't the stuff among our props. But we can get the things at a reasonable rate on hire—no need to buy them. We shan't ever be giving 'The Red Rover' again."

"Ha, ha! No!"

"And some of the things we used in the 'Tempest' will do for the ship scene in 'The Red Rover,'" said Temple. "We can easily manage the staging, and we need only hire the rig-out. I've been down to Courtfield to look over the things already, and we can select them to-morrow afternoon and get them into the school—secretly, of course."

"Mum's the word!" chuckled Fry.

And the Fourth-Formers streamed out of the Form-room, quite satisfied with themselves and their prospects, and chuckling gleefully.

They met the Removites coming away from the Rag. The Remove rehearsal was also over. Temple nodded pleasantly to Wharton & Co.

"Been rehearsing?" he asked.

"Yes," said Harry; "another whack at 'The Red Rover.' It's coming off next Wednesday, you know. What have you fellows been doing?"

"Oh, we've been rehearsing, too!"

"Some more Shakespeare?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Well, no; we're giving Shakespeare a rest this time," said Temple airily. "Can have too much of a good thing, you know. Lemme see—if you chaps have booked the lecture-hall for Wednesday, we can't have it that night."

Next Week's Greyfriars Story is Frank Richards' BEST!

"That you jolly well can't" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, I suppose Tuesday will do us. I suppose you fellows will come?"

"I don't know," said Wharton. "You see, we're jolly busy with our rehearsals, and we're having a final dress-rehearsal on Tuesday evening. I don't quite see how we can fix it."

"Sorry," said Temple; "we shall miss you—we really want you to come. But, of course, if you can't fix it up, that settles it. Perhaps you will change your minds later, though."

And Temple, Dabney & Co. chuckled as they walked away. Harry Wharton looked a little puzzled.

"Seems to be a sort of a joke on," he remarked. "I don't quite see it."

"Silly asses!" said Bob. "They're going to give some heavy classic drama, and they think it will put 'The Red Rover' in the shade, that's all! Bet you they won't get half an audience."

"They won't get us, anyway; we've got the dress-rehearsal on."

"Yes, rather!"

And the Famous Five dismissed Temple & Co from their minds.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.
A Sudden Surprise!**

NEVER had there been such peace and quietness between the Fourth Form and the Removites, as might have been observed during the next few days.

It was a case of the lion and the lamb reposing in amity together—only the Fourth-Formers and the Removites were very little together.

They seemed mutually anxious to keep away from one another.

Every spare moment, on both sides, was devoted to rehearsing; and the Removites were keeping their rehearsals dark from the Fourth—and the Fourth were still more keenly anxious to keep their rehearsals dark from the Remove.

If Harry Wharton & Co. had not been quite so busy, they might have tumbled to the fact that Temple, Dabney & Co. were scheming a great scheme for their especial benefit.

But "The Red Rover" claimed all their attention.

They were only too glad to leave the Fourth severely alone, and to be alone by the Fourth. Consequently, Temple, Dabney & Co. pursued their plan without interruption and without suspicion.

On Saturday afternoon the costumes were selected and hired in Courtfield, and were conveyed in big bundles to the school. But the Removites did not suspect anything. "The Red Rover" cast were in the rag at the time, busy with a dress-rehearsal.

Temple's consignment of costumes was conveyed to the Fourth Form dormitory without the Remove fellows even knowing that it existed.

It was in the Fourth Form dorm, with the door locked, that Temple & Co. had their first dress-rehearsal.

It was a great success.

The Fourth Form players had slogged at their lines with a vengeance, and they were getting on famously with their parts.

After the dress-rehearsal in the dormitory the gear was safely locked away from possible prying eyes.

By Tuesday, Temple felt that his company were quite ready to face the performance of "The Red Rover" in the evening. As Fry had suggested "gagging" would fill up the blanks if the fellows forgot their lines. It wasn't as if they were performing Shakespeare.

After morning lessons Temple spent some time in his study preparing the notice to put on the board, which was to astonish Greyfriars and enrage the Remove.

There was much chucking in Temple's study over the preparation of that famous notice. The Fourth-Formers anticipated the looks of the Remove when they should read it on the notice-board, and they roared with laughter at the thought.

Even now, at the eleventh hour, there was no suspicion on the part of Harry Wharton & Co. The sudden discovery would burst upon them with the shock of a thunderbolt.

Temple & Co. went in to afternoon lessons with cheerful faces.

Just before lessons were over for the day Temple obtained permission to go out of

the Form-room, and he left ten minutes before the others.

He wanted to have the notice on the board in time to greet the eyes of the Removites as they came out after lessons.

Harry Wharton & Co. little dreamed of the surprise that was awaiting them as they finished lessons that day in the Remove-room. As a rule, lamb-like innocence was not a distinguishing trait of the famous Co. They had quite as much of the wisdom of the serpent as of the innocence of the dove.

But they were fairly caught napping this time. They came out of the Remove-room without a suspicion in their minds.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's a new notice up," said Bob Cherry, as he caught sight of Coker & Co. of the Fifth staring at the board and chucking. The Fifth Form were already out, and some of them seemed to be highly amused by the paper that was pinned on the board.

A little curious, but still unsuspecting, the Removites bore down on the notice-board to see what it was that interested Coker and Potter and Green so much. Coker turned to them with a grin.

"Ain't you Remove-kids doing a play called 'The Red Rover' to-morrow?" he asked.

"Yes," said Harry.

"My hat! It will come a bit stale after the other performance, won't it?"

"What other performance?"

"Oh! Don't you know?"

"Know what, you ass?" asked Harry.

"Shift yourself, and let me see the board!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker moved aside, and the Removites looked at the paper pinned on the board.

Then they gasped.

For the moment they could scarcely believe their eyes. They crowded round the board, craning over one another's shoulders to see the notice and read it. For the moment their breath was quite taken away, for this is what they read:

"NOTICE!

"THE RED ROVER."

The great melodrama, "The Red Rover," will be performed by the Fourth Form Dramatic Society this evening, commencing at six o'clock precisely.

The performance will take place in the lecture-room. Loder and Walker of the Sixth have kindly promised to be present.

Admission free to all Greyfriars fellows excepting the Lower Fourth. The Lower Fourth will be charged threepence each for admission. They will be expected to wear clean collars, and to wash their hands for the occasion.

The cast will be as follows:

Black Jack, the Red Rover Cecil Temple.
Gomez, the Pirate Mate E. Dabney.
Spouter, the Second Mate E. Fry.
Skipper Jolly, the Merchant Captain,

D. Scott.
Bill Bunting, the Jolly Jack Tar M. Turner.
Donna Dolories, the Spanish Lady
Smith major.

Captain Benbow, of the frigate
Aspasia H. Jones.
Sailors, Pirates, Negroes, Officers,
Spaniards, etc.—

Members of the Fourth Form.
Six o'clock precisely. (Signed)

"CECIL TEMPLE."

There it was, in black-and-white, staring at them in the face—and the thunderbolt of the Fourth Form had been launched at last. Harry Wharton & Co., and the rest of the Remove, stared blankly at the notice. It seemed like a bad dream.

"The Red Rover!" stuttered Wharton at last.

"Our play!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"To-night—at six!" gasped Nugent. "And—and the Fourth Form!"

"Black Jack—Cecil Temple!" ejaculated Johnny Bull. "It must be a giddy dream—a blessed nightmare! How do they know anything about it?"

"They jolly well know about it—all about it!" said Wibley, the new boy. "Why, they've got all the names, every one of them!"

"The rotters!"

"The spoofer!"

"They sha'n't do it!"

"We'll stop them!"

"We'll slaughter them!"

"We'll muck up the show!"

"Why, it's rank burglary!" gasped Wharton. "It's our play—didn't we write it ourselves, every blessed line of it?"

"It's thaving intoirely!" howled Micky Desmond.

"I'm Bill Bunting, the Jolly Jack Tar!" roared Morgan. "That ass Turner isn't going to take my part and sing my song, look you!"

"And I'm Black Jack!"

"And I'm Gomez!"

"And I—"

"Oh, the rotters!"

"You ass, Wharton, to let them see the play!"

"But I didn't!" shouted Wharton, who was crimson with rage. "I've had the copy in my own pocket all the time. I never left it anywhere for a minute. I had a sort of feeling they might play some trick. I've had it in my pocket all the time. Some of you fellows must have left your parts about."

"I didn't!" growled Johnny Bull.

"And I didn't!"

"Nor I!"

"Well, they've got on to it somehow," said Wibley, beginning to grin. "What's written there shows that they've got the whole bizny from start to finish. They've managed to get a copy of the play somehow, and they're going to give it."

"Give our play! They sha'n't!"

"We'll advance the date by a day, and give it to-night ourselves!" exclaimed Tom Brown.

"They're booked the lecture-room!" said Nugent.

"Oh, my hat!"

"We'll go in a crowd and smash up the show, then!" roared Bolsover major.

"They've got a couple of prefects to come!" growled Wharton. "We can't do that. Loder and Walker would only turn us out, and be glad of the chance."

"Oh, the beasts!"

"The swindlers!"

"The burglars!"

"The rotters!"

"We've got to nip it in the bud somehow," said Wharton, between his teeth. "Why, the blessed thing begins in an hour. We've got no time to get our play going, even if we could find a place to play it to-night instead of to-morrow. But we've got to stop it somehow. Let's go and see Temple!"

"Yes, rather! He sha'n't be fit to play to-night, anyway," said Bolsover major, clenching his big fists, "unless he plays with two black eyes and a pair of thick ears!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Come on!"

And the Removites, in an excited and whooping crowd, rushed away to Temple's study, to see Temple of the Fourth. It was not likely to be a peaceful visit.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

What's to be Done!

HOLD ON! Where are you going?" It was the voice of Loder, the prefect.

The juniors stopped their wild rush towards the Fourth-Form passage, as the burly form of the big Sixth-Former stepped into their path.

"It's all right, Loder!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Let us pass!"

"Stop! I tell you!"

"Look here, Loder—"

"Where are you going?"

"We're going to see Temple in his study," said Harry Wharton angrily. "You've no right to stop us, Loder. I suppose we can go and see Temple if we like."

"That depends," said Loder grimly. "You're not going to kick up a row, you unruly young blackguards! What are you going to see Temple for?"

"We—we want to speak to him."

"We'er—want to explain something to him."

"Quite—quite peaceable, you know," murmured Johnny Bull, clenching his fists with almost frantic energy. "Quite—quite peaceful—and—quiet."

"There's a little mistake about a play, and we're going to explain it to Temple, that's all," said Wharton.

"You'll stay where you are," said Loder coolly. "Mind, I'm going to keep an eye on you. I'm not going to have this endless ragging among you fags."

THE POPULAR—No. 219.

Harry Wharton & Co. are Fine Pals! Meet Them Again Next Week!

"Look here—"
 "We're jolly well—"
 "Rush him!" roared Bolsover major belligerently. "Rush the cad!"
 Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, was looking out of his study. Loder raised his voice, and called to him.
 "Mr. Quelch, would you kindly step here?"
 "What is the matter?" asked the Remove master, coming along the passage. The juniors were quiet at once. They might check Loder, though he was a prefect, but not the most reckless among them thought of checking Mr. Quelch.
 "These kids are going to kick up a row in the Fourth Form studies," said Loder. "They refuse to obey me!"
 Mr. Quelch's eyes glistered.
 "If any boy in this Form enters the Fourth Form passage he will be caned!" he said. "Go away quietly at once—quietly, do you hear?"
 There was nothing for it but to obey. The Removites moved off quietly, with glowering looks at Loder. They repaired to the Rag, there to hold a sort of indignation meeting. They were debarred from raiding the Fourth, and bringing Temple to reason by the simple but drastic process of bumping him on the floor of his study. But perhaps it was a relief to "blow off steam" in the Rag. There they could talk to their hearts' content, if they could do nothing more.
 "Well, this is a go!" said Bob Cherry ruefully. "I believe Temple gave Loder the tip to keep an eye on us. Loder was glad of the chance of dropping on us, I know that."
 "Just like the beast!"
 "But what's going to be done?" exclaimed Bulstrode heatedly.
 "We are!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "We're going to be done—done brown; hopelessly diddled, dished, and done!"
 "The donefulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Singh lugubriously.
 "Something's got to be thought of," said Harry Wharton desperately. "They're getting the lecture-room ready now, I suppose. It starts at six. Temple's fixed it early on purpose, so that we sha'n't have time to think of a dodge."
 "He's got to be stopped. There won't be any Form master present. Capper's gone out, and he can't stand their acting, anyway," said Bolsover major. "We can risk the prefects, and make a regular hullabaloo!"
 "Loder would call Quelch in at once," said Nugent, with a shake of the head. "That won't do."
 "But we can't let them give our play. How can we give it to-morrow night if they give it to-night? It would fall flat."
 "The fatfulness would be—"
 "Terrific!" groaned Bob Cherry.
 "We shall be the giddy laughing-stocks of the school," said Wharton. "We can't give it to-morrow if they give it to-day. There wouldn't be any novelty in it. My hat! They'd even make out that we'd borrowed their play—copied them, you know!"
 "They would, the rotters!"
 "If they perform it to-day our giddy performance is off—right off! No two ways about that," Mark Linley observed.
 "They sha'n't perform it!"
 "We'll bottle 'em up somehow."
 "What's to be done?"
 "They begin in about half an hour now."
 "I know!" exclaimed Skinner. "Why not appeal to old Capper, their Form master? Tell him they've borrowed our play, and ask him to stop 'em."
 There was a general shaking of heads. The idea of dragging a master into the affair did not commend itself to the Removites, enraged as they were.
 "No fear!" said Bob Cherry promptly. "No calling in the masters."
 "It would be much the same thing as sneaking," said Vernon-Smith.
 "They'd have the laugh of us all the same, if we could only stop them doing us by appealing to a master," said Harry Wharton. "That's no good!"
 "Besides, Capper's gone out!" said Nugent. "He goes down to the vicarage at half-past five every Tuesday to play chess."
 "That settles it, anyway."
 "Then what's going to be done?" said Skinner sulkily. "I suppose we're not going to let the Fourth gloat over us like this?"
 "Not if we can help it," said Wharton. "But what the deuce we're to do I don't know. We must think of something. Hasn't anybody got an idea in his head?"
 THE POPULAR.—No. 219.

"I have!" said Wibley.
 "Oh, you!" growled Bolsover major. "You shut up, you new kid! Don't jaw!"
 "Let him jaw, if he's got any idea what to do," said Harry. "Anything is better than nothing, though I don't suppose Wibley can think of anything that we can't. Anyway, pile in, kid! What's your idea?"
 "I think I know how to stop them," said Wibley coolly.
 "Well, get on!"
 "No hurry. I think I can stop them. You fellows can't, but I can!" said Wibley, with a coolness that made some of the juniors want to bump him. "But, look here; unless they're stopped, our play's mucked up and done for, isn't it?"
 "Yes, fathead!"
 "Well, then, if I find a way of stopping them, there ought to be a quid pro quo," said Wibley. "I don't want to be Extra Pirate when I can play the head off any chap here—"
 "Oh, cheese it!"
 "I'm not conceited, and if I couldn't act I wouldn't ask for a part," said Wibley. "You fellows know I can act. Wharton's cousin George—"
 "Oh, ring off!" said Wharton crossly.
 "Well, you know I can act. Look here, make it a go! If I stop them from playing 'The Red Rover' this evening, will you give me a good part?"
 "You can't do it."
 "I think I can. If I can't, then it's off," said Wibley. "But if I succeed in doing it, will you give me a good part in the play?"
 The Co. looked at one another. There was something impressive in Wibley's manner, and in spite of themselves, they began to think that he might have some scheme by which the cunning enemy might be outwitted. In their desperate extremity the chums of the Remove were ready to catch at a straw.
 "Well, that's only fair," said Wharton. "If you could nip it in the bud, and make it possible for us to bring our play off, after all, you'd be entitled to a good part in the cast, certainly. If you could do it—"
 "Is it a go?" asked Wibley.
 "Well, yes."
 "What part?" asked Wibley, in a business-like manner.
 Wharton hesitated.
 "Well, all the parts are allotted, you see. Perhaps Bolsover—"
 "He's not going to have my part!" said Bolsover major, with great promptness.
 "Perhaps Bob Cherry—"
 "Ahem!" said Bob.
 "Perhaps Bull—"
 "Oh, don't be funny!" said Johnny Bull. "It's up to Wharton," said Skinner.
 "What!"
 "You're the giddy captain of the Remove, ain't you?" said Skinner, with a sniff. "It's up to you to find a way out of a fix like this; and if Wibley finds it for you, give him your part, that's all."
 "Hear, hear!" said the juniors.
 Skinner's suggestion seemed to them fair enough. It certainly was "up" to Wharton, as leader, to find a way out; and, equally certain, Wharton couldn't find a way.
 "Oh, that's all rot!" said Wharton uneasily. "I don't think it's rot," said Wibley—"in fact, the Red Rover's part is the part I want. The fact is, I've been mugging up your part, Wharton, in case you fellows should come to understand that you want a really good actor for the title-role."
 "The dickens you have?" exclaimed Harry indignantly.
 Wibley nodded coolly.
 "I've got your part quite pat," he said, "and I really think I should make a better Black Jack than you would."
 "You cheeky ass—"
 "You needn't be afraid to let me have the part. I should do it justice."
 "Hear, hear!" said Bolsover major. "We all know that Wibley can act. If he finds a way to dish the Fourth, he ought to have the part. It's only cricket."
 Wharton hesitated. But the general feeling of the Removites was evidently in favour of Wibley's claim. Their point of view was that Wharton couldn't expect Wibley to lead for him in one way and not in another. If Wibley succeeded in dishing the Fourth, he was entitled to play the title-role in "The Red Rover" as a reward. The juniors did not doubt that he would play it quite as well as Wharton.
 "Is it a go?" Wibley repeated.

"Yes," said Wharton at last. "If you dish the Fourth, and we bring off our play, you shall play the Red Rover."
 "Done!"
 "And now, what's the wheeze?"
 And the juniors gathered round eagerly to hear the "wheeze."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wibley's Great Wheeze!

"OUT with it!"
 "Buck up!"
 Wibley grinned serenely.
 "I think it's a dead cert," he said—
 "anyway, we can try it. Listen here. Suppose, when the Fourth Form duffers are beginning their giddy play, Capper should come back—"
 "He won't!"
 "And it wouldn't make any difference if he did!" growled Johnny Bull.
 "And suppose," pursued Wibley calmly—"suppose he should look into the lecture-room and find them playing a pirate play, and drop on them for playing such rot—"
 "It isn't rot, you ass!"
 "It's a topping play, you fathead!"
 "Yes, yes; I know! But Capper would think it rot, as he's dead nuts on Strakespeare and the heavy classic drama and things," said Wibley. "Suppose he should get his rag out, and order them to stop at once—make them chuck it up right there on the spot, and order them to their studies for the rest of the evening—what would happen?"
 "They'd have to go, I suppose."
 "Wouldn't that nip it right in the bud and dish them?"
 "Of course it would. But—"
 "But Capper won't do anything of the sort, you silly chump!" roared Bolsover major.
 "He will," said Wibley.
 "Why will he, ass?"
 "Because I shall fix it."
 "Wha-a-at!"
 "Do you mean to say that you can make Capper do that?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, looking at the new boy as though doubting whether he had taken leave of his senses.
 Wibley nodded.
 "Then you're dotty!"
 "Barmy—quite barmy!" said Bob Cherry. "Don't waste time listening to the silly ass!" said Tom Brown impatiently. "It will be six soon. Let's think what's to be done."
 "We know what's to be done, and I'm going to do it," said Wibley. "You remember cousin George—"
 "Hang cousin George!"
 "You remember that I took you all in? Why couldn't I take the Fourth in just as easily?"
 "Blow the Fourth!"
 "In another character, I mean," explained Wibley.
 "What on earth do you mean?" said Wharton testily.
 "Have you ever looked at Capper?" said Wibley, with a grin. "He seems to be specially designed by Nature to be impersonated."
 "Impersonated!" gasped Bob Cherry.
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "Yes. He's short—not much taller than I am—and I could make that up with high-heeled shoes. He's fat; I can make that up with padding. I can get clothes just like his in Courtfield; it won't take long to buzz down there on a bike. I know where he keeps his gown; I can bone it quite easily. His whiskers—they're the very thing that's imitated most easily. His gold-rimmed glasses—easiest thing in the world! Don't you see, Capper's safe out of the way, playing chess at the vicarage. I'm going to walk into the lecture-room as Capper—"
 "Oh, great Scott!"
 "And stop the performance," said Wibley. "Great pip!"
 "But—but his voice?" gasped Wharton.
 "Did you know your voice?"
 "You did know my voice when I was playing cousin George?"
 "Well, no," Wharton admitted.
 "I can do old Capper's squeak a treat. Listen."
 "Pile in!"
 "H—h—m! What is this I see?" exclaimed Wibley, with an exact imitation of Mr. Capper's somewhat squeaky, high-pitched voice that made the juniors gasp. "What is this—this absurd play you are performing? I cannot approve of anything of the kind!"
 (Continued on page 16.)



Supplement No. 116.

Week Ending March 31st, 1923.

TUCKSHOP TOPPICKS!

By Sammy Bunter.

DAME MIMBLE has been doing a roaring trade this week. Her little shop must be a positive gold mine. Why duzzent she turn it into a limmited company, and make me the maneing direktor? I could manage the shop all right—and the kontents, too!

Let us eggamine a few stattistix for the currant week. The number of customers Mrs. Mimble served was six hundred. That's an average of one hundred per day, the tuckshop being closed on Sundays. The gross takings for the week amounted to £30, so each fellow must have spent a bob. Thirty quids—just think of it! Of corse, it isn't clear prophet, but I eggspsect about ten pounds of it is. The sooner Dame Mimble takes me into partnership, the better!

Now let us look at the list of things sold. It will farely make your mouths water.

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Jam tarts | 770 |
| Doe-nutis | 644 |
| Creem buns | 540 |
| Mades of onner | 522 |
| Skoans | 437 |
| Pastrys | 400 |

This list does not inklood sweets and other items of konfectionery. Dame Mimble tells me that in one year she sold a billion bags of bools-eyes! "Bless my sole!" as the Head would say.

I have thought for a long time that the tuckshop dame needs a helping hand behind the counter. A tuckshop assistant should be appoyanted, at a sallery of ten bob a week and everything found. He would have all his meals in the tuckshop, of corse. I hope the Head will kon-sidder this happy suggestion, and give me the job!

By the way, what does Dame Mimble do with all her stale cakes and buns? If she would care to send them along to me every evening I shall be pleased to dispose of them.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By Billy Bunter.

MY dear readers,—A number dealing with feasting is my "forty," or my "meet-er," as they say in France. That is to say, it is a job I am quite qualified to tackle.

Where is the fellow who knows more about feasting than I do? Produce him!

Where is the fellow who dares pitt himself against me in an eating contest? Produce him also!

What do you say—you can't? Very well, then, I must be looked upon as the greatest living orthority on grubb.

Way back in the dim past, we had a Cooking Number, and also, if I remember rightly, a Tuck Number. But this is sumthing quite different, and it is handled in a different way. I never go over the same ground twice, as the farm-laberer said when he was ploughing a field.

When I told my four fat subbs that we were to have a Special Feasting Number they farely jumped for joy. So grate was their delight that they could not contain themselves. "That's a capittal wheeze, Billy!" said my minor. "It's a stunning stunt!" declared Fatty Wynn. "It will put all previous numbers in the shade!" said Baggy Trimble. "It will be a feast in itself!" observed Tubby Muffin.

So here we are, dear readers, with our Special Feasting Number, all compact and complete. I do not want to blow ny own trumpitt—matter of fact, I haven't got one to blow!—but I will say this much: I deserve a shake of the 'back and a pat of the hand for the wonderful jernalistick feet which I now plaice in your hands.

Could Wharton do better? Neigh! Could anybody do better? Neigh! Could you wish for a finer feast of ficksun than this? Neigh! So I will now leave you to shout yourselves horse with applaws.

Your plump pal,

YOUR EDITOR.

SOME FAMOUS FEASTS!

By George Bulkeley.
(Captain of Rookwood.)

IT has long been the custom at Rookwood to celebrate every great event with a feast.

Although I am not much of a trencherman myself, I think this is a very happy way of celebrating a triumph on the football field or a victory on the river.

One of the most famous school feasts on record took place at Eton. Having received the sum of forty pounds for his first novel, Shelley stood a handsome feed to eight schoolboy friends. It was also a farewell celebration, for Shelley was about to leave Eton and proceed to Oxford University.

The first big feed that crops up in Rookwood history took place in 1815. It was doubtless inspired by Wellington's success at the Battle of Waterloo.

This was not a private feed, confined to a few fellows, as in Shelley's case. It was a general affair, and all Rookwood sat down to it. History does not tell us who footed the bill. But what a bill it must have been! For the fellows did not stut themselves in those days. They ploughed their way solidly through the cold chicken and the ham and beef sandwiches, and were still going strong when the strawberries and cream were served. Muffin of the Fourth must often regret that he was unborn when this bumper feast took place!

Coming to more recent years, there was a wonderful spread in 1905, when Rookwood won the Public Schools' Football Championship. This was also a public affair, and the Head and the masters were present at the feed, the Head presiding. Happiness and high good-humour prevailed on every side, and many speeches were made. The school magazine of that period gives a very interesting account of the function.

A more modern spread still was the one which took place on Armistice Night. It started at eight o'clock in the evening, and the revelry was kept up until long past midnight.

Let us hope that the fine old tradition of having grand banquets to celebrate great events will continue to flourish!

THE POPULAR.—No. 219.

MY FAVOURITE DISH!

By Dick Penfold.

SOME sing the praise of treacle tart,
And some of tapioca;
While currant duff delights the heart
Of good old Horace Coker.
Well, every fellow to his taste,
But I am keen as mustard—
Upon a dish I never waste—
It's apple tart and custard!
Bob Cherry dotes on saveloys,
He bolts them in a hurry;
While Hurree Singh declaims the joys
Of steaming rice and curry.
But when I see such things appear
I'm never moved nor flustered;
The dish that makes me rise and cheer
Is apple tart and custard!
Alonzo Todd is satisfied
With one large oval biscuit;
Although I've tons of room inside
I don't think I should risk it!
Dick Russell likes a dish of fruit,
Where grapes are thickly clustered;
But I am going in pursuit
Of apple tart and custard!
Here's to the dish that I adore!
I wish they served it daily;
I'd always pass my plate for more,
And laugh and chuckle gaily.
When in the spacious dining hall
The Greyfriars boys are mustered,
You'd always hear my clarion call:
"It's apple tart and custard!"

SOME ROOKWOOD RIDDLES.

By Jimmy Silver.

Why is Tubby Muffin like a London bus?
Because he invariably has "no room inside!"

Why is a gullible person like Tubby's mouth?
Because he "takes everything in."

Why is an apologetic person a dreadful glutton?
Because he spends all his time "eating his words."

What is the difference between the Modern Side and a dustbin?
None. There are "scraps" in both!

Why do the Moderns never go hungry?
Because they boast an excellent "Cook!"

Why are the Classics badly off for fruit?
Because they've only got Peele!

How do we know Tubby Muffin is an excellent boxer?
Because, when eating toast the other morning, he kept going till the tenth round!

Why are the Fifth-Formers always happy?
Because they are never without their "Duff."

What will Tubby Muffin become when he leaves Rookwood?
A "stowaway" of course!

What does Tubby do when he is broke?
He goes to the kitchen for some "dough."

Why is it tantalisng to attend a wedding?
Because there are "maids of honour" that you can't eat!

THE POPULAR.—No. 219.

DINING-HALL DITTIES.



By FATTY WYNN.

A CHAP in the Fifth, Herbert Prye,
Went stealing downstairs on the sly.
He'd had a good dinner,
But felt somewhat thinner,
So he bagged the remains of the pie!

When a fag in the Second, John North
Had a habit of hisping—of courth!

"I've eaten for tea
Twenty doughnuts," said he,
"And now I am filled with remorth!"

There's a lanky Fifth-Former called
Cutts,

Who into the dining-hall struts.
When once he starts eating
He takes lots of beating—
That rat-trap of his never shuts!

I'll tell you a story of Gunn.
He ate twenty apples for fun.
The pile was diminished,
They said, "Have you finished?"
He answered, "I've hardly begun!"

Oh, the comical capers of Crooke!
His dinner and tea he forsook.
Did he starve? Not at all!

When he entered the hall
We found him "devouring" a book!

A greedy Fifth-Former named Gilmore
Said, "I wish that my plate would fill
more.

Although infra dig.
To be seen eating pig,
I love it, so why don't they kill more?"

I know a young fellow named Dane,
The sight of a chop gives him pain.
He made quite a stir
When he said, "I'd prefer
To have a nice 'cut'—with the cane!"

A ravenous fellow named Blake
Once fancied a nice juicy steak.
He rushed into hall
And he sampled them all.
Now, how many steaks did Blake take?

Show this Special Supplement to your Pals—they will enjoy, reading it!

MY FINEST FEAST.

Some Happy Recollections of St. Jim's Characters!

TOM MERRY:

The finest feed I ever sat down to was the one which followed our winning of the Public Schools' Football Cup. Never have I seen such an array of good things. Never have I heard so many happy speeches. Never have I felt so proud of the members of my eleven, who won their way to the Cup Final after so many stirring fights. I didn't eat a great deal myself—I was too excited—but that feed will always live in my memory as the merriest function I have ever attended.

REGINALD TALBOT:

My finest feed consisted of a couple of stale buns. This will seem strange, I know, but when I tell you the circumstances, you will understand. In the days when I was under a cloud, and had been expelled from St. Jim's, I was wandering in London, and I had not touched food for two solid days. Somebody happened to leave a couple of buns, in a paper bag, on a seat on the Embankment. Those buns, stale though they were, seemed like manna from the skies. I shall never forget the relish with which I consumed them. They seemed to melt in my mouth, and although I can afford to laugh at the experience now, I always declare that those two stale buns formed my finest feed.

BAGGY TRIMBLE:

Not being a very harty eater, and being also a marter to dispepsia, I can't say that I have ever really enjoyed a feed. I'm not a glutton for food, like other fellows. I simply eat for the sake of keeping myself alive. Meals are a jolly nuisance, and I wish it was possible to eggst without them. (Have you ever heard of a woman called Anna Nyas, Baggy? You're she!—Ed.).

FATTY WYNN:

I have had so many fine feeds in my time that I honestly can't say which I enjoyed the most. The little "bust-up" we had after winning the Football Cup was one of the best; but I went to sleep over my fifth helping of apple-pie, and that rather took the gilt off the ginger-bread, so to speak. But it was a rattling good spread all the same.

EPHRAIM TAGGLES:

Which I don't hold with all this eating and drinking and making merry. There seems to be a sort of eat-wave at the school, and eat-waves are out of place in spring! I like a little snack now and again, but I prefer to take my meals in liquid form. Who said ginger-beer?

THE HEAD:

I decline to reply to this frivolous question. I am concerned with graver matters than eating and drinking. I am at present engaged on investigating the case of the raided larder. (Fremble, Trimble!—Ed.).

[Supplement 14]

Billy Bunter's Got Another Screamer For You Next Week!



The Feasters of St. Fred's!

A Story that will Hold You, and Grip You, and Move You, without Hurting You.

By DICKY NUGENT.

A SOLLUM stillness, as of some brooding Fate, hung over St. Fred's.

In the silent clocks of the night, Tom Tuckaway awoke. Tom was the kaptin of the Third, and a jolly good fellow—though he had one grate weekness. He was often the worst for food.

What had awakened our hero? Was it a bergler in hobnailed boots? Was it a rat in the wanesoting? Was it the booming of the school-clock, as it tinkled the hour of midnight?

No, dear readers, it was none of these things. It was the pangs of hunger which had aroused Tom Tuckaway.

"I'm simply fammished!" muttered Tom, sitting up in bed. "And I've got nothin at all, eggsept food for thought. I'm eating my hart out for grubb, but it duzzent seem very satisfying. I think I'll wake the other fellows, and suggest a midnight feast."

Tom Tuckaway jumped out of bed, swooning with hunger. He fell to the floor in a dead faint, but he was on his feet again in a twinkling.

Tom then went round the dormitory with a pillow, bashing the slumbering forms of his schoolfellows.

"Turn out, you chaps! There's going to be grate doings to-night! We're going to eat, drink, and be merry."

"What are we going to eat?" asked Sidney Stodge, with a yorn.

"Grubb, of corse."

"And what are we going to drink?" asked Sammy Swigge.

"Why, lots of things," said Tom Tuckaway. "Lemonade, jinjer-pop, cherry sider, lime-jooce and soder—"

"But where's all this stuff coming from?" demanded Stodge.

"Ah! Now you've touched the vital question," said Tom Tuckaway. "Sumboddy will have to go down to the village, and knock up the old dame at the bunshopp. Who will volunteer?"

Charlie Curridge held up his hand.

"I'll go," he said. "But what about the munney?"

"Ahem! I happen to be broke, at the moment," said Tom Tuckaway. "But we'll have a whip-round."

Sidney Stodge set the ball rolling with fourpense. Sammy Swigge tost a bad sixpence into the cap which Tom Tuckaway carried round the dormitory. The other fellows gave according to their means—or, rather, their meanness—and at last the hansom sum of five pounds-two-and-sixpence was collected. Five pounds had been skweezed out of Frank Flush, who had reeseved a hansom remittance from his maiden aunt, Miss Milly O'Nair. The other members of the Form had made up the odd half-crown.

Tom Tuckaway counted out the munney. Then he handed it to Charlie Curridge.

"How do you propose to leave the school presinks, Charlie?" he asked.

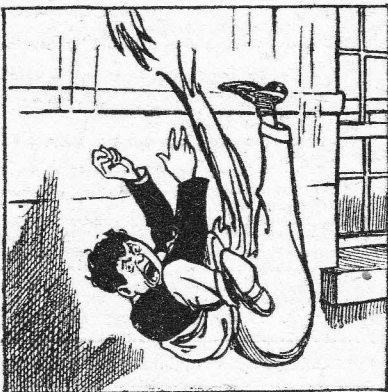
"You'd better make a rope of sheets," was the reply, "and lower it from the window."

A number of sheets were cut into strips and notted together. One end of this impervised rope was tied securely to a bed-rail. The other end was made fast round Charlie Curridge's waste.

Curridge lingered a moment on the window-sill.

"Aw revore, you fellows," he said. "If you here a dull thud, you'll know I've broke my neck."

The daring jungster then started to lower himself. He was rather plump, and he was putting a grate strane on the rope of sheets.



The sheet-rope broke and down, down, down, went Charlie Curridge.

Dangling between earth and sky, Charlie Curridge hoped and preyed that the rope wouldn't bust.

But it did!

Down he went—down, down, down, with a roaring in his eyes and a mist swimming before his ears. Down, down, down, until his body alighted on the flagstones of the quad with a sickening thud.

Tom Tuckaway peered out of the dormitory window.

"What's happened, Curridge?" he called.

"Ow! I've broke my neck!"

"Never mind your neck. Is the munney safe?"

"Yes."

"Oh, good! That's all that matters."

Tom Tuckaway turned back into the dormitory.

"The rope busted, and Curridge got it in the neck," he eggplained. "Sumboddy else will have to volunteer to go down to the village."

"I'll go!" said Sidney Stodge. "But I'm not going to rely on a rope of sheets. I'll go downstares, and clamber through the box-room window."

"My blessing with you!" said Tom

Tuckaway, clapping his chum on the back. "Mind you don't fall fowl of a master."

But this was eggactly what Sidney Stodge did. He was descending the stares six at a time, when he cannoned into Mr. Bendover, the master of the Third.

Crash!

"Yarooooooop!"

Mr. Bendover picked himself up, and wipped out his electric torch.

"So it is you, Stodge?" he said sternly. "What are you doing out of your dormitory at this hour?"

"Ahem! I—I was just going down to put my white mice to bed, sir," stammered Stodge.

Mr. Bendover frowned.

"What a wopper!" he said. "As if I should beleave a yarn like that! Buzz off to the punishment-room, and stay there till the morning!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Go and fry your face!" said Mr. Bendover angrily.

So Stodge went—not to fry his face, but to spend the remainder of the night in the punishment-room.

The Third-Formers waited patiently for Sidney to return. But at last they gave him up, and Sammy Swigge was despatched for the tuck.

Sammy came a cropper almost at once. He fell into the hands of Prowler of the Sixth, who took him into custody.

It was now one o'clock, and Tom Tuckaway was so ravvenus that he could hardly stand.

"Stodge and Swigge seem to have made a mess of things," he said. "So I shall have to go myself."

Even as Tom spoke, the door of the dormitory opened, and Charlie Curridge came in, carrying a large hamper.

There was a woop of delight from the Third-Formers.

"Good old Charlie!"

"How did you mannidge it?"

Charlie Curridge dumped the hamper on to the floor, and eggplained.

"It was like this," he said. "Although my neck was broken, and my ancles twisted, and my spine fractured, I made up my mind to get to the village somehow."

"And how did you do it?" asked Tom.

"I crawled there on all fores."

"My hat!"

"I nocked up the old dame at the bunshopp, and bought the hamper, and crawled all the way back to St. Fred's, and—well, hear we are!" said Charlie Curridge. And he kollapsed in a dead faint.

"Noble fellow!" merched Tom Tuckaway, dashing a tear from his eye. "We will reserve him the jammicst doe-nutt of all, for his gallantry!"

The midnight feast—it wasn't really a midnight feast, bekwase it took plaice at two a.m.—was a grate sucksess.

THE END.
THE PUPILAR.—No. 219.

Wibley's Wonderful Wheeze!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Ripping!"
"Hurrah!"

The Removites were growing enthusiastic. They could hardly believe that it was not Mr. Capper who was speaking, so well did Wibley render his voice. Harry Wharton's face lighted up. He began to believe in Wibley's powers now. He was not keen to give up his part as the Red Rover, of course. But the first and most important thing was to dish the Fourth, and he believed now that Wibley could dish the Fourth. And that consideration came before everything else.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "I believe he can do it. You remember he took in old Capper himself as cousin George?"

"And Capper's simply built for imitation," grinned Wibley. "I tell you I've done lots of this kind of thing. I'm an old hand. I've played more difficult parts than a fat Form master."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"It's a go!" he said. "Let's try it!"

"Hear, hear!"

"If we buck up, we can chip in before they're through the first act," said Harry. "Come on; we'll bike down to Courtfield for the things. Hurry up! It's the last chance, anyway, and we'll try it."

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry. "If it fails, we're no worse off. And it will be a jolly good jape, anyway. And if it succeeds, we'll let the Fourth know about it to-morrow, and laugh them to death."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Harry. And he fairly dragged Wibley out of the Rag.

Three minutes later they were speeding down to Courtfield on their bicycles. No time was to be wasted, and no money was to be spared.

When they came back half an hour later they were shut up in Wharton's study with the rest of the Co. for some time; and the suppressed laughter that proceeded from Study No. 1 told that the process of disguising Wibley was proceeding satisfactorily.

Meanwhile, the audience was pouring into the lecture-room for the play.

The announcement of "The Red Rover," to be played by the Fourth Form Dramatic Society, had caused loud laughter among all the Greyfriars fellows, with the exception of the Remove.

Admission being free, there was no reason why all the fellows shouldn't go—and they went.

Coker & Co. came along with a large party of the Fifth. They knew that Temple and his friends had "boned" the Remove play, and they were glad to see the famous Co. done in so complete a manner, and they were prepared to enjoy themselves.

The Fourth-Formers, all who were not in the cast, swelled the audience, and the Taid and Second came almost to a man, or rather, to a fag. The lecture-room was crowded. Loder and Walker, the two prefects, came in to keep order, and several more of the Sixth came with them. There was, in fact, no lack of audience. Temple, Dabney & Co. watched the incoming stream of spectators with great satisfaction.

There was an endless ripple of laughter in the crowded room. It seemed a first-class joke to the Greyfriars fellows to come there to see the Remove play played by the Remove's bitter rivals.

Removites began to stream in later, close upon six o'clock. They had to pay for admission, but they parted with their three-pences cheerfully enough. Charging the Remove for admission to see their own play was really insult added to injury. It was the finishing stroke, and the Fourth expected to see their rivals simply writhing with rage. But they weren't. The Remove fellows were taking it quite calmly. Temple was a little puzzled; he did not know the great wheeze that had been planned at the meeting in the Rag.

But Temple & Co. had little time now to think of the Remove fellows or how they took it. They were busy with their play.

THE POPULAR.—No. 219.

The room was crowded when the curtain rose on the first act of "The Red Rover." A buzz of applause greeted Temple when he strode on the scene in the impressive garb of Black Jack, the pirate chief. In Study No. 1 the chums of the Remove were equally busy.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Thoroughly Done!

CLAP. Clap! Clap!

"Bravo!"

The audience were cheering. The scene on the stage represented the deck of the pirate ship. The jolly Jack Tar had made a telling speech about British pluck, and walked the plank with great fortitude. And the audience cheered. There was no doubt that it was most thrilling.

The Red Rover paused for the clapping and buzzing to die away, and then restarted: "Bring forth the next prisoner!"

Skipper Jolly, otherwise Scott of the Fourth, was dragged forward by two heavily bearded and most villainous-looking Fourth Formers.

At that moment the door of the lecture-room opened. Harry Wharton & Co. entered, and went quietly to places at the back of the room. The performance went on. Skipper Jolly defied the Red Rover in thrilling terms, and walked the plank amid applause.

Just as he disappeared from the deck of the pirate ship, the door opened once more, and an imposing figure came in.

The Red Rover glanced round from the stage.

"My hat! Capper's come to the show after all!" he murmured to the chief mate.

"Good old Capper!" murmured Dabney. Two or three fellows in the front seats jumped up to make room for the master of the Fourth.

"Will you take my seat, sir?" said Loder. The Form master blinked at him through his gold-rimmed glasses.

"No, Loder; I will not take your seat!" he said snappishly; "and I may say—h'm!—that I am surprised, Loder, to see you giving countenance to this—this nonsense!"

The prefect looked a little taken aback. "I—I came here to keep order, sir!" he stammered. "Some of the juniors were going

to make a row, I understand, and interrupt the performance."

"The sooner such a performance was interrupted the better, I should say."

"Mr. Capper—"

"That will do, Loder! I repeat that I am surprised to see you giving support to the juniors in representing such an absurd and bloodthirsty play. I think that you should leave immediately."

Loder coloured with vexation.

"If you think that, sir, I will go at once," he said.

"You had better."

Loder strode angrily towards the door, followed by Walker. The other Sixth-Formers promptly followed suit. They were all looking vexed; it was not pleasant to be called over the coals in this manner in public.

The rest of the audience exchanged uneasy glances. "Old Capper," as they disrespectfully termed him, was evidently in a "wax."

Mr. Capper—if it was Mr. Capper—cast a stern glance over the crowd of boys, before which their eyes fell.

Then he rustled on towards the stage.

The play had stopped.

Mr. Capper's strident tones had reached the actors, and they had come to a dead pause, in great dismay. The first sight of their Form master had pleased them; they had supposed that he was coming as a spectator. They began to understand now what he had come for, and they were stricken with dismay and apprehension.

The Form master reached the stage. There was a dead silence in the lecture-room now. Some of the Removites were grinning, but all the rest of the audience looked serious and uneasy.

"Temple!"

Temple started. His name was rapped out like a pistol-shot.

"Ye-es, sir!" he faltered.

"What is this you are doing?"

"It—it—is a play, sir," stammered Temple. He did not look much like a bold pirate chief now.

"You are, I suppose, Temple?" said the Form master, blinking at him through his glasses. "I hardly know you in that absurd attire, Temple."

"I'm Temple, sir!"

"And this—this play, as you call it—what is it?"

"It's—it's—it's a play, sir."

"What is it called?"

"The—The Red Rover, sir!"

The Form master snorted.

"Ridiculous!" he exclaimed.

"We—we—I—that is—"

Temple was at a loss for words.

"And who is the author of this blood-curdling nonsense?" asked the master sternly. "You do not pretend that it is a real drama, Temple?"

"Nunno, sir."

"I have never objected to representations of the classic drama, Temple. I have had great pleasure in knowing that my boys liked to represent Shakespearean plays. But this kind of thing! Temple, I am shocked!"

"Oh, sir!"

"I am disgusted!"

"Mr. Capper!"

"I repeat I am shocked and disgusted. I supposed that you had better taste, Temple. It appears that I was mistaken."

"The—The fellows like a melodrama, sir," said Dabney feebly.

Another snort.

"I hope there is no one here who likes such nonsense," said Mr. Capper, glancing round at the audience. "Cherry, you are laughing! Take a hundred lines!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Wharton, you are laughing, too! I shall report you to your Form master for disrespect. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir," murmured Wharton, almost overcome.

"Now, Temple, of course, you understand that now this matter has come to my knowledge I cannot possibly allow this ridiculous nonsense to proceed?"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Temple. "We—we're fairly started, sir! Some—some of the fellows have paid for admission, sir."

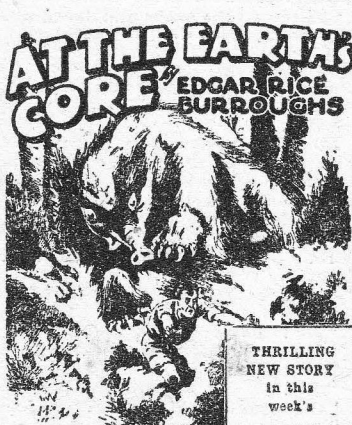
"Indeed! All the money paid for admission will be put into the school poor-box, Temple—every penny! Do you understand?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"You will strip off that ridiculous garb at once—now, under my eyes!" rapped out the Form master.

"Yes, sir. But—but—"

AT THE EARTH'S CORE EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS



THRILLING NEW STORY in this week's

PLUCK

SPORTS AND ADVENTURE STORY PAPER

Who is the Mysterious Boxer? See Next Week's Story of Greyfriars!

"Don't argue with me, Temple, or I shall cane you. Strip off that foolish garb! All of you, and at once!"

"Very well, sir!" groaned Temple. There was no help for it. Pirates and jolly Jack Tars and merchant captains and Spaniards and negroes all piled in, taking off their costumes—or, at least, part of them. In public it was not possible to obey Mr. Capper thoroughly, of course.

Plumed hats, laced jackets, swords and daggers and pistols were piled on the stage by the dismayed and unhappy Fourth-Formers.

Temple's face was a study. He had dished the Remove in the completest manner; but he was dished now more thoroughly than he had dished his old rivals, and by his own Form master! It was a bitter pill to swallow. But there was no help for it.

Mr. Capper's word was law to the boys in his Form; there could be no thought of disobedience. Under the stern eyes of the Form master, blinking through the gold-rimmed glasses, the unhappy amateur actors obeyed his orders, and they were soon looking sadly mounted.

Some of the audience were filing out now. Others remained to see the finish of the peculiar scene. Never had any enterprise come down with such a heavy bump. There were almost tears in Temple's eyes as he stood with nothing left of his dashing piratical costume but his velvet trousers and sea-boots.

"Take that rubbish away!" said Mr. Capper's double sternly. "And then go to your studies. You will remain in your studies for two hours, as a punishment for this ridiculous freak, and each of you will write out two hundred lines of Virgil!"

"Yes, sir," said Temple, fervently wishing at that moment that he were a real pirate captain and could order Mr. Capper to walk the plank.

"Ahem! On second thoughts you need not do the lines," said the Form master rather hastily. "But you will remain in your studies for two hours."

"Very well, sir," said the forlorn actors departed.

Mr. Capper watched them out, frowning. The last of the Fourth disappeared from the lecture-room. The audience were going fast now, whispering to one another. Only the Removites remained. They had a reason for remaining.

And when only the Remove were left, Bob Cherry closed the door of the lecture-room, and the Removites broke into a long-suppressed yell of merriment and triumph.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Harry Wharton rushed at Wibley and fairly hugged him.

"Oh, ripping!" he gasped. "Splendid! Topping! You can play the title-role, or any other role—any old thing you like! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" And Wharton and the pseudo Mr. Capper—the latter holding his whiskers in his hand—danced a wild tango round the lecture-room, in the exhilaration of their triumph, while the Remove laughed and cheered, and cheered and laughed, till they were hoarse.

Temple, Dabney & Co. remained confined to their studies for two hours that evening.

Those two hours were not pleasant ones to them.

The Fourth-Formers were furious. After their splendid success, up to a certain point, it was exasperating in the extreme to come down with a bump.

Their representation of "The Red Rover" had been nipped in the bud with a vengeance. And on the following evening the Removites were to give it—without any interference from their Form master—indeed, sanctioned by their Form master's presence. The feelings of Temple, Dabney & Co. towards Mr. Capper were almost homicidal. Wild schemes of vengeance were hatched and discussed in the Fourth Form studies that



"DONE!" Wibley held up a pair of gold-rimmed glasses and a set of whiskers. "Know these?" he asked. Temple stared at them blankly. "Why—what—what—" he stammered. "It wasn't Capper, you ass!" said Wibley. "It was I!" (See Chapter 5.)

evening during the two long hours of detention.

It was not till that detention was over, and the Fourth-Formers came down to the Common-room, that they discovered anything.

Then they made a discovery. When they came into the Common-room, looking glum and black and downcast, a yell of laughter greeted them from the fellows there.

The Remove were there in force, waiting for them—and they had by that time imparted the story to the other fellows—and all the juniors enjoyed it thoroughly.

Temple frowned at the laughing crowd. "There's nothing to cackle at!" he said savagely. "We couldn't help old Capper coming down on us like that, could we, you silly duffers?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Capper's at the vicarage!" roared Bob Cherry.

"It wasn't Capper, you ass!"

"Wasn't Capper!" said Temple, with a jump. "What are you talking about? Do you think I don't know my own Form master, you chumps?"

Wibley held up a pair of gold-rimmed glasses and a set of whiskers.

"Know these?" he asked.

Temple stared at them blankly.

"Why—what—what—" he stammered.

"I am shocked at you, Temple!" said Wibley, in the high-pitched voice of Mr. Capper. "I am disgusted—shocked and disgusted, and also disgusted and shocked!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will be detained in your studies for two hours," resumed Wibley in the same tones.

"On second thoughts, you needn't do any lines, as they'd be rather a surprise to the real Capper when he comes home."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple staggered.

"You!" he gasped.

"Wibley!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Oh, you asses, it was Wibley all the time! And you think you can keep your end up against the Remove! Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. looked at one another with sickly expressions. They understood now how completely, hopelessly, and egregiously they had been done.

"Oh!" murmured Temple. "If we'd known!"

And the Removites roared again, and Wibley dangled the glasses and whiskers before Temple's enraged eyes. It was too much! Temple & Co. made a wild rush, and in a moment a free fight was raging in the Common-room, which was only ended by three or four prefects rushing in with canes, and laying about them heartily till all the juniors, Remove and Fourth alike, fed yelling.

And the next evening the Remove Dramatic Society gave that great representation of "The Red Rover" with tremendous success, Wibley acting the part of the Red Rover himself to great applause.

As for the Fourth, there was nothing for them to do but to hide their diminished heads. They had been completely outwitted and done by Wibley's Wonderful Wheeze!

THE END.

There will be another amazing long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, entitled:

THE BOXER'S DOUBLE!

By FRANK RICHARDS,

in next week's extra-bumper issue.

PREFECTS ON STRIKE!

AMAZING SCENES AT ROOKWOOD!

The prefects of Rookwood stand by their late captain, who has fallen from his high estate!



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Tubby Wants to Know.

"NEVILLE!" Jimmy Silver of the Fourth tapped at Neville's door in the Sixth Form passage at Rookwood and looked in.

Jimmy's usually sunny face was clouded. From his expression it might have been supposed that the junior had come to Neville's study for a licking; but Jimmy was not, as it happened, worried about himself. He was thinking, like many of the Rookwood juniors, of the trouble that had fallen upon "Old Bulkeley," the popular captain of the school—captain no longer.

All Rookwood School was in a buzz of excited discussion upon that topic just then.

"Well, what do you want?"

"It's a message from the Head."

"Oh! Get it out, then!"

"The Head wants you in his study at once, Neville."

"All right. You can clear off."

Jimmy Silver cleared off.

He went quickly down the passage, and found a group of juniors waiting for him at the end.

"You've told Neville?" asked Lovell.

"Yes."

"I say, did you see Bulkeley?" asked Tubby Muffin eagerly. "It's an awful come-down for Bulkeley, you know, to be sacked from the captaincy. I saw Cartbaw of the Sixth grinning over the Head's notice on the board; he was jolly pleased."

"The rotter!" growled Lovell.

"There'll be a new captain," pursued Tubby Muffin. "I expect it will be Neville, as he's going to be made head prefect in Bulkeley's place. That will be all right for us."

"All wrong, you mean, you fat duffer!" said Raby.

"Well, Neville's jolly easy-going—in fact, soft," said Tubby sagely. "He won't jaw us like old Bulkeley. Bulkeley's a good sort, in his way; but he did jaw a chap. For instance, if a chap was too tired to turn up at cricket practice, Bulkeley never would take any notice. He took me down to Little Side by the ear the other day. Fancy that!"

"Serve you right, you fat slacker!" grunted Newcome. "Dry Up! You make me tired!"

And the Fistical Four moved away, not in their usual sunny spirits, for once.

Dr. Chisholm's face was very grave as Neville of the Sixth entered his study.

"Pray come in, Neville," he said. "Doubtless you are aware why I have sent for you. You have seen my notice on the board?"

"Yes, sir," answered Neville quietly.

"As you know, Neville, I have decided to remove Bulkeley from the position of head prefect and captain of the school. I have reflected upon the matter, and decided that there is no other course open to me. I

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have no longer the necessary confidence in him."

"But, sir—"

Dr. Chisholm held up his hand to stop the interruption.

"As I have decided to appoint you in Bulkeley's place, Neville—"

"But—"

"Pray allow me to conclude," said the Head sharply. "I have decided to appoint you head prefect in Bulkeley's place, as you are next in rank. You will also act as captain of the school pro tem—that is, until a new election takes place."

"But, sir—"

"Really, Neville, you should be aware that you ought not to interrupt your headmaster in this manner. Bulkeley has, perhaps, acquainted you with the affair—"

"Yes, sir, and—"

"Allow me, please. I found Bulkeley inflicting a very severe punishment upon Raby of the Fourth Form—a punishment far in excess of what he had, as a prefect, any right to inflict. It transpired that the fault for which he was punishing Raby so excessively was shared by another boy, Grace of the Fourth. An unusually severe punishment, administered without adequate inquiry into the facts—"

"But—"

"This is the first time that such dereliction of duty, on Bulkeley's part, has come to my knowledge. I fear, however, that there may be other instances in which it has not come to my knowledge."

"Oh, no, sir! I can assure you—"

"I have therefore removed Bulkeley from the high position he held in the school," said Dr. Chisholm. "As next in rank of prefects, Neville, I am appointing you in his place. You will take up the duties of head prefect at once."

"But, sir—"

"The date of a new election of captain of the school will be fixed very soon. Until the result is known you will act as captain of Rookwood."

"But, sir—"

"That is my decision, Neville. I trust," said the Head, in quite a grim manner—"I trust, Neville, that you have no objection to offer?"

Neville drew a deep breath. It required a good deal of nerve to oppose the Head, who was always a very awe-inspiring personage. Opposition, too, was not likely to be of much use; Dr. Chisholm was a man of very firm character—perhaps a little too firm. There had been whispers at Rookwood that the Head's firmness partook the nature of obstinacy. But the prefect nerved himself for the ordeal.

"Yes, sir, I have," said Neville, with some spirit. "Bulkeley was at fault, but it wasn't so very serious—"

"I consider it serious, Neville."

"Ye-es, sir; but—but, for instance, the junior in question, Raby of the Fourth, makes no complaint. Raby! I am certain, will be as sorry as anybody to think that Bulkeley is degraded on his account. I have seen him,

and he is looking quite miserable about it. He would rather have had twice the licking than have caused Bulkeley trouble like this."

"That is simply another condemnation of Bulkeley," said the Head coldly. "It appears that he punished with undue severity a junior who is his loyal admirer."

"Well, ye-es; but—"

"I have said, Neville, that I no longer have confidence in him. That is the end of the matter. You may leave my study, Neville."

"Then, sir, I'm bound to say that I can't take—"

"What!"

That sudden ejaculation from the Head was almost terrifying. So might Jove, on cloudy Olympus, have ejaculated, at the first breath of opposition to his lofty will and pleasure.

Neville faltered, but he went on:

"I can't, sir—"

"You cannot—what?"

"I can't consent to taking Bulkeley's place—"

"Neville!"

The Head, more Olympian than ever, rose to his feet. His glance was simply scathing.

"Is it possible, Neville, that you are thinking of declining the position I have decided to place you in?"

"Yes, sir," said Neville desperately. "I'm not going to supplant Bulkeley—I can't take his place!"

There was a moment of silence—awful silence. Then the Head spoke, quietly—but with a rumble of distant thunder, as it were, behind his quiet tone.

"Very well. I did not expect this, Neville. I fear I have been mistaken in you."

"I—I—"

"You need say no more, Neville. You understand, of course, that you are no longer a prefect. Leave my study!"

"I—I hope, sir—"

"You may go!"

And Neville went.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Something Up!

ROOKWOOD SCHOOL was in something like a flutter on the following day. The school was, at present, without a captain; and the august body of prefects was without a head.

It was known far and wide that Lawrence Neville had refused to take Bulkeley's place; and fellows discussed his refusal with bated breath.

How he had found the nerve to do it was a mystery. But he had done it; there was no doubt about that.

So far no fresh appointment was made. Jimmy Silver remarked that it was a "facer" for the Head. Smythe of the Shell, in his slangy way, declared that the downy old bird was no end bottled. Whether the Head was "bottled" or not, he had made no move so far.

There was quite an unusual atmosphere in the Form-rooms that day. A sort of unrest was perceptible all over Rookwood.

Everybody felt a sense of trouble to come.

That Bulkeley had been in fault in the affair with Raby of the Fourth was not to be denied. But Bulkeley was too good a fellow for his popularity to be shaken by one fault. Raby, who had been severely licked, was as loyal a supporter as ever of the old captain of Rookwood. Jimmy Silver & Co., in fact, were his most enthusiastic backers.

The Head, whose only intention was to be just, was erring a little on the side of excessive firmness. If all Rookwood could forgive Bulkeley, there was no reason why the Head should not—no reason, excepting that when he had once decided, his decrees were as immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

That was all very well, in its way; but Smythe of the Shell remarked that it wasn't a headmaster's bizney to set up as a giddy Tsar or Kaiser, and Jimmy Silver & Co., for once, agreed with Adolphus Smythe.

After morning lessons, which were a little thundery in the Sixth Form room, there was a meeting of some of the Classical Sixth in Neville's study. The juniors noted it with keen interest, and wondered what would come of it. For there was no doubt that the Sixth were supporting Bulkeley, though the fallen captain of Rookwood was not asking for support.

Bulkeley did not attend the meeting. He came out into the quadrangle, and many eyes were fixed upon him there. His face was a little clouded, but he did not appear conscious of the general attention.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were chatting near the doorway, and Raby coloured a little as Bulkeley came up to the quartette. Poor Raby was feeling very downhearted. It was through him that this disaster had fallen on George Bulkeley, though he really was not to blame. He wondered for a moment, as Bulkeley came up, whether it meant more trouble.

"I've wanted to speak to you, Raby," said Bulkeley quietly, without any sign of anger.

"Yes, Bulkeley," murmured the junior.

"I'm afraid I lost my temper with you yesterday, kid. I gave you rather more of a licking than you deserved."

"Oh!"

"I'm sorry," said Bulkeley. Raby gasped.

The great man of the Sixth was actually apologising to him, a fag of the Fourth!

If Bulkeley's popularity had waned in the Lower School, nothing more than that would have been required to restore it to its zenith.

"Oh, Bulkeley," stuttered Raby. "I—I don't mind; it doesn't matter a bit! Besides, it was my fault—"

"All serene, kid!" said Bulkeley. And with a kind nod the captain of Rookwood walked on towards the cricket ground.

The Fistical Four looked at one another.

"Isn't he a brick?" said Jimmy Silver, with a deep breath.

"Splendid old chap!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Fancy the Head sacking a chap like that! The Head's a donkey!"

"It's a shame!" said Raby. "It's a rotten shame! I'd have been flogged a dozen times before I'd have had this happen to Bulkeley! Suppose he did lose his temper! Well, he got the booby-trap that I'd fixed up for Carthew. It was enough to make any fellow waxy."

"Of course it was!" said Newcome. Jimmy Silver nodded.

"It's rotten!" he said. "The Head means well; he thinks he's seeing stern justice done. As a matter of fact, he's going too far. But he's jolly obstinate."

"Obstinate as a mule?" said Lovell. "It was his dashed obstinacy caused the trouble with the masters a few weeks ago. Now there's going to be trouble with the prefects for the same reason. Nearly all the Sixth are backing up Bulkeley—all the Classical side, excepting Carthew, perhaps."

"They won't get a man to take Bulkeley's place in a hurry, unless they go to the Modern side for him," said Newcome sagely.

"Silver!"

Neville of the Sixth looked out from the doorway. Jimmy Silver hurried to him at once.

"Yes, Neville?"

"Take this note over to Knowles, in Mr. Manders' House, will you?"

"Yes, rather!"

Jimmy Silver took the note and trotted off to the Modern side with it. In Mr. Manders' House he found Tommy Dodd & Co.

of the Modern Fourth in deep discussion upon the topic that was agitating all Rookwood just then. He went on to Knowles' study to deliver the note, and found the head Modern prefect there, with Frampton and Catesby.

The three Modern prefects were, like the juniors in the passage, deep in discussion. Knowles gave Jimmy a sharp, frowning look. "For you, Knowles!" said Jimmy; and he tossed the note on the table and retired.

He rejoined his chums on the School House steps, and in a few minutes Knowles & Co. came across. The note had evidently been to summon them to the meeting in Neville's study. Knowles, Catesby, Frampton, and Tresham passed into the House, and the juniors exchanged glances.

"Something's up!" remarked Arthur Edward Lovell oracularly.

The juniors could not help feeling keenly curious. Some step was contemplated by the Sixth, which was to be taken altogether, it was clear. Tubby Muffin came out of the School House a little later, with his round, fat face full of excitement.

"Jimmy!" he gasped. "I—I say, they're going it!"

"Who's going it, fatty?"

"The Sixth!" gasped Tubby. "All the prefects—in Neville's study. They're going to remonstrate with the Head—"

"What!"

"And request him to reinstate Bulkeley, and—"

"Oh!"

"And they've agreed that no prefect will take Bulkeley's place, and if the Head asks them they're going to refuse!" gasped Tubby. "Even Knowles—that Modern cad, you know—is backing up! I don't believe he wants to back up Bulkeley, you know, but he daren't get the Sixth down on him—that's my belief—or he'd be jolly glad to jump into Bulkeley's place. Even Carthew has agreed. All the Sixth are in it. Fancy that!"

"And how the thump do you know all this?" demanded Arthur Edward Lovell gruffly.

"I—I happened to be near Neville's door, and—"

"And your ear happened to be at the keyhole, you listening beast!" exclaimed Lovell in disgust. "You've no business to know anything about it!"

"Well, I like that!" said Tubby indignantly. "You let me tell you, anyway!"

"Oh, bump him!" said Lovell. Tubby Muffin fled.

In a very short time Tubby Muffin's exciting news was widely known. In Neville's study the important debate among the great men of the Sixth went on, the prefects of Rookwood little dreaming that it was the subject of another exciting debate among the small fry outside the sacred precincts of the Sixth.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Jimmy Silver Takes a Hand.

"**W**ERE going to back him up!" Jimmy Silver made that announcement in the end study at tea-time.

The captain of the Fourth had been thinking. This, apparently, was the result.

"Bulkeley, do you mean?" asked Lovell, as he cranked his second egg.

"Naturally!"

"We'll back him up all right," said Arthur Newcome cheerfully. "But how are we going to do it, Jimmy?"

"I've got an idea."

Lovell grunted.

"There's nothing doing, Jimmy. We can't argue with the Head, and it depends on the Head. And he's as obstinate as a mule!"

"I'm not thinking of arguing with the Head. But look here." Jimmy Silver raised his hand holding the egg-spoon, and proceeded to lay down the law with the egg-spoon, as it were.

"The Head's pushed Bulkeley out of the captaincy, wishing to be just. We know he means well—these headmasters always do mean well. But he doesn't understand."

"He doesn't, for a fact."

"He thinks he's defending the rights of juniors, and all that—standing between chaps like us and an overbearing fellow in the Sixth—"

"What rot!"

"Well, that's how the Head is looking at

it. If it was Carthew or Knowles, he would be right; but it's Bulkeley, and Bulkeley is the best chap at Rookwood."

"Hear, hear!"

"He pitched into Raby. Well, Raby can stand that, and come up smiling—can't you, Raby?"

"Of course I can!" grunted Raby. "I'm not made of putty, I suppose!"

"Bulkeley lost his temper, but we can excuse that. Why, dash it all, I've lost my temper myself at times!" said Jimmy Silver.

"These things happen, you know. It's a pity, but there you are! The Head isn't making enough allowance for human nature."

"Old scout, you talk like a picture-book!" said Lovell admiringly. "What a pity you can't pitch it like that to the Head!"

"He wouldn't listen," said Jimmy regretfully. "That's the worst of these headmasters—you can't make 'em listen to sense, and they can always stop an argument, when they're getting the worst of it, with the cane. But come to the point—"

"Oh, you're coming to the point?" asked Lovell, in a tone of mild surprise.

"Yes, you ass!" roared Jimmy Silver.

"Well, come to it—pass the margarine first."

"Bother the margarine! Dry up! The Head hasn't confidence in Bulkeley any more because he walloped a junior a bit too—well, a bit too drastically. He really did pitch into Raby, you know."

"He did!" said Raby reminiscently.

"But the point is this. A junior was the injured party, and the juniors still have confidence in Bulkeley—plenty of it."

"Lots!" agreed Lovell.

"The whole Lower School backs him up as one man—excepting a few cads, perhaps, like Lattrey and Gower and Peete and Leggett and perhaps Towny and Toppy, and perhaps a few others. Those who don't back up Bulkeley don't count."

"Nobody counts who doesn't agree with us."

"Don't be a funny ass, Lovell! Practically the whole Lower School backs up Bulkeley," said Jimmy Silver warmly. "Well, if he wasn't all right for head prefect and captain, would they do it?"

"Of course not."

"Now, then, suppose the Head is made aware that the whole Lower School supports Bulkeley, won't that very likely make him change his mind?"

"Ahem!"

"His only reason for shifting Bulkeley is that he can't trust him to be just to the Lower School. Well, the opinion of the Lower School on that point is bound to influence him, as a reasonable man."

"Yes, if he is a reasonable man."

"Well, even a headmaster is bound to be more or less reasonable."

"H'm!"

"So my idea," pursued Jimmy, "is this—"

"H'm!"

"I'll tell you my idea, if Lovell isn't going to start difficulties at the very beginning—"

"Oh, pile in!" said Lovell.

"My idea is, a loyal address to Bulkeley—"

"Eh—a which?"

"Loyal address, signed by the whole of the Lower School!" said Jimmy Silver impressively. "We can get sheets and sheets of impot paper filled up with signatures. Every chap in the Third, the Fourth, and the Shell will sign it on both sides of Rookwood. The Second, too, for that matter."

"Oh!"

"Every chap signs freely, of his own accord, in hearty support of Bulkeley of the Sixth. See?"

"And suppose a chap won't?"

"Then we'll jolly well punch his head till he does!" said Jimmy Silver warmly.

"Oh, my hat! Punch his head till he signs of his own accord!"

"For goodness' sake, Lovell, don't keep on arguing! I never knew such a chap for starting difficulties!" exclaimed the captain of the Fourth, in great exasperation. "My idea is free and unanimous support of Bulkeley by the whole Lower School. We draw up the loyal address in a few well-chosen words—"

"Who's going to choose 'em?"

"I am. In a few well-chosen words, and get all the fellows to sign it. We present it to Bulkeley in a representative deputa- tion—"

"Oh!"
"With a speech from the chairman of the deputation—"
"Who's chairman?"
"I am."

"And what's the speech going to be?"
"Oh, a few well-chosen words, you know."

"And you're going to choose 'em?"
"Look here, Lovell—"
"It jolly well looks to me as if this giddy loyal address will represent Jimmy Silver more than anybody or anything else. Why not drop in on the Head, and give him your advice straight away?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell, with a heavy touch of sarcasm.

"Look here—"
"Peace!" murmured Newcome. "I say, Jimmy, if we present the cheery address to Bulkeley, the Head mayn't even hear of it."

"He's bound to," said Jimmy. "After handing it to Bulkeley, we are going to stick it on the notice-board."

"Oh, my hat!"
"Bulkeley will read it, you see, and thank us—"
"In a few well-chosen words?" asked Lovell.

"And thank us!" roared Jimmy Silver "And then we shall put it on the board, for all Rookwood to read. As a reasonable man, the Head is bound to be influenced by it."

"He might," said Newcome.
"And he mightn't!" remarked Lovell.

"Well, it shouldn't do any harm, anyway," said Raby pacifically. "Let's draw up the blessed address after tea, and then get the fellows to sign. Even if it doesn't make any difference with the Head it will please old Bulkeley."

"Yes, something in that!" agreed Lovell.
"I'm glad you can see something in it at last," observed Jimmy Silver sardonically.

"Keep your wool on, old chap. Let's get on with the giddy address, and we'll all help choose those few well-chosen words. Four heads are better than one."

"Thicker, at any rate!"
"Look here, Jimmy—"

"Agreed!" said Jimmy Silver. "We'll all put our heads together over it, and then take it round for the fellows to sign. And my belief is that it will make a lot of difference with the Head, and the trouble will blow over—all through the end study."

The idea of the end study causing the trouble to blow over was rather flattering to the Co. And the feathings were shifted, pens and ink and paper produced, and the Fistical Four started to work upon the loyal address which, at the very least, was to assure Bulkeley of the Sixth that he still possessed the full confidence of the Lower School at Rookwood.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
The Loyal Address.

"**H**OW do we begin it?"
"Dear Bulkeley," I should think," said Lovell thoughtfully.

Jimmy Silver shook his head.
"Too easy and familiar," he said. "Something a bit more—well, more stately and—official, you know."

"Which person is it to be?" asked Raby.
"Bulkeley, of course," answered Lovell.
"Fathead! I mean which person—"

"Well, Bulkeley's the person, isn't he?"
"I mean second or third person!" howled Raby.

"Oh, I see. You never make yourself clear, Raby. Third person sounds rather impressive," remarked Lovell. "Something like this—Bulkeley of the Sixth is assured by members of the Lower School—"

"That sounds a bit as if he were taking out a life assurance," remarked Newcome.
"Rot! Assured by members of the Lower School that they have complete confidence in him, and are down on his being sacked."

"Better not rub in too much about the THE POPULAR.—No. 219.

sack. That point ought to be passed over diplomatically," remarked Jimmy Silver.

"He is sacked from the captaincy, isn't he?"
"Well, yes; but—"

"Well, I believe in calling a spade a spade. You can call it a dashed agricultural implement if you like."

"Let's hear Jimmy's views!" murmured Raby.
Jimmy Silver smiled. He was waiting patiently for the Co. to come round to his views.

"Well, Jimmy gases such a lot," said Lovell. "Still, let him go ahead. I don't believe he can improve upon" assured by members of the Lower School.
"Something like this," said Jimmy Silver: "We, the undersigned members of the Lower School at Rookwood, hereby—"

"Well, hereby" sounds all right," admitted Lovell. "What about 'heretofore,' too? That's got quite a legal sound."

"It isn't necessary."
"Oh, if you're only going to put in what's necessary—" said Lovell, with the air of a fellow washing his hands of the job.

"Go it, Jimmy!"
Jimmy Silver went it, and his rough sketch of the loyal address was more or less approved by the other members of the end study. Lovell made some amendments, which were discussed, and some of them admitted—perhaps not with enthusiasm. Raby and Newcome also put in an improvement here and there—no doubt by way of drawing attention to the fact that the end study was a free republic and not an autocratic monarchy.

Many hands are said to make light work; but, as a matter of fact, four heads did not prove much better than one in this case. And by the time the loyal address was completed a considerable time had elapsed, and the paper it was written on was inky and bloty and smudgy, and so were the fingers of the four juniors.

But they were satisfied, upon the whole, with their joint production. It really was agreed that Bulkeley was sure to be pleased, even if the Head did not come down off his perch.

The document, as completed, ran as follows:

"WE, the undersigned members of the Lower School of Rookwood, comprising all the Lower School of Rookwood, excepting a few cads, hereby announce, declare, and affirm our complete and continued confidence in George Bulkeley of the Sixth Form, and in the name of the Lower School of Rookwood we hereby demand that the said George Bulkeley be reinstated as captain of the school without a stane on his character.

"We also declare that we, the Lower School of Rookwood, won't have any other captain, at any price, and if ordered so to do we shall regard it as our duty to look upon it with contempt.

"Our motto is back up Bulkeley, who is a good Sort, though some Fatheads may think otherwise, for he's a jolly good fellow and so say all of us.

(Signed) J. SILVER,
"A. E. LOVELL,
"G. RABY,
"A. NEWCOME."

"That only requires some more signatures and it's all right," said Jimmy Silver.

"That bit about the fatheads is good!" said Lovell, with a grin. "Of course, it may be glancing at the Head, and it may not."

"It's rather deep," agreed Raby.
"I believe there ought to be an 'i' in 'stain'" murmured Jimmy Silver. "In fact, I know there ought."

Lovell shook his head.
"It's a word of five letters, Jimmy—I know it," he answered. "Leave it to me, old chap. I'm pretty strong on spelling."

"Leave out the 'e,'" suggested Jimmy.
"What rot!"
"Lovell—"

"We don't want to make a bad impression on Bulkeley by showing him a lot of bad spelling," said Lovell. "A word misspelt might spoil the whole effect. Leave it as it is."

"But I tell you—"

"It's a jolly curious thing, you chaps, that Jimmy thinks he knows everything that's to be known in this study!" remarked Lovell. "What is it puts the idea into his head?"

"Oh, leave it as it is, then!" said Jimmy Silver resignedly.

"I should jolly well think so—especially as you've left out my bit about assuring him! Besides, I think 'heretofore' would have been impressive; but I've agreed to leave it out."

"Let's go and gather up signatures," said Raby. "We'll pin the sheets of impot paper together."

"Good egg!"
And the Fistical Four sallied forth, document in hand, with an ample supply of impot paper for the signatures.

They looked in first on the Colonial Co. Conroy, Van Ryn, and Pons grinned when they read the document, but they signed cheerfully. Oswald and Jones minor, and Flynn and Teddy Grace followed their example, and Tubby Muffin appended a signature that looked like something in Turkish.

Mornington and Erroll were the next, and Mornington grinned and Erroll stared as the loyal address was presented to them for inspection.

"What is it—a map?" asked Morny.
"Map!" repeated Lovell. "What the thump do you mean?"

"Blessed if I can tell whether it's a geographical map or a geological chart!" said Morny. "Which is it?"

"It's an address to Bulkeley!" roared Lovell. "There may be a blot or two."

"I—I say, will Bulkeley like that?" hesitated Erroll. "Especially that bit about the fatheads. I suppose that means the Head?"

"That's where we're jolly deep," said Lovell complacently. "It's a sort of hint of what we think, you know, without saying anything right out. Of course, we couldn't very well call the Head a fathead actually."

"Bad form!" said Raby, with a shake of the head. "It's pretty well wrapped up there. That's all right."

"I suppose you're going to sign, Erroll?"
"Oh, certainly!"

And Erroll signed, and Morny followed his example; and the Fistical Four marched on in search of fresh signatures.

Up and down Rookwood they went with the loyal address, sheets of impot paper, and a fountain-pen, and signatures flowed in like the waves of the sea. Nearly every junior at Rookwood, Classical or Modern, was prepared to testify his readiness to back up Bulkeley.

There were a few objectors. Lattrey & Co., for instance, who were rather black sheep, did not like Bulkeley, and said so.

Jimmy Silver & Co. left them in their study after a short argument, without taking their signatures—but they left them in a state of wreck and ruin that was simply deplorable. After the Fistical Four had gone Lattrey extracted his head painfully from the coalscuttle, and Peele sawed ashes out of his hair, and Gower gouged furiously at the ink on his face, and the observations they made sounded absolutely humish.

Smythe of the Shell also declined—but after his refusal Smythe of the Shell was scarcely recognisable by his nearest and dearest pal.

Possibly owing to such considerations as this, fellows who were not very keen on the loyal address decided to append their signatures, lest a worse fate should befall them.

By the time the Fistical Four had finished their round they had sheets of impot paper covered with signatures more or less decipherable, representing at least ninety per cent. of the Lower School of Rookwood.

The sheets were pinned together carefully in the end study. It certainly was an imposing document now, and the Fistical Four justly considered that a few blots and smudges did not detract from its imposing nature.

"It's bound to impress Bulkeley," said Lovell. "And the Head, too. I really think that the Head can scarcely fail to take notice of this. It will show him what we jolly well think, anyhow."

The Co. agreed that it would; and the loyal address being completed at last, and duly

"The New Captain!" is the Title of Next Week's Dramatic Rookwood Yarn!

planned together, Jimmy Silver & Co. fared forth in search of George Bulkeley, with the firm conviction that, upon presentation of that loyal address, the one-time captain of Rookwood would be "no end bucked."

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Not Quite a Success!**

BULKELEY of the Sixth was pacing to and fro in his study after tea with a deep line in his brow.

He was in a troubled mood. That a meeting of the Sixth had been held, and that the decision had been to support him, he knew; and though the loyal friendship of the Sixth was agreeable enough, it troubled him. He foresaw trouble with the Head, which would certainly not be good for the school or good for the Sixth, and he would gladly have dropped quietly into the background and submitted without question to his severe sentence.

But that his friends would by no means allow. Even Knowles of the Modern side, his own rival, was acting with the rest. The seniors agreed that the dignity of the Sixth Form was compromised by the Head's decision, and that it was up to them to back up the captain's cause.

Bulkeley's friends—who were most of the Sixth—were enthusiastic; and Knowles & Co. gave their support somewhat less warmly; and even Carthew, the bully of the Sixth, for the present gave in his adhesion.

Feeling was so strong in the Sixth, in fact, that Bulkeley's few enemies could not venture to make their voices heard, even if they wished to.

But Bulkeley was sorely troubled by the thought of having his rights championed against the Head; and he knew by experience that Dr. Chisholm was certain not to yield the point, and that nothing but a struggle could ensue of which the results could not be foreseen.

He was thinking over the matter as he paced to and fro, when the door opened and Neville looked in. Bulkeley gave him a sombre glance.

"It's being settled now," said Neville. "Come along to the prefects' room, will you, Bulkeley?"

"Neville, old chap—"
"Come along, anyhow, and you can tell us what you think," said Neville.

"Oh, all right!"

Bulkeley followed his chum slowly to the prefects' room—an apartment sacred to those members of the Sixth who had been appointed prefects. Other seniors sometimes came in by permission; but to juniors and such small fry the precincts were strictly taboo.

Only prefects were present now. Knowles, Frampton, Catesby, and Fresham, of the Modern side; Neville, Lonsdale, Jones major, Carthew, Scott, and Bulkeley himself, of the Classical side.

It was a very grave and serious assembly—only on Carthew's face was there a suspicion of a lurking grin. But the bully of the Sixth did not dare to allow his secret satisfaction at Bulkeley's fall to be seen. For the present, at least, Carthew was acting in co-operation with the rest.

There was a murmur in the room as Bulkeley came in with Neville. The latter was about to close the door, when Jimmy Silver presented himself. Behind Jimmy Silver came his chums, and behind them a little crowd of the Fourth and some of the Shell.

"Hold on a minute, Neville," said Jimmy. "We want Bulkeley—"

"You can't see him now—cut off!"

"It's important."

"Cut off!" said Neville sharply.

He did not see the importance of it—even having noticed that Jimmy Silver had a bundle of inky sheets of impot paper in his hand, and besides being quite unaware that those inky sheets were, in point of fact, a loyal address from the Lower School of Rookwood, affirming their undiminished confidence in Bulkeley of the Sixth.

"Look here, Neville," chimed in Lovell warmly. "This is jolly important, and we want to see Bulkeley at once. Bulkeley, we want—"

"What on earth's the row?" called out Bulkeley.

"Some blessed fags—" began Neville.

"Cut off!"

"It's important, Bulkeley; it may mean

the end of all this trouble," said Jimmy Silver. "Let us come in!"

"What on earth do you mean?" exclaimed Bulkeley. "Let the young donkeys come in for a minute, Neville."

The juniors looked at one another rather uncertainly, not over-pleased by the "young donkeys." Still, Bulkeley did not know about the loyal address yet. Doubtless he would change his opinion when he did know.

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver determinedly.

And the deputation of the Lower School marched in, about nine or ten of them; eyed very grimly by the prefects in the room.

"Well?" said Bulkeley.

"Ahem!" Jimmy Silver cleared his throat.

"The—the fact is, Bulkeley—"

"Sharp!"

"All right! We, members of the Lower School of Rookwood—"

"What?"

"We, members of the—"

"Is this a joke, Silver?"

"Nunno!"

"What the thump are you driving at, then?"

"We, members of the Lower School!" gasped Jimmy Silver, a little confused. He found his task harder than he had supposed. "We have come—that is to say, we—we are hereby—I mean here to assure—I mean—Ahem!"

"Turn them out!" said Knowles impatiently.

"Only some fag cheek," said Carthew.

"For goodness' sake kick them out, and let's get to business!"

"You ring off, Carthew!" said Jimmy Silver, with spirit. "This address isn't for you, anyway. The Lower School haven't any confidence in you, I can tell you!"

"What!"

"If you have anything to say, Silver, say it and cut!" exclaimed Bulkeley. "You should not have come here, anyway."

"We, members of the Lower School—"

began Lovell, as Jimmy hesitated.

There came a murmur from the deputation:

"Shut up, Lovell!"

"Go it, Jimmy!"

Jimmy Silver found his voice, and resumed, amid blank stares from the prefects of the Sixth.

"We, members of the Lower School of Rookwood, have brought a loyal address for presentation—"

"Ye gods!" murmured Neville.

"To Bulkeley, and we hereby have the pleasure," said Jimmy, with dignity, "of handing it to you, Bulkeley."

Bulkeley, with a look of great astonishment, took the inky sheets held out to him. "What on earth's this?" he asked.

"An address, Bulkeley."

"A loyal address."

"Backing you up, you know."

"Hear, hear!"

Some of the Sixth-Formers laughed, which caused the juniors to repeat, "Hear, hear!" in louder and somewhat defiant tones.

Bulkeley stared at the loyal address. Jimmy Silver & Co. watched him, to see the pleased smile dawn upon his face. But it did not dawn. To their surprise and consternation, Bulkeley frowned instead.

"You thundering young idiots!" he ejaculated.

"Wha-a-at!"

"What does this utter rot mean?" exclaimed Bulkeley. "You cheeky little sweeps—"

"Eh?"

"Take this rubbish away at once!" said Bulkeley sternly. "If I were a prefect now I should cane you for alluding to the Head disrespectfully. By Jove, I've a good mind to cane you, anyway!"

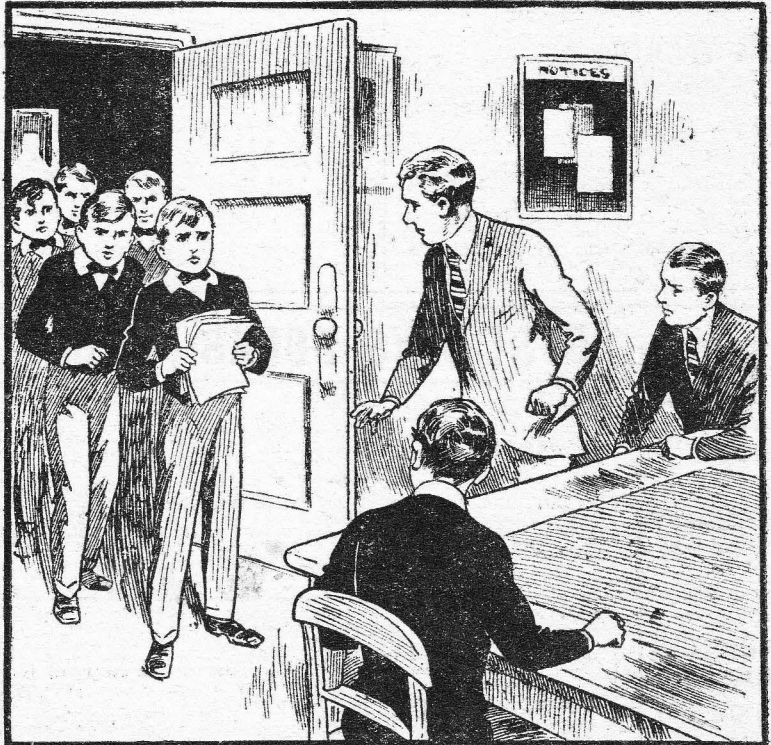
"Oh!"

"I've got my asphalt here," remarked Carthew.

"Get out, you ridiculous young duffers," said Bulkeley, "and don't play the goat again! Put that rubbish into the fire! Off with you!"

And Neville bundled the astounded and amazed deputation of the Lower School of Rookwood out of the room, and closed the door on them.

In the passage Jimmy Silver blinked at the loyal address which Bulkeley had thrust back into his hands, and then blinked at his



THE DEPUTATION! The deputation from the Lower School marched into the prefects' room. "Well!" said Bulkeley. "Ahem!" said Jimmy Silver. "The fact is we're—we're members of the Lower School of Rookwood, and—and—we hereby—that is—assure—I mean—" "You thundering young idiots!" exclaimed Bulkeley. (See Chapter 5.)

comrades. His complexion was very rich at that moment.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Lovell.
 "B-B-B-B-Bulkeley didn't seem pleased, after all," murmured Newcome.

"He, he, he!" came from Tubby Muffin.
 "Oh crumbs! He, he, he! Yaroooooh!"

Tubby Muffin's inclination changed into a howl of anguish as Jimmy Silver's boot came in contact with his podgy person.

The juniors looked at Jimmy Silver as he stood, with a crimson face and the hapless loyal address in his hands, wishing that the floor would open and swallow him up. They walked away grinning, only the faithful Co. remaining with their leader.

"Seems a bit of a frost!" murmured Raby, comfortingly.

"Rotten idea, if you ask me," said Lovell. "It was the way the address was drawn up, of course. If we'd put in that bit about assuring Bulkeley—"

"Fatehead!"

"And worded it a bit more impressively—such words as 'heretofore,'" said Lovell warmly. "In that case, I think—"

"Oh, you can't think!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

"Look here, you ass—"

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"I'll put this rot in the study fire," he said. "It will be useful to boil the kettle, anyhow. And if you fellows ever get up a loyal address again, don't ask me to have a hand in it. I simply won't!"

And Jimmy Silver walked away, leaving his chums staring after him blankly. They did not speak; they couldn't. Jimmy had taken their breath away.

**THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
 Resignations Accepted.**

BULKELEY of the Sixth remained alone in the prefects' room. The Rookwood prefects had heard what he had to say, but Bulkeley's counsels of peace had not been heeded. And the prefects had gone in a body to the Head's study to remonstrate.

Bulkeley could guess the kind of reception they would get, and he was very uneasy. He knew that the Head would not change his determination, and a struggle once entered upon would have to be proceeded with.

There were steps outside at last, and Neville came into the room, followed by the rest of the prefects.

All of them looked red and angry, excepting Carthew, whose face wore a lurking smile.

"Well!" said Bulkeley.

Neville knitted his brows.

"He won't listen to a word!" he exclaimed.

"The moment we mentioned you he told us to be silent."

"He won't hear of reinstating you, old chap, or even of listening to a word on the subject," said Lonsdale. "He said his mind was made up, and told us to go."

Bulkeley nodded.
 "I expected it," he said quietly. "Now, you fellows, I want you to let the matter drop. I was to blame, though not so much as the Head seems to think; and I don't want trouble on my account."
 "It's not wholly on your account," said Knowles. "It's the position of the Sixth in the school. We've got to keep up that position."

"Yes, but—"

"We've been treated like a gang of cheeky fags!" burst out Neville. "It won't do!"

"We're not standing it!"

"The Head can't cut up prefects and push them over like skitties at his own will and pleasure, without a reason," said Jones major. "The case of one is the case of all. When the Head had a dispute with the masters, the staff went on strike, and brought him to reason. I'd like to know how he'd run the school without prefects."

"But—"

"Enough said, Bulkeley! We're standing by what we've told the Head, and if he doesn't come round we shall resign."

A quarter of an hour later Jimmy Silver of the Fourth was called to the prefects' room. He came with a rather red face; but he soon saw that the loyal address had been quite forgotten by those august seniors. He was simply wanted as a messenger.

"Take this note to the Head, Silver!" said Neville.

"Yes, Neville."

Jimmy Silver conveyed the note to Dr. Chisholm's study. He found the Head with a very stern brow. The visit of the prefects, in a body, to remonstrate had roused the firm old gentleman's ire.

"What is it, Silver?"

"This note, sir, for you."

Jimmy laid it on the desk, and waited in case there should be an answer. Dr. Chisholm opened it, and his brow was thunderous as he read:

"We, the prefects of the Sixth Form, beg to tender our resignations."

The signatures of the whole body of prefects followed.

Dr. Chisholm sat silent for a minute or two, the note in his hand. Jimmy Silver hardly dared to look at him. He did not know what was in the note, but he felt the atmosphere of thunder.

The Head took up a pen at last, wrote a few words on the paper, and replaced it in the envelope.

"Take that back, Silver."

"Yes, sir."

Jimmy Silver returned to the prefects' room. He found the prefects all there, in a very subdued and serious mood. Their looks were anxious, as Jimmy handed the note to Neville.

"It's our own note back," said Neville, as he opened it.

"Hasn't he said anything?"

"Yes; there's something written on it. Oh, look!"

"The Head's reply was short, if not sweet. Your resignations are accepted. New prefects will be appointed."

That was all.

The Sixth-Formers exchanged grim looks. "New prefects will be appointed, will they?" muttered Lonsdale. "Not from the Sixth—the Sixth are solid with us."

Jimmy Silver quietly left the prefects' room, leaving the seniors in hot discussion. The trouble at Rookwood was coming to a head at last.

The next day all Rookwood knew that the prefects were on strike. The battle had been joined between the Sixth Form and the Head, and all Rookwood looked on breathlessly, wondering what the result might be.

THE END.

(More about the Great Prefects' Strike next week. Read "The New Captain!" By Owen Conquest.)

**THE RESULT
 OF THE
 "WEDNESDAY"
 FOOTBALL
 COMPETITION**

In this competition two competitors sent in correct solutions of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been divided between the following:

G. PURDEY,
 9, Rosedale Road,
 Richmond,
 Surrey.

DORA WILLIAMSON,
 39, Willoughby Street,
 Gainsborough.

So many competitors qualified for the third grade of prizes that division among them of the prizes offered was impracticable. The second prize of £2 10s. and the ten prizes of 6s. each have therefore been added together and divided among the following sixteen competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

Peter Wood, 21, Pleasance, Edinburgh;
 W. A. Ellisey, 97, Carlton Terrace, Radcliffe, Manchester; Cyril R. Horton, Rodford, Westerleigh, Chipping Sodbury, Glos.; Mrs. McMahon, 35, Macclesfield Street, Chester Road, Hulme, Manchester; Henry Urquhart, 115, Causewayend, Aberdeen; E. Nunn, 1, Alexandra Road, Windermere; James Russell, 44, Norman Street, Glasgow, E.; Cecil Winslow, 6, Fairfield Terrace, Douglas, I. o. M.; Wm. Mustoe, 5, School Lane, Cirencester; R. B. Curtis, Hillside, Taplow, Bucks; Norman Reed, 48, Northcote Road, Clapham Junction, S.W. 11; David Johnstone, 20, Martin Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow; Miss D. Stephenson, 68, Keppel Road, East Ham, E.; Fred Archer, 96, Humberstone Road, Plaistow, E. 13; Leslie Tapscott, 141, Coronation Avenue, Stoke Newington, N. 16; S. Walker, 26, Padwell Road, Southampton.

SOLUTION.

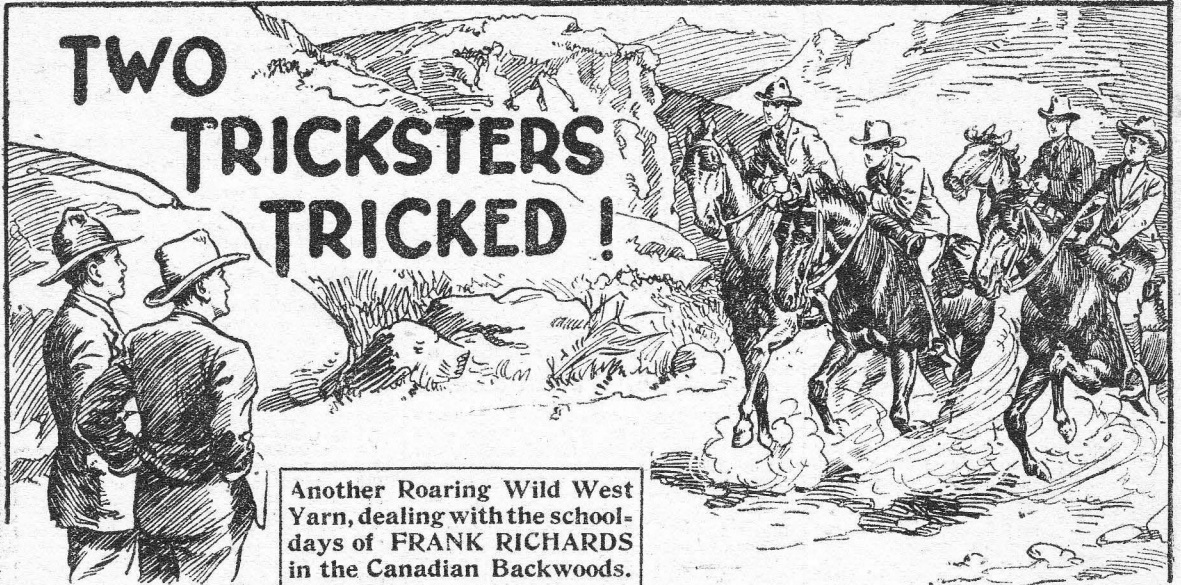
The Wednesday is an ancient club, for it began in the '60s, 15 years before football properly took root in the provinces. Like many other well-known clubs, The Wednesday has had several homes, and its association with the Cup competition has been long and honourable.

| | | |
|---|--|------------------|
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HOMeward BOUND!

Rascal though he is, Yen Chin has more than once been very useful to the schoolboy explorers. This week they have again good cause to bless the day the Chinese joined their party!

THE TRICK THAT FAILED!



Another Roaring Wild West Yarn, dealing with the school-days of **FRANK RICHARDS** in the Canadian Backwoods.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Two In Trouble!

GUESS those galoots have found trouble!"

Bob Lawless shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked away across the wide expanse of prairie, dotted with clumps of timber, as he spoke.

Frank Richards & Co. were on the homeward trail, after their holiday in the far North-West.

Far behind them now rose the pine-clad slopes and rocky summits of the Cascade Mountains.

They were heading southward for the Fraser River, with some more days of travel before them ere they reached their homes in the Thompson Valley.

Frank and Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc were riding a little ahead, followed by Chunky Todgers and Yen Chin and the pack-mule.

Away, ahead of the schoolboy party, two diminutive figures had come into view on the plain, Bob's keen eyes being the first to sight them.

The two strangers were a good distance ahead on the same scarcely marked trail, and, being on foot, they were half-hidden by the high grass.

They were tramping on slowly, their heads bent, and their looks indicative of heavy fatigue, their backs to the riders coming up the trail behind.

"I guess there's been trouble," Bob Lawless went on. "Those galoots never started on this prairie on foot, I reckon. They've lost their hosses, and they've had to tramp it."

"Poor beggars!" said Frank.

"There's twenty miles ahead of them to the nearest settlement, I calculate," said Bob.

"They've got a hard row to hoe."

"We shall be camping soon," said Frank.

"Let's put on speed, and overtake them, Bob, and see if we can help."

Bob Lawless nodded.

"I was just thinking of that," he replied.

"Good idea!" agreed Beauclerc. "Put it on!"

"Hustle, there!" Bob called back to Chunky Todgers and Yen Chin. And the chums of Cedar Creek urged on their horses.

They had been proceeding at a leisurely pace when they had sighted the two forlorn wanderers ahead; but now they were galloping their soon overhauled them.

Bob's expression changed as they came nearer and nearer to the pair.

"I guess I've seen those galoots before!" he said suddenly.

"Can't see their faces," remarked Frank.

"There seems something familiar about them, though."

"Gunten and Keller," said Vere Beauclerc quietly.

"My hat!"

Instinctively, the chums of Cedar Creek slackened down a little.

They were not anxious to fall in with Gunten and Keller, their old enemies of Cedar Creek School.

The two Swiss schoolboys had spent the school holiday in the North-West, and more than once had fallen in with Frank Richards & Co., and there had been trouble.

Bob frowned grimly.

"Better keep clear of that lot," he said.

"We've had trouble enough with them."

"But—" began Frank.

"They're bad eggs, Franky."

"I know; but they're in hard luck, by their looks," said Frank. "They've lost their horses, and they're stranded. After all, they belong to our school, rotters as they are."

Bob Lawless made a grimace.

"You mean you want to lend 'em a hand!" he grunted. "They're the kind of rotters to bite the hand that helps 'em! Still, I don't mind."

"They've seen us," said Chunky Todgers.

Gunten and Keller had heard the hoof-beats behind, and looked round.

They stared in surprise at the sight of Frank Richards & Co., and stood motionless, evidently waiting for the party to come up.

The looks of the two Swiss showed that they were very much down on their luck.

It was clear that they had been in the wars.

"Hallo, you galoots!" exclaimed Bob Lawless, as he drew rein. "I never expected to see you again before we got back to school."

"Where are your horses?" asked Frank.

Gunten gritted his teeth.

"Stolen!" he answered. "We fell in with a gang of rustlers this morning. They took our horses, and cleared us out of our money, and everything else they took a fancy to."

"And left us to hoof it," said Keller, with a quaver in his voice. "We're tired out, and jolly near famished!"

He cast a hungry glance at the load on the pack-mule.

"Hard luck!" said Beauclerc.

"Yes; very amusing to you, I dare say!" said Gunten, between his teeth. "You can cackle!"

"But we're not cackling, Gunten," said Frank Richards mildly.

"Not so much chin-wag, Gunten!" grunted Keller. "We're in a bad box. Look here, old chaps, we'll be glad of some help. We've eaten next to nothing to-day."

"We're welcome to camp with us, and

share round," said Bob Lawless at once.

"But none of your tricks! We did as much for you before, when you landed yourselves in a scrape, and you played a dirty trick on us. None of that, or I tell you there will be trouble!"

"That was only a—a joke."

"We don't like jokes of that kind. Look here, we're camping at the next timber," said Bob. "Hoof it along with us as far as that."

A mile on, a clump of timber rose from the plain, a spring sparkling in the sunset among the trees.

There the Cedar Creek party halted, to camp for the night.

The horses and the mule were staked out, and the latter unloaded.

Bob Lawless was about to begin gathering brushwood for a camp-fire, when he paused.

"Hold on!" he said. "How far back did you meet those rustlers, Gunten?"

"A good many miles," answered the Swiss. "We've been tramping ever since."

"We don't want them to call on us, if they're within sight of smoke," Bob explained to his chums. "Of course, they wouldn't handle us as they seem to have done with these chaps; but we don't want any shooting, if we can help it. I reckon we'll do without a fire. It's not cold, since we left the hills."

"Good idea!" agreed Frank Richards.

"We've got plenty of cold meat, and we don't need to cook."

"I say, I was going to make a jolly good supper!" said Chunky Todgers. "There's game in this timber—"

"Bother your supper, Chunky! Leave it till to-morrow, and you can feed till you burst your crop!"

"Look here, Bob—"

"B-r-r-r!" was Bob's answer.

And Chunky Todgers had, to relinquish the vision of a glorious supper, which he had been looking forward to all day, and the party sat down to cold meat and corn-cakes, which, however, they ate with very good appetites.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Good Samaritans!

BOB LAWLESS had taken a large buck-skin bag from his saddle at the halt, and fastened it to his belt when the schoolboys camped.

It was a heavy bag, and both Gunten and Keller looked at it very curiously, probably guessing what it contained.

"How did you get on with that strike

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"A Rank Injustice!"—That is Next Week's Roaring Backwoods Story!

you made up in the hills?" asked Kern Gunten suddenly. "You were working a placer—"

"First chop!" answered Bob cheerily. "We put in a week's hard work, and cleared out the placer."

"You found dust?"
"I guess so—in fact, you know we did!" said Bob, looking at him. "You saw Yen Chin with some of our dust, I guess."

"Guntee velly bad boy!" murmured Yen Chin.

"And you've got it there?" asked Gunten. "A thousand dollars' worth!" answered Bob. "That was clear, after we'd spent money on tools and things in the camp at Tucker's Bar. Not so bad to bag on a holiday, I reckon."

Gunten compressed his lips. There was bitter envy and malice in his eyes.

"You fellows have all the luck," he said sullenly. "We've had the worst."

"I dare say we each got what we deserved," said Bob dryly.

"We've had rotten luck all along," said Keller. "We lost our canoe and outfit, in the first place, on the rapids, and had to spend money on horses. Now we've lost them."

Bob Lawless looked very thoughtful. In the buckskin bag there was gold-dust to the value of a thousand dollars, which was to be divided into two hundred dollars each for the five members of the party—forty pounds each in English money.

Frank Richards smiled as he read the expression in his Canadian cousin's face, and Vere Beauclerc smiled and nodded.

They could guess Bob's thoughts.

"I suppose you galoots are cleared right out?" said Bob, after a short silence.

"Down to bedrock!" grunted Gunten; and Keller nodded dolorously.

Bob glanced at his comrades.

"What do you fellows say?" he asked. "We're going to divvy up the dust when we get home. What about letting these galoots stand in, to see them through?"

Chunky Todgers' eyes opened wide. Yen Chin shook his head emphatically.

But there was assent from both Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc.

"Oh, I say—" began Keller.

"You don't mean that?" said Gunten.

"I do mean it," said Bob quietly. "Yen Chin and Chunky don't agree, I see that; but we three do, and you two fellows shall stand in equal with us three, in six hundred dollars, if you like."

"And welcome!" said Frank Richards. Beauclerc nodded.

"I guess we close on that," said Keller, with a grin. "I don't know what you're doing it for, but I agree, right down! I owe money for my outfit at Thompson, and it will see me through."

Kern Gunten did not speak.

There was a strange expression on his heavy face.

"Well, what do you say, Gunten?" asked Bob genially. "It was a windfall for us. We never expected to bag anything of the kind, of course. You've had hard luck, and it will help you through."

Gunten shook his head.

"I don't want to touch your dust!" he said deliberately. "Keller can do as he likes, but I sha'n't touch it!"

Bob shrugged his shoulders.

"Suit yourself!" he answered.

"Well, I guess you're a jay, Gunten?" exclaimed Keller. "I think it's jolly decent of these chaps, and I accept—with thanks, too! Don't be a silly ass! Your poppa will make a row when you crawl in and tell him you're cleaned out. I know that. Take your chance while you can!"

"I guess I know my own business best," said Gunten.

And with that the subject dropped.

Gunten sat silent for some time, with his eyes on the dark trees round the camp, as he finished his supper.

Suddenly he gave a start, and jumped to his feet.

He pointed excitedly to the shadowy wood.

"Look out!" he exclaimed.

Bob Lawless grasped his rifle at once, remembering the rustlers.

"What is it?" he asked.

"One of that gang that robbed us this morning!" said Gunten. "He was staring out from that thicket! He's gone!"

The schoolboys were all on their feet now, rifle in hand.

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But there came no sound from the timber, not even the rustling of a twig.

The sun was gone now, and the dim twilight of the stars reigned on the prairie. In the timber all was darkness.

"By gum!" muttered Bob Lawless. "We shall have to keep our eyes peeled to-night! You're sure you weren't mistaken, Gunten?"

"Quite sure!"

"I heard nothing," said Bob. "I reckon I'll take a look round before I turn in. You fellows keep a watch out."

Bob went into the timber, his eyes well about him and rifle ready.

Gunten rose to his feet.

"Come on, Keller!" he said. "Let's have a look round, too!"

"I'd rather stay here!"

"Oh, don't be a fool! Come with me!" Keller unwillingly rose and followed his comrade. They disappeared into the shadows of the timber.

Yen Chin rose to his feet.

"Me looker loud, too!" he said.

"Sit down!" answered Frank. "You'll lose yourself, kid! Stay where you are!"

"Me wantee looker loud!" persisted the little Chinese.

Yen Chin glided away into the timber, unheeding.

Frank Richards and Beauclerc and Chunky Todgers remained in charge of the camp and the horses, waiting rather uneasily for the others to return.

Bob Lawless came back before long.

"All serene!" he said. "I can't find any trace of anybody in the timber. I guess Gunten was mistaken. Where are they?"

"Gone to look, too!" answered Frank.

"Silly duffers!" commented Bob. "We'd better stay up till they come in."

And Bob sat down on a log, his rifle on his knees, and his eyes very sharply on the shadowy timber.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Precious Pair!

"WHAT'S the game, Gunten?" Keller asked the question suddenly when the two Swiss were a dozen yards from the camp.

"I'm not going into the wood in the dark. That rustler—"

Gunten broke in impatiently.

"Don't be a fool! There was no rustler."

"But—but you said—"

"I was fooling them, of course," muttered Gunten. "Those rustlers are thirty miles away, I guess. They were going west when they left us."

Keller stared at his comrades in the gloom under the trees, in utter bewilderment.

"What did you want to give a false alarm for?"

"Oh, you're a jay!" said Gunten impatiently. "Look here, Keller, we both owe money for our outfit in Thompson, and we're cleaned out. We spent every cent on our new outfit after we lost the canoe, and now we've been robbed of the whole caboodle."

"I know that. But a whack in the gold-dust will help us out, and they've offered—"

"Hang them and their offers! I don't want shucks in their dust! I want the lot!"

"What?"

"There's a thousand dollars in that bag," said Gunten, sinking his voice, though the wood was silent round them. "Think of that! It would see us through, and give us plenty over. It's a ten-strike, if we can finger it."

"You fool!" muttered his companion. "They'd give us the trail-ropes again, as they did before, if we tried anything of the sort. There's five of them, armed—against us two!"

Gunten smiled sourly.

"I'm not thinking of tackling them," he said. "That wouldn't do, anyway. We can't knock them on the head, and nothing short of that would be safe. But there's no reason why we shouldn't bag the dust. Bob Lawless keeps that bag tied to his belt. When he's asleep—"

"Well?"

"One cut of a knife would get the bag loose, without waking him; and then—"

"Oh, you're mad!" muttered Keller. "I dare say you could do that much; but how could you get away with it? They'll be watching the horses; they haven't forgotten the trick we served them before."

"I know that."

"Well, are you thinking of starting out on foot?" sneered Keller. "Suppose they didn't miss the bag till morning? Then they'd simply run us down."

"That's no good, of course. We've got to stick them for a supply of food before we leave them. We can't take that without being seen, and we can't take the horses. We're not going to light out with the dust."

Keller looked bewildered.

"Not light out! Then as soon as Bob Lawless misses the bag, do you think he won't know who's taken it?"

"Yes; he'll think of the rustler he thinks I saw in the thicket," said Gunten coolly.

"Oh!"

"That's why I pretended to see the man there. Now do you savvy?"

Keller shook his head.

"They may think of the rustler, but they're jolly certain to think of us, too!" he said. "They'll search us to the skin."

"Of course they will; I've considered that. But we sha'n't have the dust about us. As soon as I get my hands on the bag I shall hide it. Easy enough to do that."

"Oh!" said Keller again.

"They can search us if they like; they'll find nothing. They'll have to take the trail to-morrow without the bag of dust. We shall go with them."

"And then—"

"After we've parted with them—we can work up a quarrel—we get back here, and lift the dust," said Gunten coolly. "We can buy horses at the settlements, and ride home, with money in our pockets."

"By gum, it's a cinch—if you can get hold of the dust!" said Keller.

"I can do that," said Gunten. "I know how to work the rifle," said Gunten. "The one I'm afraid of is that infernal Chinese. He's as sharp as a needle. But I guess we can do it."

"Where will you hide the dust?" muttered Keller.

"I'm going to find a hollow tree before we get back to camp."

"Good!"

Keller's objections were overcome now.

In the darkness under the timber the two young rascals proceeded to search for a hiding place for the bag of gold-dust, and in a few minutes they found a hollow tree.

Gunten thrust his arm into the hollow, and felt around it.

"I guess this will do," he said. "We can stuff some brushwood in after the bag, and they'll never find it, even if they thought of looking."

"Don't forget the tree."

"I guess I'll remember it," said Gunten.

"Look at it—two forked branches, covered with creepers. I sha'n't forget that. Let's get back."

The two Swiss returned to the camp on the edge of the timber.

"Oh, here they are!" said Bob Lawless, as Gunten and Keller came out into the starlight. "Seen anything?"

"I heard something," said Gunten calmly. "I'm pretty certain that there's somebody lurking in the wood."

"I heard a footstep," said Keller, backing up his companion's story.

"Mine, perhaps," said Bob, laughing. "I reckon you were mistaken, Gunten."

"Better keep a watch to-night, all the same," said Gunten anxiously.

"You bet!" answered Bob. "Might lose our horses if we don't!"

Gunten affected not to see that allusion to the trick the two Swiss had played on a previous occasion.

"Time to turn in," he said, with a yawn. "I'm tired out. I reckon I shall sleep like a top to-night."

"Whack out the blankets, Franky," said Bob. "Lucky we've got a few spares. Where has that blessed heathen got to, I wonder?"

Gunten looked round quickly; he had not noticed the absence of Yen Chin.

"Has the heathen gone out?" he asked.

"The young ass went to look for your blessed rustler," said Frank Richards. "I'm afraid he'll get lost."

"If he does, he can camp out in the timber till morning," said Bob. "No finding him in the dark. He shouldn't have gone."

Gunten's eyes glimmered.

Yen Chin was the only member of the party of whose keenness he was in fear, and nothing would have suited his plans better than for the little Chinese to remain out of camp for the night.

He made no remark, however.

The campers waited up some time for Yen Chin, but the Chinese did not appear.

"The young ass!" said Frank at last. "He would go. After all, it won't hurt him to sleep in the bush; it's not cold. Just as good as being here, except that he won't have his blanket."

"Bless him!" said Bob. "You fellows turn in; my first watch."

Chunky Todgers was already fast asleep, and snoring.

Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc rolled themselves in their blankets to sleep, and the two Swiss followed their example.

Bob Lawless remained near the staked-out horses, on the watch.

At midnight he called Vere Beauclerc, who rose to take his turn of duty.

"Yen Chin come in?" asked Beauclerc.

"No."

"The young ass!"

Beauclerc took his rifle, and paced to and fro in the grass, near the horses, while he kept watch.

Bob Lawless was very quickly in the land of dreams.

Beauclerc was watching the horses, the plain, and the shadowy wood with unrelenting vigilance; but, naturally, he did not give much attention to the sleeping forms in the camp.

Darkness and silence reigned.

In the darkness Beauclerc was unconscious of the fact that Gunten was moving silently, cautiously.

He did not know that the Swiss, like a snake in the grass in nature as well as action, was creeping into the timber hidden by the long herbage.

Black shadows hid the cunning Swiss as he moved and as he crawled back through the deep grass.

There was a smile on Kern Gunten's face when at last he composed himself to sleep.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Missing!

MORNING dawned on the prairie.

It was Frank Richards who was keeping the last watch, and he called to his comrades as the sunlight strengthened on the plain, turning it into a sea of green and gold.

Bob Lawless sat up, yawned, and kicked Chunky Todgers in the ribs, and Chunky jumped up with a yell.

"That blessed Chinese come back?" asked Bob, looking round.

"No," answered Frank.

"Bother him! That means that we shall have to hunt for him before we take the trail!" growled Bob. "Here, wake up, Gunten! Wake up, Keller!"

The two Swiss sat up and rubbed their eyes.

Bob cast an impatient look towards the timber. He had intended to take the trail early, after a hasty, cold breakfast.

But Yen Chin could not be left behind.

"He's bound to find his way back now it's daylight," said Beauclerc.

"Unless something's happened to him," said Frank uneasily.

"He had his gun with him. He would have used it if he was in danger, and we should have heard it."

"Yes, that's so."

The party sat down to a cold breakfast, and they were just beginning when Bob Lawless suddenly started to his feet, with a loud and excited exclamation.

"Great gophers! The bag!"

"The bag!" repeated Frank.

Bob's hand was at his belt. The place was empty where he had slung the buckskin bag the previous night.

"It's gone!" he shouted.

"Gone!" yelled Chunky Todgers. "The gold-dust!"

"Yes!"

"Oh, gum! But it can't be gone."

"Must have come unfastened," said Beauclerc. "How could it be gone, Bob? You'll find it in the grass."

Bob Lawless' eyes gleamed.

"It hasn't come unfastened," he said. "Look here! The strap's been cut through with a knife!"

"Great Scott!"

Gunten and Keller went on with their breakfast, apparently unconscious of the looks the chums cast upon them.

"Gunten," said Bob, very quietly.

The Swiss looked up.

"Do you know anything about this?"

"What should I know?" said Gunten, with



THE PRISONERS ESCAPE! There was a yell from Chunky Todgers. "Yen Chin, you silly heathen! You've let them go!" The Chinese looked round. Gunten and Keller had taken to their heels now and were running hard. "Gonee!" said Yen Chin calmly. (See Chapter 3.)

a sneer. "Do you think I've taken your bag of gold-dust?"

"Yes, to be candid, I do," answered Bob. "It's been cut loose from my belt while I was asleep, and somebody's taken it."

Gunten shrugged his shoulders.

"You should have kept better watch," he said. "I should, with a thousand dollars about me. That rustler has bagged it."

Bob fixed his eyes on Gunten.

"It's possible that there was a rustler in the timber last night," he said slowly.

"Only you saw him, though. It's possible that he may have sneaked in through the grass and corralled my bag. But it's jolly unlikely. I may as well speak out plain, Gunten. I think you've got it, and I'm going to see."

"You can do as you like, of course," said Gunten sullenly. "You're armed, and I'm not, so you can insult me as much as you choose, I suppose."

"If I'm doing you a wrong, I'm sorry. But I'm going to see whether you've got my dust, and that's flat—you and Keller."

"You're welcome!"

Gunten and Keller held up their hands submissively, while Bob Lawless made a grim and thorough search of them.

The buckskin bag did not come to light, however.

It certainly was not concealed about either of the two Swiss.

"Well?" said Gunten sneeringly, when Bob had finished.

"You've not got it about you," said Bob. "If you took it, you've hidden it somewhere. Easy enough to crawl out of camp in the dark and hide it, I guess."

"If it was easy for me to crawl out unseen, it was easy for anybody else to crawl in unseen," said Gunten. "I don't know anything about it. It looks to me as if that rustler I saw last night crept in and robbed you."

Bob wrinkled his brows.

There was certainly reason in what the Swiss said.

"Better search," said Frank Richards abruptly.

Bob Lawless nodded, and the chums of Cedar Creek began a search for the missing buckskin bag.

They extended the search to a good distance around the camp, among the trees and tangled thickets.

But if the bag was hidden there it was too well hidden for them to find it.

They returned to the camp at last, tired and angry.

The two Swiss were still there, and they found Yen Chin sitting on a log, eating his breakfast.

"Oh, you've come back, then!" growled Bob.

"Me comee backee," said Yen Chin, grinning. "Turnee up like badee pennce. Ole Bob had tempee this morning."

"The dust's been stolen."

"Velly baddee," said Yen Chin. "P'Paps Guntee stealce."

"Blest if I know!"

"Where have you been all night, Yen Chin?" asked Frank Richards.

"Walkee bout, and sleepee undel tree," said the Chinese. "Allee light! Solly makee Flanky anxious. Oh, yes!"

"You didn't see anything of a rustler in the wood?"

"No see."

The chums ate their belated breakfast in glum spirits.

The gold-dust had vanished, and there seemed no prospect of finding it.

But naturally their suspicions lingered upon the Swiss.

"We'll stick here for the morning, and hunt for it, anyway," said Bob. "If a rustler's bagged it and vamoosed, we shall never see it again, of course, but—" He paused.

"But if it's hidden in the timber, to be taken after we've gone, that's different," said Beauclerc.

"It won't be," said Bob grimly. "Gunten and Keller are going to keep in our company till we get back to Thompson Valley, now. They're not going to have any chance of coming back and taking it."

Keller started, but Gunten burst into a laugh.

"We'll be glad to travel with you," he said. "It's up to you to pay our expenses if you do."

"You'll stay in camp for the present," said Bob. "Yen Chin, stay with them, and see that they don't light out. If they try to vamoose, give them a charge from the shotgun in their legs."

"What you tinkee?" grinned the Chinese, and his look showed that he would not fail to carry out Bob's instructions.

"We'll help you hunt for the thing, if you like," said Keller.

Bob's answer was curt.

"I guess I don't trust you. Stay here." And, leaving the two Swiss in charge of the Chinese, with the loaded shotgun on his knees, Frank Richards & Co. resumed their search for the missing dust.

It was a discouraging search, for they knew all the time that the stolen bag might be twenty miles away, if some unknown thief had taken it.

The search was only founded upon their distrust of the Swiss.

Gunten and Keller were not without uneasiness as they waited at the camp.

Well as the stolen buckskin bag had been hidden, it was barely possible that it might be found.

But when the sun was at the meridian, and the chums returned wearily to camp, their looks showed that they had been unsuccessful.

"Any luck?" asked Gunten, smiling.

"No!" snapped Bob.

They ate their midday meal almost in silence, Chunky Todgers giving a deep groan every now and then.

After the meal there was a consultation.

"We can't do any good by hanging it out here," said Bob glumly. "It's a case of easy come and easy go. The dashed stuff's gone, and we may as well make up our minds to it. It's rotten, but it can't be helped."

Chunky groaned.

"We've only allowed ourselves time to get home before school begins, too," said Bob. "We can't afford to lose another day. What do you fellows say?"

"Better get on the trail," said Frank.

"And keep Gunten and Keller with us," added Beauclerc quietly.

"You bet!"

Upon that point the chums were determined, though their suspicion was less keen now.

If the Swiss had taken the gold, they were not to be allowed a chance of returning to the timber and taking it from its hiding-place.

The horses were saddled, and the mule's pack being distributed among the other animals, Gunten and Keller rode double upon the animal.

There were glum faces in the party as they set out on the trail—with one exception.

Yen Chin was smiling away cheerily as if he regarded the loss of the gold-dust as more or less of a joke, as perhaps he did.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Plotters' Punishment!

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. took little heed of the two Swiss as they travelled on that day.

Gunten and Keller looked gloomy as the afternoon waned into evening.

They were looking for a chance to get away, but it had not come. They were, in fact, more or less prisoners, and they realised it.

Gunten had tried the resource of a quarrel, but that failed him.

The chums of Cedar Creek, half-suspecting his motive, refused to answer him; and when he became insulting, a "lick" from Bob's trail-ropes gave him a hint to be silent; and he was silent.

But the Swiss was growing desperate as mile after mile intervened between him and the timber left far behind.

To recover the buckskin bag hidden in the tree, he had to retrace the journey on foot, and that was no easy task.

Indeed, after another day's journey he was not sure that he would be able to find the timber-clump again in the wide prairie.

That night, at the latest, he had to escape. Then, with the gold-dust in his possession,

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he would be able to reach the settlements and pay his way home.

At sundown the party halted by a stream that murmured through low bushes and long grass.

The two Swiss sat sulkily on a knoll, while the chums camped and built a fire, and Bob and Frank and Beauclerc went to look for game.

Chunky Todgers gathered brushwood for the fire, and Yen Chin was set to watch the Swiss, with the shotgun ready.

Gunten and Keller gave him savage looks.

To their amazement, after his comrades were out of sight, Yen Chin rose from the ground and walked away towards the stream.

Gunten and Keller exchanged a rapid glance.

"The fool's forgotten us!" muttered Keller.

"More likely fed up with the job of watching us!" grinned Gunten. "Now's our chance!"

Yen Chin was standing by the stream twenty yards distant, looking with apparent interest into the glistening waters as they rippled by.

He had his back to the two Swiss, who rose with great caution, and tiptoed away in the opposite direction.

The Chinese did not turn his head.

Gladly enough would the Swiss have stolen a horse apiece, but Yen Chin was standing close by the animals, where they were tethered within reach of the water, and that was impossible without risking the shotgun.

They were only too glad of the chance of escaping at all, and their hearts were beating as they stole away.

There was a yell from Chunky Todgers as he came back with his plump arms full of brushwood.

"Yen Chin! You silly heathen, you've let them go!"

Yen Chin looked round.

Gunten and Keller had taken to their heels now, and were running hard, and he caught a last glimpse of them vanishing among the swellings of the prairie.

"Gone!" said Yen Chin calmly.

"You jay!" roared Chunky. "They've gone back for the dust. I'll bet you they have!"

"No indeed, me tinkee."

Chunky Todgers threw down the brushwood, and stood for a good ten minutes telling Yen Chin what he thought of him. The little Chinese listened with a sleepy grin.

Chunky's tirade was still going strong when Frank Richards and his chums returned to the camp, well supplied with game for supper.

"Hallo! What's the row?" exclaimed Bob. "Where are the Swiss?"

"Gone!" howled Chunky. "The heathen let them vamoose!"

"Yen Chin! You born idiot——"

"No matter!" said Yen Chin. "Allee light!"

"We can run them down on horseback," said Frank Richards.

"In the dark?" grunted Bob.

"We know where they are heading for," "What's the good? They won't go straight back there. They'll keep close till they know we're off the scene," said Bob. "Oh, that idiotic heathen! We oughtn't to have trusted him."

"Velly good to tluetsee Chinese," said Yen Chin. "Me, tallee you allee light! You losee gold-dust; you velly silly. Me findee!"

"What!" yelled the whole party.

Yen Chin grinned and fumbled among his garments, and to the amazement of his comrades produced the buckskin bag.

Bob, almost gasping, pounced upon it and opened it.

The gold-dust was there!

"Great gophers!" gasped Bob dazedly. "Here's the dust, right enough! Was it you who lifted it, you monkey? Is this another of your heathen tricks? By gum, I've a jolly good mind——"

"No playee tick!" said Yen Chin indignantly. "Me velly good boy!"

"How did you get the dust, then?" asked Chunky Todgers, feasting his eyes upon it.

"Explain, you young ass!" said Frank Richards.

Yen Chin chuckled.

"Chinese velly clevee boy," he said. "Velly deep ole lasca, you bet! Oh, yes! Last night Guntsee and Kellee goey out. Pietend lookee for bad man in timber. Oh,

yes? Me tinkee keepee eye on ole lasca. Oh, yes! Me goey, too!"

"You were watching them!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

Yen Chin nodded, evidently in great enjoyment.

"Me watchee. Keepee velly close, and watchee and listen. Oh, yes! Heal Guntsee talkee to Kellee. Sayee steal gold-dust from silly ole Bob, and hidee in hollow tlee. Me stickee in wood, waitee and watchee."

"So that's why you didn't come back to camp?" said Frank in wonder.

"Allee light! Me waitee, watchee!" grinned the heathen. "Latel on Guntsee stealae bag. Comee creepee, creepee into wood, and hidee in hollow tlee. Me say nuffin, no lettee Guntsee see. Oh, yes! Guntsee clepee, clepee, and hidee bag, and goey back clepee, clepee, likee snake. Me smilee. Goey to hollow tlee, takee out bag, and puttee back blushwood in hollow, allee samee Guntsee."

"My only hat!" murmured Frank.

"Lettee Guntsee tinkee bag hidee allee light. What you tinkee? Me comee bakcee in morning, bag safee under jackee. What you tinkee? Me laugh velly muchee when pool ole Bob searchee for bag."

And Yen Chin roared.

Frank Richards & Co. gave the young Chinese very peculiar looks.

"You young rascal!" said Bob in measured tones. "You let me hunt all the morning for the bag! Why didn't you tell us?"

"Spoiltee jokee on Guntsee," explained Yen Chin, perhaps not-thinking it wise to confess that the vain search had amused him, too. "You savvy? Guntsee goey twenty millee back to takee bag from hollow tlee. No findee! Ha, ha!"

And he roared again.

The chums of Cedar Creek stared at one another, and then burst into a roar. They understood now.

Yen Chin had allowed the two Swiss to escape on purpose, and they had twenty miles to tramp back on the rough prairie to find the hidden gold-dust in the hollow tree.

When they arrived and found that it was not there their feelings could be better imagined than described.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Yen Chin joined joyously in the laughter.

"Goodee jokee on Guntsee. What you tinkee?" he grinned. "Goey clamp, clamp, clamp twenty millee, and lookee in hollow tlee, and findee noote! He tinkee Guntsee and Kellee solly stealae. Oh, yes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The chums of Cedar Creek camped in great spirits, and they burst into renewed laughter whenever they thought of the two rascals tramping mile after mile over the dark plains to find the plunder that was not there!

They felt that they could quite forgive Yen Chin for the trouble they had gone through in view of the peculiar punishment of Gunten and Keller.

The next day two disappointed and furious young rascals were tramping wearily on the prairie—disappointed, furious, penniless, and fatigued. Gunten and Keller were getting their punishment.

Frank Richards & Co. at the same time were riding cheerily homeward, to arrive in great spirits, with a thousand dollars' worth of gold-dust to show for their excursion into the wild North-West; but long after the chums of Cedar Creek had arrived at the Lawless Ranch, Gunten and Keller were still on the tramp, homeward bound.

THE END

Next week's extra-special story of the Chums of Cedar Creek is entitled: "A Bank Injustice!"

By Martin Clifford.

Don't miss it!

THE HAUNTED STUDY!

(Continued from page 9.)

Manners, who saw it first, uttered a startled cry.

"Look!" he muttered.

The ghost had at last made its appearance. The juniors gazed with starting eyes at its motionless outline. But they did not turn and flee, as their school-fellows had done. They felt that there was safety in numbers. Surely three sturdy fellows would be more than a match for one ghost?

Tom Merry picked up a cushion, and hurled it with deadly force at the apparition.

The figure on the wall appeared to be hit, but it did not move. It remained perfectly still, as if mocking its assailant.

"It—it isn't human, at any rate," muttered Tom Merry, clenching his hands.

Monty Lowther addressed the apparition in faltering tones. But it did not deign to answer.

"Well, we won't budge," muttered Manners. "The thing can't hurt us whatever it is."

For two or three minutes the apparition lingered on the wall. Then, suddenly and without warning, it vanished as swiftly as it came.

"Well, of all the rum goes!" ejaculated Tom Merry, in wonder. "I can understand those fellows being scared. It seems to be a real ghost, right

enough, though I didn't believe in ghosts—until now."

"Are we going back to bed now?" asked Manners.

Manners shivered a little.

"No. We'll stick it out. The thing may come again."

"I don't see what good we can do by staying here," he said.

"We might be able to solve the mystery," said Tom Merry.

Of the three juniors, Manners was scared the most. Tom Merry soon fell asleep on the sofa, and Monty Lowther dozed in the armchair before the fire. But Manners found sleep impossible. He did not dare to close his eyes.

Shortly before one o'clock, the wailing noise was resumed.

Manners sat bolt upright in his chair, and awaited developments.

As soon as the clock struck one—a long, mournful note that reverberated through the night—the apparition once more made its appearance on the wall.

Manners jumped to his feet, with the intention of rousing his chums. At the same instant he fancied he heard a low chuckle—a human chuckle.

Manners had a quick ear, and so far as he could judge, the sound had come from the study next door—No. 11. Only a very thin partition separated Study No. 11 from Study No. 9.

His suspicions aroused, Manners crept swiftly out of Talbot's study, and into

the passage. Keeping against the wall, he moved silently along to the adjoining apartment.

There were three fellows in Study No. 11—Bernard Glyn, Clifton Dane, and Harry Noble.

Glyn was standing on a chair, facing the wall. In his hands he held what appeared to be a magic lantern. Dane and Noble were watching him, with broad grins on their faces. These grins immediately changed to looks of dismay when the door of the study swung open and Manners stood grimly in the doorway.

"The intruder gave a shout.

"What are you fellows doing?" he demanded.

Bernard Glyn glanced down from his perch.

"Hallo! The game's up," he said, with a rueful grin.

"So it was you all the time?" said Manners. "You wangled this ghost stunt?"

"Guilty, my lord!" said Glyn, stepping down from the chair.

Manners looked utterly bewildered.

"Why did you do it? How did you do it?" he asked.

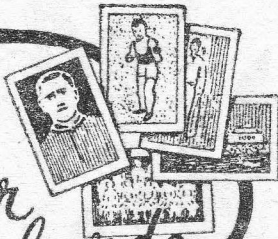
"One question at a time, please," said Bernard Glyn. "First of all, I'll tell you why I did it. A few nights ago, you will remember, we were jawing about ghosts, up in the dorm. Nearly every fellow who took part in the discussion declared that he wasn't afraid of ghosts. So I thought I'd put the matter to the test."

"And how was it done?" asked Manners.

"With this magic lantern. There's a tiny round hole in the wall, as you will

(Continued on page 28.)

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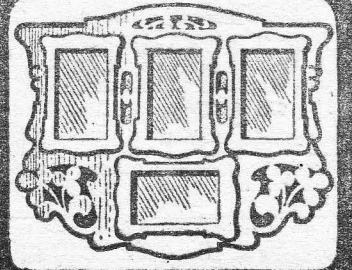
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THE HAUNTED STUDY!

(Continued from page 27.)

see. I fixed the projector of the lantern into the hole and I had a special slide of a ghost made. I stood on this chair and operated, and the picture was thrown on to the farther wall of Talbot's study."

"My hat!"
 "A very simple device," said Bernard Glyn, "but it worked like a charm. Of course, it would have shown up better if Talbot's study had been in darkness. With the light on, the ghost appeared very hazy. Still, an apparition is supposed to be rather hazy, so that was no drawback. I first of all put the wind up Skimmy. Then I scared Talbot and Gore. Then Grundy and Gussy had a turn; and you and your pals are the latest—and the last—victims. Now that you've tumbled to the jape, we sha'n't be able to work it any more."

"Well, of all the cute wheezes—" began Manners.

"You'll admit you were scared?" said Harry Noble.

"Scared stiff," said Manners frankly.

"I was in favour of going back to bed, but Tommy and Monty insisted on sticking it out. They've dozed off to sleep. I'll go and wake 'em, and tell 'em what I've discovered. You fellows had better bunk for your lives!"

"Why?" asked Clifton Dane.
 "Why! Do you think you're going to get off scot-free, after spoofing us like this?" hooted Manners. "I expect Tom Morry will be in favour of flaying you alive! You've kept us up half the blessed night, and robbed us of our beauty sleep."

The three conspirators chuckled, and quitted the study, Glyn taking the magic-lantern with him.

Manners went into Study No. 9 and aroused his chums who were amazed when they heard how they had been hoaxed.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Monty Lowther. "So it was Glyn all the time—working his magic-lantern through the hole in the wall!"

Manners nodded.

"Well, it was jolly clever, but we can't allow people to pull our noble legs in this way," said Tom Merry. "I feel too sleepy to deal with the boggers to-night; but they shall come up for judgment in the morning."

The Terrible Three returned to their dormitory. They glared at Glyn, Dane, and Noble as they undressed. And when the rising-bell went, they did something more than glare. They jumped out of bed, and told the story of Glyn's trick to their schoolfellows.

Instantly there was a roar.
 "Spoofed by Jove!"
 "Bump the boundaries!"
 "Go for 'em baldheaded!"

Bernard Glyn and his chums were soundly bumped on the floor of the dormitory. And their yells of anguish fairly awakened the echoes. They began to wonder whether their priceless jape had been worth while, after all!

Talbot and Gore and Skimpole resumed possession of Study No. 9 in the Shell passage. And that celebrated apartment ceased to be known as the Haunted Study.

THE END.

(Next week's long complete tale of St. Jim's will take some beating. It's called "His Word of Honour" and is full of lively incidents and dramatic situations.)

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