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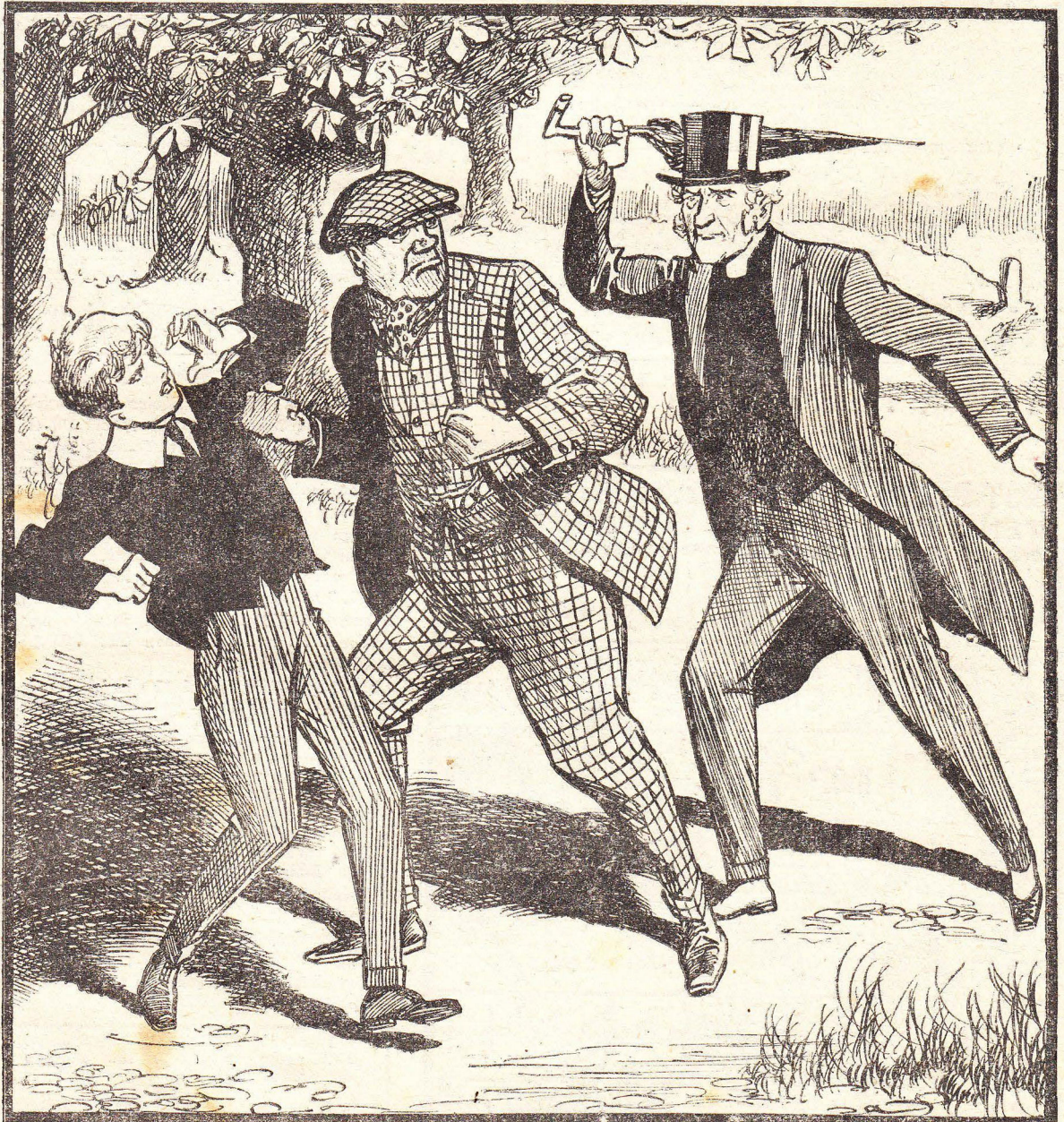
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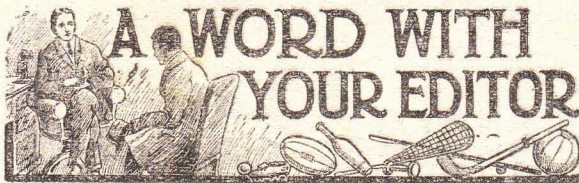


SAVED BY THE HEAD OF GREYFRIARS!

(A Dramatic episode from the long complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co., inside.)

A Bumper Feast of Fiction in Next Week's issue!

Stories of School, Wild West, and Adventure for you next week!



PILING ON THE RECORDS.

Next week's issue of the "Pop" has a finer budget than ever of grand stories by the best-liked authors. Bumper numbers are things which come naturally to the "Popular." This weekly is pre-eminently for variety. Nothing could be more representative, and the yarns are all first class.

"THE GREYFRIARS CRICKETERS!"

Just take next week's bill of contents. It is simply the best out. The Greyfriars tale by Frank Richards is simple tophole! In this story we see how Harry Wharton's cricket team meets a crack club called the Trojans in an amazing manner. The plain fact was that everybody was astonished on that memorable day. I am not going into the matter of Coker and an anonymous letter. Anonymous communications are far better left alone. It is enough to point out that things got curious and still more curious, but there was a topping game, and you have a first-rate yarn to look forward to.

"THE SIEGE OF THE LUMBER SCHOOL!"

Surprises come thick and fast next week. Martin Clifford's story of the Backwoods school is not an exception. Cedar Creek is in the throes of strife. It was all the doing of Old Man Gunten—both father and son are to blame—and since the dismissal of the charming headmistress, Miss Meadows, there has been no suggestion of peace. It is war to the knife; the school is barricaded against the sheriff and his trusty men. There is a big surprise for several people in this full-of-dash yarn.

"THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST CARTHEW!"

As a general rule, the juniors at Rookwood can put up with a

good deal, but they cannot stomach Carthew as captain. It has been decreed by the august Head, Dr. Chisholm, that Carthew shall assume the dignity of the vacant captaincy. The seniors are out, as we know. Now the throne of a usurper is but a bed of thorns; it is extremely unlikely that Carthew—an ignominious person at best—gets a decent night's sleep with so much point in his pillow. He knows in his soul that he has no genuine right to the lofty position into which he has been lifted by the pitchfork of misguided authority. He is a round peg in a rectangular aperture. Look out for what the Carthew Campaigners do next Tuesday. It's a titanic struggle against oppression.

"THE RETURN OF THE WANDERER!"

We are shown Dick Redfern alone in London in next week's St. Jim's story. There is another surprise here, and Tom Merry & Co. participate in it. You will be delighted with the detail and characterisation of the coming story. It is full of grit, and you get more light thrown on "Ratty" and his somewhat questionable proceedings.

POSTMAN'S NUMBER.

Letters stream into this office praising up Bunter's "Weekly." There will be more after the Postman's Number has appeared. It is not clear what prompted Bunter to give the palm to the faithful missive-carrier. Perhaps the porpoise wished to encourage the man in connection with the long-delayed postal-order. You never know. It was a good notion, anyway, and next Tuesday's merry supplement is first class.

OUR SERIAL.

"Stand and Deliver!" runs its course next week, and a brilliant career it has had. No yarn of Dick Turpin ever went with such spirit. Now comes a special bit of news. There will be full particulars next week, but I will say this much now. In a fortnight's time our new serial starts.


"THE OUTLAW KING."

That is the title of the coming treat! In a fortnight! Don't forget. The "Popular" is always on the spot, and can be relied upon. You know it gives the very finest in fiction, as here. You know the "Pop" won't fail you—not a here-to-day and gone-to-morrow weekly. In the Chat next week I will let you into my secret.

Your Editor.

BIG CASH PRIZES FOR A FEW MINUTES' WORK!

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 Footer Competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Blackpool 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 underneath, pin it to your solution, and post it to "BLACKPOOL" Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, April 19th, 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 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 is final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

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

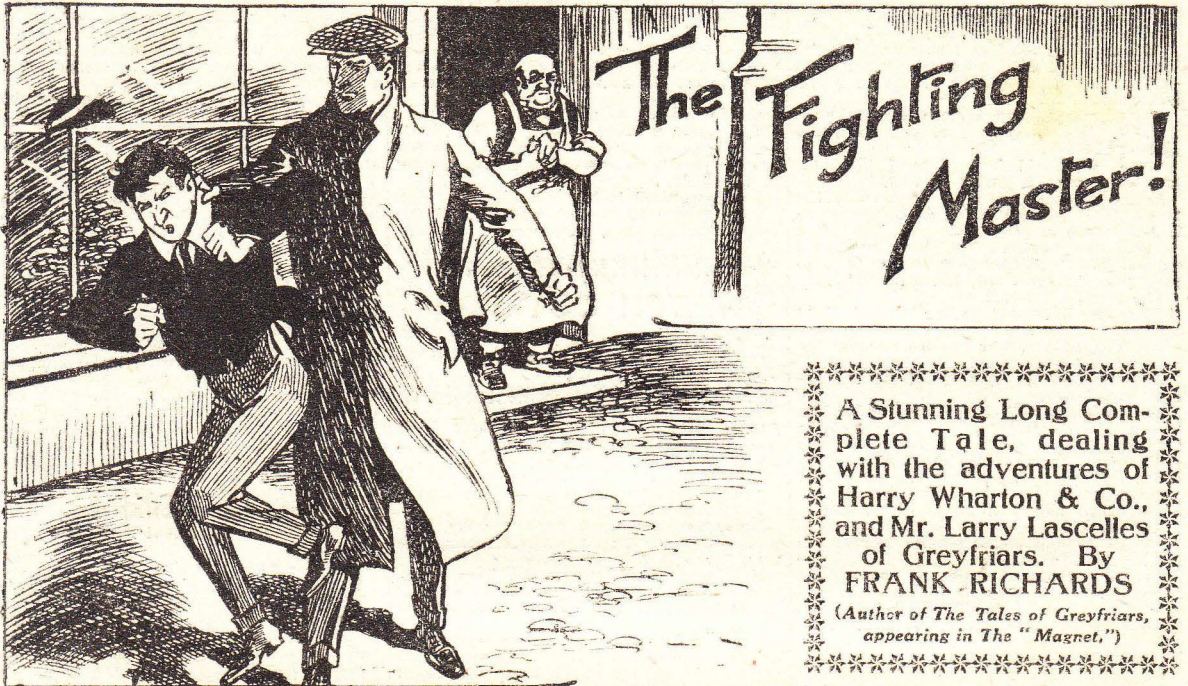
I enter "Blackpool" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name
Address
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HIS LAST FIGHT!

Harold Skinner's attempt to "get even" with Larry Lascelles brings about an unexpected and dramatic climax to the mystery of the new master!

BOXING AND SCHOOL TALE!



**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Skinner's Scheme!**

MR. LARRY LASCELLES, the new mathematics master, at Greyfriars, had certainly created more than the usual amount of interest amongst the fellows. The Removites, especially, had a particular interest in Mr. Larry Lascelles.

Harry Wharton & Co. and Skinner of the Remove had witnessed a prize-fight at the well-known boxing-ring at Chilford, near Greyfriars, and the remarkable likeness between Mr. Lascelles and Larry Lynx, a professional "pug" was too marked to pass unheeded.

Of course, there was nothing in it—from Harry Wharton's point of view.

But Skinner thought otherwise. He thought the likeness was too jolly marked not to be something more than coincidence. In short, in Skinner's and William George Bunter's opinions, Larry Lynx and Larry Lascelles were one and the same person.

A master at Greyfriars a professional prize-fighter!

It was impossible, and Harry Wharton & Co. quickly realised it.

Skinner and Bunter's prying into the affairs of the new master had brought the wrath of the Removites upon their heads, and they had been bumped hard and then bumped again.

Skinner's opportunity came along quickly. News that there was to be another fight at Chilford with Larry Lynx as one of the principals soon got to the ears of the sneak of the Remove.

He boasted that he would not only prove that he was right—that Mr. Lascelles was also Larry Lynx, the professional pug—but he would make Lascelles "toe the line" if he didn't want to be shown up to the wote of Greyfriars.

The boast was viewed with disgust, and Skinner had listened to a tirade of denunciation from Harry Wharton and his chums.

Skinner was more determined than ever to prove that he was right; his malice was fully excited now, and he was more obstinate than ever.

And on Wednesday afternoon he might have been heard—and, as a matter of fact, was heard—inquiring for Mr. Lascelles.

"He's gone out," Bob Cherry told him.

"What on earth do you want him for?"

"Got an impot to show him," explained Skinner. "Sure he's gone out?"

"Well, I believe so."

"Begad, I saw him go out!" said Lord Mauleverer, when Skinner inquired of him.

"He went down towards Courtfield."

Coker of the Fifth had just come in on his bike from the direction of Courtfield, and Skinner addressed his inquiries to the great Coker. Had he seen Lascelles?

"Yes," said Coker. "He passed me on the road. He's gone to Courtfield."

"Thanks!" said Skinner, and he joined Bunter in the tuckshop.

"Any news?" asked Bunter, blinking inquiringly at Harold Skinner's excited face. Skinner nodded and grinned.

"Yes, rather! Lascelles has gone to Courtfield."

"Well?" said Bunter, not much interested.

"Well?" repeated Skinner. "I've got a time-table here. There's a train leaves Courtfield for Chilford just after Lascelles will get there. And this afternoon Larry Lynx appears again at the Chilford Ring."

Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. He understood now.

"Then he's gone to Chilford?"

"Of course he has!" said Skinner.

"That settles it!"

"Settles it all—except proving it," said Skinner. "That's what we want—proof. He's meeting the Limehouse Chicken at Chilford Ring this afternoon, in ten rounds, according to the paper—Larry Lynx is, I mean. He beat Tim Tutton last week there. Now, my idea is to see him at Chilford. If we actually see him in the boxing-ring we shall be able to identify him—what?"

"I should think so," agreed Bunter.

"And I've got a dodge, too," went on Skinner gleefully. "After the match, we'll wait about outside the house till he comes out, and then we'll speak to him."

"Speak to him!" repeated Bunter.

"Yes; speak to him as Mr. Lascelles. He'll be taken by surprise, of course, and he'll give himself away at once—what?"

Bunter rubbed his fat hands.

"Sure to!" he agreed. "That's a nobby idea. In fact, it's just what I was thinking of myself. I was just going to suggest—"

"Oh, rats!" said Skinner. "What is more important—have you got any money to take us to Chilford?"

Billy Bunter coughed.

"Ahem! You—you see, Skinny, I've— I've been disappointed—" he began.

"Oh, more rats! You spend every blessed bean you get in the tuckshop! I jolly well know how I can get there!" said Skinner.

"Eh?"

"On Coker's motor-bike!" said Skinner.

Bunter gasped. He could not help it. Skinner fairly took his breath away.

"M-m-my hat! Coker'll fairly scrag you!" he panted.

"I'll risk it!" said Skinner, shrugging his

A Stunning Long Complete Tale, dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., and Mr. Larry Lascelles of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS

(Author of *The Tales of Greyfriars*, appearing in *The "Magnet."*)

shoulders, and he moved away towards the cycle-shed, where the Great Horace kept his famous machine.

Billy Bunter started after the sneak of the Remove, and caught him by the sleeve.

"I say, Skinny, old chap, I'll come with you—on the pillow seat, you know!" he said. "You won't come!" said Skinner grimly. "I'm not going to risk my neck with you, my fat tulip!"

"Oh, really—beast!" growled Bunter.

And he watched Skinner wheel out Coker's motor-bike, climb into the saddle, and kick off. A moment later Harold Skinner was whirling towards Chilford, there to resume his spying upon the new master at Greyfriars.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.
On the Track!**

THE Chilford Ring was crowded for the match between Larry Lynx and the Limehouse Chicken. Skinner had arrived in good time, however, on the station, and hurried to the Ring, and expended his shilling upon a cheap seat, and crowded in with the rest. He found himself squeezed between a burly carter on one side and a powerfully-built man with a bulldog face on the other. The latter had the look of a pugilist, and he attracted Skinner's attention. He remembered having seen that bulldog face and square jaw somewhere before. He remembered suddenly—it was in a photograph in the "Chilford Times."

The "pug" seated beside him, with a scowling brow, was Tim Tutton, the boxer who had been defeated by Larry Lynx, in the last week's match at the Chilford Ring. Evidently he had come there to see his rival in the engagement with the Limehouse Chicken.

There was a round of applause when the boxers came on the scene.

Skinner fastened his eyes upon Larry Lynx.

His eyes gleamed.

There he was—the young boxer, looking in the pink of condition, and looking the exact counterpart of the mathematics master at Greyfriars, with the exception that he was clean-shaven.

Surely it was the same man!

Before the afternoon was out Skinner meant to know for certain.

He heard a low growl beside him as the boxers came into the ring, and he glanced at his neighbour. Tim Tutton's face was working with rage. He had evidently been drinking, and he did not take the trouble

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to conceal his feelings. His hatred for the young boxer was plain enough.

"You know that chap?" Skinner ventured to remark.

Tutton gave him a surly look.

"Wot if I do?" he growled.

"I know him, too," said Skinner. "You're the chap he fought with last week, ain't you? Everybody expected you to beat him hands down!"

Tutton's expression became a little more amiable. The burly pugilist was not proof against flattery.

"And I should 'ave downed 'im," he growled; "only I wasn't in condition!"

Skinner, reading the signs of drink in the man's face, guessed easily enough why he had not been in condition.

"Why, he oughtn't to have a chance against you!" Skinner remarked. "I suppose your luck was out, Mr. Tutton?"

The pugilist growled.

"My time'll come!" he muttered, half to himself. "They don't want me to box now—me, Tim Tutton, wot has been before the public this twenty year! My time'll come!"

And his deep-set eyes blazed at the unconscious boxer.

Skinner realised that the man beside him was a bitter enemy of the young boxer; his own dislike for Mr. Lascelles paled into nothingness beside Tutton's fierce hatred for Larry Lynx. Were they the same man—the mathematics master and the boxer? Skinner had hardly a doubt of it, and it came into his mind that Tim Tutton might be useful to him in his scheme against the master he disliked.

"You'll tackle him again, of course?" he remarked.

"Ain't got a chance!" growled Tutton. "I tell yer they don't want me now. That was the finish for me."

"Hard lines!" said Skinner.

"Well, it ain't any business of yours," said Tutton morosely.

"Of course not," said Skinner amicably. "Only I've watched your career, in the papers, Mr. Tutton, and I'm proud to have met you."

"I'm out of it now," the boxer growled. "If I were you I'd tackle him again," said Skinner, in a low voice. "I'd tackle him outside the ring if I couldn't meet him inside it."

Tutton's eyes gleamed. "Wish I 'ad the chance!" he growled. "I'd show whether he could stand up to me or not, I would. But he lays low when he ain't before the public. There ain't no finding him."

"No?" said Skinner. "Why, I should have thought it would be quite easy to find a well-known boxer."

"He ain't like the rest: he's a gentleman, he is!" snorted Tutton. "Runs some other bizney as well as boxin', so they say. Nobody knows where he lives."

Skinner grinned. All that he heard from the pugilist was confirmation of his theory. "I fancy I know!" he remarked.

Tutton stared at him.

"You do?" he ejaculated.

"I've seen him at home," said Skinner. "At least, I think so."

"You tell me where to find him, then," said Tutton, with a hoarse laugh. "I'll pay him an afternoon call."

Skinner laughed. He could not help it. He pictured the astonishment of Greyfriars if that battered old pugilist came to the school to pay the mathematics master an afternoon call, with the intention of tackling him. It would be the finish of Mr. Lascelles' career at Greyfriars; there could not be much doubt about that.

"Wot you cackling at?" demanded Tutton suspiciously.

"I was thinking how surprised he'd be when you called, Mr. Tutton."

"I'd give him something to surprise 'im!" "I could find out his address for certain, I think," said Skinner. "I could send it to you. Where do you live?"

"Red Lion, in Chilford," said Mr. Tutton.

"Good! I'll remember."

The boxing was beginning now, and the talk ceased.

Larry Lynx and the Limehouse Chicken seemed well matched, and the big audience watched the rounds with breathless attention; but there were few so keen as Skinner. Every movement of the young boxer reminded him of the style of Mr. Lascelles.

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in the rounds with Wingate in the gym, at Greyfriars.

There could be no doubt; but Skinner meant to make quite certain. And just before the contest was over, he slipped out.

While the boxing-match was finishing, in a victory for Larry Lynx, Skinner was waiting outside the building by the stage door, to see the boxer when he should come out.

Skinner waited patiently.

The audience were leaving at last. If Larry Lynx was Mr. Lascelles, he was certain to be out soon to catch the train back to Courtfield.

He emerged at last.

The athletic figure was muffled up in an overcoat and a thick muffler and a cap was

WATCH OUT FOR
THIS TALE:—

pulled down over the face. Larry Lynx started to walk quickly down the street, in the direction of the railway-station.

Skinner ran into his path.

"Excuse me, Mr. Lascelles—" he began.

The boxer halted.

His eyes were fixed upon Skinner, and Skinner's keen glance was searching his face. Was it Mr. Lascelles?

If it was he certainly must have recognised Skinner, and he must have been startled to hear his real name spoken so suddenly.

But not by the flicker of an eyelid did he give himself away. He stared at Skinner, as anyone might have who heard himself addressed by a name not his own.

"Did you speak to me, lad?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I am Larry Lynx."

Skinner stared at him. Was he mistaken, after all? The boxer was regarding him with an expression of surprise and impatience.

"I—I thought—" stammered Skinner, taken quite aback.

"I am in a hurry," said Larry Lynx. "Kindly step out of my way!"

"But—but—"

Larry Lynx's strong hand dropped on Skinner's shoulder, and he was lifted out of the way as easily as if he had been a child.

—"THE
OUTLAW
KING!"

By MORTON PIKE.

COMING SHORTLY. Keep
your eyes open for further
particulars.

The boxer strode on.

Skinner, discomfited and enraged, stroked after him a few moments, and then broke into a run in pursuit. At least, he would see whether the boxer took the train for Courtfield; but his footsteps were heard, and at the corner of the street, Larry Lynx halted and swung round.

"Why are you following me?" he asked quietly.

"I—I'm going to the station!" faltered Skinner.

"You were following me."

"I—I—"

"You are an impertinent and prying little rascal," said the boxer, taking Skinner by the ear. "I don't allow cheeky kids to follow me!"

"Ow—ow!" groaned Skinner, as the boxer's iron grip was compressed upon his

ear. "Ow—ow! Leggo, you beast! Yow-ow!"

He writhed with anguish. "Now, cut off!" said Larry Lynx, releasing him. "This instant, or—"

Skinner cut off fast enough.

The boxer watched him out of sight, and then hurried on his way. Skinner halted breathless, at a safe distance.

"The rotter!" he muttered, caressing his ear. "The beast! I know he's Lascelles! I'm certain of it now! Ow—ow!"

He made his way by a detour to the station; but he had lost too much time. When he arrived there, the Courtfield train was gone, and he had no means of discovering whether Larry Lynx had taken it or not.

In a sullen and savage manner, Skinner rode back to Greyfriars on Coker's motor-bike. When he arrived at the school, there was a very painful explanation with Coker. Coker declined to listen to Skinner's reasons for borrowing his bike. He simply flew at Skinner, and hammered him till the junior roared for mercy. When Skinner escaped, he was feeling sore all over, in body and in mind. He had only one consolation—he was assured now of Mr. Lascelles' real identity, and he felt that he held the mathematics master in the hollow of his hand. And Mr. Lascelles should pay for all that Skinner had suffered—if Skinner could contrive it.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Skinner Does Not Prosper!

TAP! "Come in!" said Mr. Lascelles. The mathematics master was in his shirtsleeves, with a pair of boxing-gloves on his hands, when Skinner opened the door of the study. A punching-ball was suspended from the ceiling. Mr. Lascelles had been punching the ball. He paused in that occupation, and glanced round carelessly at Skinner.

Skinner looked sharply at his face.

Under Mr. Lascelles' left eye was an unmistakable "mouse," and there was a slight swelling on his nose. Skinner remembered that Larry Lynx had received heavy drives from the Limehouse Chicken on those two spots, in the contest at the Chilford Ring. Of course, the punching-ball might account for them—punching-balls, when carelessly handled, sometimes rebound with direful results upon the puncher. But Skinner divined that that was the very reason why Mr. Lascelles was so industriously punching the ball—in order to account for any slight marks upon his face.

"Skinner!" said the mathematics master, looking at him. "What do you want, my boy?"

His tones were very much softer than those in which Larry Lynx had addressed the spy of the Remove in the street of Chilford.

"I want to speak to you, sir, if I may," said Skinner.

"Certainly."

"Not interrupting you in your exercise, sir?" asked Skinner satirically.

"It does not matter," said Mr. Lascelles, taking off the gloves, and laying them upon the table. "I was nearly finished." He resumed his coat. "What is it, Skinner? Can I assist you in any way? You are one of my most backward pupils—the most backward of all, with the exception of Bunter. I should be glad to help you."

"I don't like mathematics, sir," said Skinner, closing the door.

"No? But you are not sent here to do exactly as you like, I presume?"

"That's what I want to do, sir, so far as maths are concerned," said Skinner, with an air of deliberation, as he faced the master again.

Mr. Lascelles looked puzzled.

"I don't quite understand you," he said. "I want you to excuse me from lessons, sir, and to stop giving me extra instruction," said Skinner.

"What?"

"At the same time, sir, I should like you to give me always a good report."

"Skinner!"

Mr. Lascelles' look now was utter astonishment. He seemed to be wondering whether the junior had taken leave of his senses.

Skinner's heart was beating hard. He was bearing the lion in his den now, with a vengeance, and a great deal depended upon the way he played his cards. He was quite certain that Larry Lynx, the boxer, stood before him, that the mathematics master of

Greyfriars was a boxer and pugilist in his spare time, unknown to the headmaster. That knowledge placed Mr. Lascelles' fate in his hands, and he felt that he had the master under his thumb. But his heart thumped uncomfortably as he faced the steady, keen eyes that were bent searchingly upon him. It was no light matter to encounter and defy a master, even if he had the power in his hands to get that master the "sack."

"I do not understand you in the least, Skinner," said Mr. Lascelles icily. "If you will have the kindness to explain yourself, I shall be obliged."

"Very well, sir. Look at that!"

Skinner drew the photograph of Larry Lynx from his pocket, and held it up. Mr. Lascelles looked at it.

"Well?" he said.

"That is the photograph of Larry Lynx, sir, the pugilist."

"Indeed!"

"Any chap might take it for your photo, sir."

"Yes. It is very like. Well?"

"As a matter of fact, sir, I think it is your photo," said Skinner, taking the plunge. Mr. Lascelles stared.

"My photograph!"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you not just say that it was the photograph of a boxer?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what do you mean?"

"I mean that you are Larry Lynx, and there's no use denying it, Mr. Lascelles," said Skinner desperately.

"I am Larry Lynx!" Mr. Lascelles repeated thoughtfully.

"You know you are," said Skinner. "I know you are, too. I thought it might be your twin brother at first, but now I know it's you. I saw you at the Chilford Ring to-day, and spoke to you afterwards. You came home in the train to Courtfield. I've found it all out, sir."

"It seems that you have been spying, Skinner?"

"You can call it that if you like, sir," said Skinner insolently. "I call it finding out the truth about a—a—a—an—"

He hesitated.

"About a what?"

"An impostor!" blurted out Skinner. "You know jolly well what the Head would think if he knew. He wouldn't have you here! Well, I've only got to tell him, and it would be all up with you at Greyfriars!"

"Indeed!"

"Isn't it true?" demanded Skinner.

Mr. Lascelles smiled slightly.

"I do not intend to argue with you, Skinner, or to admit or deny anything, as I do not recognise your right to pry into what does not concern you."

"That's as good as admitting it, sir."

"But I intend to punish you severely for your impertinence, and for the veiled threat you have used," said Mr. Lascelles, picking up a cane. "As a rule, I should report you to your Form master for punishment, but on this occasion I shall take the matter into my own hands. Hold out your hand, Skinner!"

Skinner put his hands behind him.

"You're not going to cane me, sir," he said, between his teeth.

"And why not?"

"Because, if you do, I'll go directly to the Head, and tell him all I know."

The mathematics master laughed.

"That is quite dramatic, Skinner! However, I shall cane you, all the same, and then we will go to the Head together!"

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Skinner, taken quite aback.

"Certainly! If you have something to tell the Head concerning me, it will be better to tell it in my presence."

"You—you wouldn't dare—"

"Enough! Hold out your hand!"

"I—I—I—"

"If you do not hold out your hand, Skinner, I shall cane you across the shoulders, and very severely!" said Mr. Lascelles quietly.

Skinner, white with rage, held out his hand. The cane came down with a swish, and Skinner gave a howl of anguish.

"Now the other!" said Mr. Lascelles grimly.

Swish! Another howl from Skinner. Whether Mr. Lascelles was Larry Lynx or not, he was certainly very muscular, and the strokes were well laid on.

Skinner writhed with the pain of infliction as Mr. Lascelles laid down the cane.

"Now we will go to the Head!" said the mathematics master pleasantly. "Come with me, Skinner!"

He dropped his hand on the junior's shoulder, and led him out of the study. In the passage, however, Skinner halted.

His brain was in a whirl. Had he made a mistake, after all? If the mathematics master was really the boxer, with a false moustache on his upper lip, would he dare to go to the Head? Was it bluff, or—had the spy of the Remove made a ghastly mistake?

And even if he proved his case, what was the Head likely to say to him? Whatever happened to Mr. Lascelles, certainly the spy and informer would only meet with contempt. Indeed, if Mr. Lascelles informed the Head of the threat Skinner had uttered, undoubtedly the junior would receive the most condign punishment.

"Come!" said Mr. Lascelles.

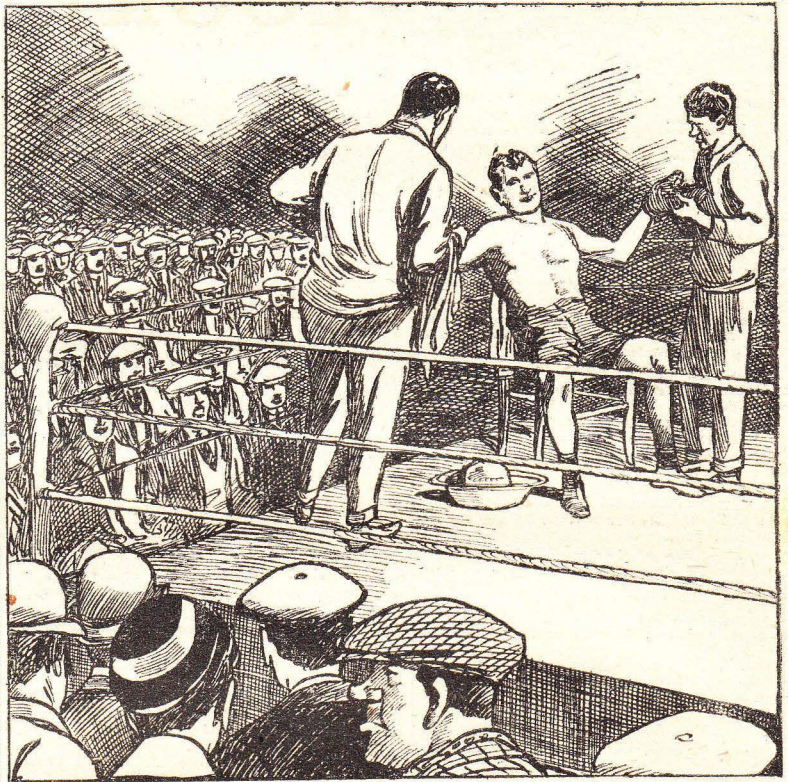
furiously to his own study, his eyes gleaming, his teeth set.

"The rotter!" he muttered. "He was bluffing me, but—but I dare not go to the Head! But—but I'll settle him, all the same. Tutton will settle him!"

And within half an hour a note was written and posted to Tim Tutton, at the Red Lion, in Chilford. The note was unsigned, and it was in a disguised hand. But it told the pugilist all he wanted to know—that Larry Lynx, the boxer, held a post at Greyfriars School under the name of Lascelles, and that he could be found there at any time.

Skinner chuckled as he dropped the letter into the box. His scheme—Bunter's scheme—of having the mathematics master under his thumb was finished with. There was evidently nothing doing, so to speak, in that line. But the call of the Remove had the satisfaction left of making Mr. Lascelles pay dearly for the reception he had given him.

It would be something to see him disgraced



SCHOOLMASTER OR BOXER? There was a round of applause when the boxers stepped into the ring. Skinner fastened his eyes upon Larry Lynx. There he was—the young boxer, looking in the pink of condition and the exact counterpart of the new master at Greyfriars. (See Chapter 3.)

Skinner hung back.

"I—I don't want to go to the Head, please, sir!" he mumbled.

"You have no choice now. Come!"

"I—I—I take back what I said, sir!" panted Skinner, in a terrible funk by this time. "I—I beg your pardon, sir!"

Mr. Lascelles paused.

"If you apologise I may look over the matter," he said curtly. "But nothing of the kind again, Skinner."

"I—I apologise, sir!"

"Very well. I will say no more about the matter. You may go!"

Mr. Lascelles went back into his study. Skinner, almost livid, tramped away down the passage. Billy Bunter met him at the corner.

"How did it work, Skinny, old man?" he asked eagerly. "Why, you beast! Ow! You rotter! Wharrer you at?"

The infuriated Skinner pushed him roughly aside, and Bunter sat down on the floor of the passage with a howl. Skinner strode on without replying.

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

Skinner did not heed. He stamped away

and sacked! And Skinner looked forward to that consummation of his plot with great glee. Mr. Lascelles had refused to make terms with him, and Mr. Lascelles would be "booted" out of Greyfriars. It was a very severe Roland for an Oliver.

Skinner walked back to the school after posting the letter with a very cheerful grin on his face. Skinner generally looked cheerful when something unpleasant was to happen—to somebody else.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Harry Wharton's Diplomacy!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! I know that merchant!" said Bob Cherry softly.

"Tutton!" said Harry Wharton. "What does he want here, I wonder?" It was after lessons on the following day, and the Famous Five were strolling down the lane towards Friarvale. Tim Tutton came into view from the direction of the village, tramping along the road towards Greyfriars. The juniors recognised him at once. They

remembered the bulldog jaw and the deep-set eyes of the pugilist who had been defeated by Larry Lynx at Chilford.

"It is certainly the esteemed pug," Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked. "Can he be coming to the school, my esteemed chums?"

"Why should he?" muttered Wharton uneasily. He thought of Mr. Lascelles at once.

The bruiser stopped as he came up to the juniors. The deep flush in his rough, stubby face showed that he had been drinking.

"Greyfriars School 'creabouts?" he asked. "Yes," said Wharton, eyeing him. "Are you going there?"

"I reckon. You belong to Greyfriars—hey?" asked Mr. Tutton, noting the school caps.

"Yes."
"Then you come along, and you'll see something. I'm going to see Larry Lynx!" said the bruiser thickly.

"Larry Lynx, at Greyfriars!" said Nugent. "Calls himself another name there," said Mr. Tutton. "Nobody knewed where he hung out, but a young gent 'ave told me. Ever 'eard of Mr. Lascelles?"

"He's our mathematics master," said Bob Cherry.

"Zackly, when 'e's at 'ome," chuckled Tutton. "When he ain't at 'ome he's Larry Lynx, the boxer. I'm goin' to see him."

"What are you going to see him for?" asked Harry.

"Lick him!"

"You won't have much chance of doing that, considering how matters went at the Chilford Ring, Mr. Tutton!"

Mr. Tutton eyed him ferociously.

"You shut your head!" he said. "I was out of sorts then. I'm going to show him that I can lick him—and show him up, too! I reckon they don't all know at the school as how the man is a common bruiser—what? Which way is Greyfriars?"

"Come with me," said Bob Cherry politely. "It will be a pleasure to show you the way, Mr. Tutton!"

"I'm arter you!" said Mr. Tutton!
And Bob, closing one eye at his companions, led Mr. Tutton down the side-road that ran towards Redclyffe. It was a move to gain time, for all the juniors realised what it would mean for Mr. Lascelles if the half-intoxicated bruiser arrived at the school as he intended.

Bob felt that he could leave the matter in Wharton's hands, to do what was best to be done.

The Co. consulted hurriedly. It was no special business of theirs; but they liked Mr. Lascelles, and they wanted to do what they could for him.

"This will be a rotten show up for him!" said Harry, biting his lip. "Not much doubt about it now, chaps!"

"None at all, I suppose," said Nugent. "It wouldn't be so bad for Lascelles if he told the Head himself, but if that ruffian gets there—"

"He musn't get there! Lascelles must come here!" said Harry decidedly. "He will be able to deal with him."

"But Lascelles is at Greyfriars now—"

"I'm going to warn him!"

"Phew! I don't know how he'll take it when—"

"Must chance that!"

"Good egg!" said Johnny Bull. "Cut off, and we'll help Bob keep an eye on that tipsy brute, and keep him back as long as possible."

"Right-ho!"

And Harry Wharton started at a run for the school.
The active junior covered the ground quickly. He reached Greyfriars in a few minutes, and hurried into the School House. He was breathing hard as he knocked at the door of Mr. Lascelles' study.

"Come in!" called out the cheery voice of the mathematics master.

Wharton entered the study. Mr. Lascelles was seated in his armchair before the open window, looking out towards the playing-fields, with a book on his knees.

"What is it, Wharton?" he asked, his keen eye noting at once the signs of haste and excitement in the junior's looks. Wharton closed the door quickly.

"I've come to tell you, Mr. Lascelles, that—that—"

He paused.
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"Well?" Mr. Lascelles' handsome face hardened a little.

Perhaps he anticipated another interview similar to the one with Harold Skinner.

"I—I don't want to mix myself in your affairs, sir," said Wharton, reddening. "It's no business of mine, I know. But—but we were at Chilford Ring last week, and we saw the contest between Tim Tutton and— and Larry Lynx!"

"Well?"

"We couldn't help seeing the likeness, sir. Tim Tutton is coming to Greyfriars!"

That startled Mr. Lascelles. He rose quickly to his feet.

"How do you know that, Wharton?"

"We've just met him on the road, sir. He says he knows that you are Larry Lynx, and he's coming here to make a scene."

"Indeed?"



"The other chaps are keeping him back, sir—"

"Why?"

Wharton's flush deepened.

"We—we thought, sir—excuse me—if there's going to be a scene, we thought you'd prefer, perhaps, to have it outside the school. It—it would attract less attention."

Mr. Lascelles smiled a little.

"That was very thoughtful of you, Wharton."

"I'm sure we don't want to meddle, sir, but—but we didn't want you to be taken by surprise, and—and—"

"Thank you very much, my dear lad!" said Mr. Lascelles kindly. "So this obstreperous person is coming here to see me?"

"He can't be far off now, sir. Bob's trying to keep him away, but—"

"I think I had better go and meet him," said Mr. Lascelles quietly. "If he really desires to see me, there is no reason why he should be disappointed."

And the mathematics master took up his hat, and followed Wharton from the study.

Harry Wharton would have hurried across the Close; but Mr. Lascelles proceeded him with a calm and deliberate step. Apparently he was not perturbed. Yet he must have known—if he was indeed Larry Lynx—that his career at Greyfriars was trembling in the balance.

They passed out of the school gates, and moved on towards Friardale, and in a few minutes came in sight of the Co. Frank Nugent ran up to them.

"Well?" said Mr. Lascelles, with a smile.

"Where is our friend Tutton?"

"Bob's taken him down the Redclyffe Lane, sir," said Nugent, with a very curious look at Mr. Lascelles' imperturbable face. "But I fancy he'll tumble soon, and come on this way. I hope he won't hammer Bob when he finds out."

Mr. Lascelles quickened his pace.

"There's going to be trouble now," Johnny Bull remarked.

"I feel sorry for Tutton if he tackles him!" said Wharton grimly.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific. I considerably think—"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's flow of peculiar English was interrupted.

Across the wood came ringing a shout, from the direction of the lane behind the trees.

"Help!"

It was Bob Cherry's voice.

Mr. Lascelles broke into a run, and the Co., with anxious faces, broke into a run after him. What was happening, out of their sight, behind the trees?

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Truth Out!

BOB CHERRY had led the half-intoxicated bruiser some distance towards Redclyffe, before Tutton became suspicious.

"This 'ere road leads to Greyfriars?" asked Tutton, at last.

"Straight on," said Bob cheerfully, for-bearing to add that it would be necessary to traverse, roughly speaking, twenty-four thousand miles before Greyfriars was reached in that direction. "Only got to keep on long enough."

"Well, git on!" said Tutton.

But Bob halted himself the next moment. Ahead of them, in the lane, appeared a majestic figure. It was that of Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars. And Bob remembered that the Head had been on a visit that afternoon to the headmaster of Redclyffe School. He was taking advantage of the fine spring weather to walk back to Greyfriars—and here he was, only a dozen yards ahead of them. Bob halted in dismay. He did not want the bruiser to meet Dr. Locke.

"Wot you stopping for?" asked Mr. Tutton suspiciously.

"Ahem! Would you care to take a short cut through the wood?" asked Bob.

"You said this 'ere road was straight on to Greyfriars."

"So it is—only—"

"Then I don't want no short cut!" said Mr. Tutton. "And I'll ask this old gent, too! I've a suspicion you're larking with me, you young rip!"

"Better take the short cut!" urged Bob. "This road is right on to Greyfriars, but—but you'll have to go right round the world, you know, and that's a long distance. I'll show you a shorter cut!"

Mr. Tutton stared at him savagely.

"So you was larking, was you?" he exclaimed. "I thought as much. And I'll show you that it don't pay to play your larks with me, young shaver!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hands off!" exclaimed Bob, as the bruiser grasped him. "I'll give yer larks!" grunted Tutton.

And he rained angry blows upon the junior. Bob Cherry struggled fiercely, but he was as a child in the grasp of the pugilist.

"Ow! Ow! Leggo! Yarchoo! Oh crumbs!" yelled Bob.

"Take that—and that—and that!"

Dr. Locke quickened his pace as he saw a Greyfriars junior in the grasp of the ruffian. He came up quickly.

"Let the boy go at once!" he exclaimed angrily.

Tutton paused in sheer surprise. That an old gentleman with white hair, whom he could have killed with one blow of his fist, should dare to speak to him in this manner, quite took his breath away for a moment.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he ejaculated.

"Release the lad instantly."

"And s'posin' I don't?" grinned Tutton.

"Then I shall do my best to make you?"

Tutton gave a snort of derisive laughter.

"Why, you old donkey, I could knock you skyhigh with one lick!" he exclaimed. "My heye! Do you know who I am? I'm Tim Tutton, the pugilist!"

"Release that boy instantly!"

"Oh, shut your head!" said Tutton.

And he rained blows again upon the unfortunate Bob, as much upon the Head's account now as upon Bob's own. But he did not anticipate what was to follow. The Head strode towards him, his umbrella uplifted.

Thwack!

It came down across Tutton's shoulders with such force that the handle broke in two, and the bruiser gave a yell of pain.

He released Bob, and turned upon Dr. Locke with a murderous look.

"I'll out yer for that!" he hissed. And he sprang right at the Head of Greyfriars.

"Help!" yelled Bob Cherry, hoping that his chums were in hearing. And he ran recklessly between the bruiser and his intended victim.

Dr. Locke, who had been a boxer in his far-off youth, had put up his hands, though his defence would certainly have availed him little against the crushing attack of the pugilist. But Tutton did not reach him. He collided with Bob, and staggered and fell.

Tutton scrambled to his feet, and, with a heavy and brutal blow, sent Bob spinning out of his path. Then he advanced upon the Head again, his huge fists clenched, his eyes gleaming spitefully.

There was a swift pattering of footsteps in the dusty road. Round the corner came Mr. Lascelles at top speed, behind him Harry Wharton & Co.

The bruiser had just reached the Head

when Lascelles reached him. Tutton had sent in one blow, which the Head stopped. He could not have stopped the next; but Tutton had no time for another. A grasp like iron was laid upon his collar, and he was swung away from the Head, and sent spinning to the ground. He fell in a heap with a gasp, raising a cloud of dust where he fell.

Mr. Lascelles turned quickly to the Head. "He has not hurt you, sir?"

"N-no!" panted the Head. "Thanks to your timely arrival, Mr. Lascelles. But look out—he's going to attack you!"

Tutton had leaped up, his eyes bloodshot, his face red with fury.

"Larry Lynx!" he shouted. "Now for you!"

"Come on!" said Mr. Lascelles coolly.

He had thrown his coat off in a twinkling. In his shirt-sleeves, he stood up to the big bruiser, as Tutton rushed down upon him. Dr. Locke came forward anxiously.

"I shall aid you, Mr. Lascelles."

"Stand back, please!"

"But—but—"

"I can handle him. You will see."

There was no time for more. Tim Tutton was upon his old enemy, and they were fighting hammer and tongs. There were no rounds in that fight; little skill, on Tutton's side, at least. It was a struggle of strength, activity, grit, and endurance.

The Head looked on, spellbound. Harry Wharton & Co. stood round, gazing with all their eyes. It had come now—in the very presence of the Head. Their well-meant endeavours had been in vain. They could only hope that the rascal would receive a most terrific hiding; and there was little doubt about that.

But the fight was long and hard. Tutton was furious, and did not seem to care what punishment he received.

But from the start it was clear that Mr. Lascelles could take care of himself.

"Bless my soul!" the Head muttered more than once. "Bless my soul! Well hit—well taken, indeed! Splendid! Splendid!" For the moment the old gentleman was no longer the reverend Head of Greyfriars; he was an old boxer looking on a fight that would have thrilled him to the core in his younger days, and that thrilled him now. "Splendid! Bravo, Lascelles!"

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The Head's an old sport himself, and no mistake! Blessed if he isn't enjoying it!"

Crash!

It was over at last. Tim Tutton lay in the dust, so utterly knocked out that he could not rise—could only lay and groan and gasp. It was the severest licking he had ever had in all his career as a bruiser. But Mr. Lascelles had not escaped punishment. His nose was streaming red, his left eye was closed, his upper lip was cut, and the cut lip was no longer adorned with a moustache! The blow that had cut the lip had torn the moustache away, and the mathematics master of Greyfriars was revealed—with all possible doubt gone now—as Larry Lynx, the boxer!

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head, grasping Mr. Lascelles' hand and wringing it. "I had no idea—no idea at all that you were so terrible a pugilist, my dear fellow. How very fortunate for me. I could certainly not have handled that ruffian. But—but—" His eyes opened wide. "Your—your moustache, my dear sir, how—how very extraordinary! My dear Lascelles—"

"Lascelles!" gasped Tim Tutton, raising himself on his elbow, with a look of hatred at his vanquisher. "That man is Larry Lynx, the boxer."

"What! Nonsense! My dear Lascelles—"

"It is true, sir," said Mr. Lascelles quietly.

The Head stared at him.

"Come, my dear Lascelles, what do you mean? You—you are—"

"I had intended to tell you, sir," said Mr. Lascelles. "You will forgive me for not having done so already, I hope; but—but your offer of a position at Greyfriars meant so much to me that I could not risk it. I am the man known in the sporting ring as Larry Lynx."

"But—but explain!"

"There is not much to explain, Dr. Locke. After I left Oxford, I had to depend on myself, and there was nothing doing. I could teach mathematics, and I could box. For the latter gift I found plenty of openings, for the former none. To keep the wolf from the door, I took to boxing in a small way. I was successful. I began to make something of a name. I could have made much more; but when, through Mr. Quelch, I received your offer of a position at Greyfriars, I determined to give up boxing and go back to the life I desired."

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head. "But—but if you gave it up—"

"I had certain engagements already made which I could not break without causing loss to those who had engaged me, sir."

The last of these I fulfilled yesterday at Chilford. But—but I understand how you must regard the matter, and—and I place my resignation in your hands, sir."

There was a pause. The juniors looked on anxiously. Bob Cherry murmured in Wharton's ear that he hoped the Head would play up like an old sport.

Bob's hope was well grounded.

Dr. Locke extended his hand to the young man.

"Mr. Lascelles, this has surprised me very much, and, of course, it is impossible for a master at Greyfriars to pursue at the same time the avocation of a boxer. But you say you have fulfilled the last of your engagements?"

"Yesterday, sir."

"And—ahem!—it is finished for good?"

"If I remain at Greyfriars, certainly. Otherwise, I shall have to earn my bread as Larry Lynx once more."

"You will remain, I trust, Mr. Lascelles. After what you have just done, after you have saved me from a brutal assault by your boxing powers, I should be ungrateful indeed if I should find fault with the young man. He shook hands cordially with the young man. "We will say no more about it, Mr. Lascelles. You will remain at Greyfriars, and that chapter in your life is closed."

Mr. Lascelles pressed his hand with emotion.

"I thank you, sir," he said, in a low voice. "I am glad the truth is out now. It has weighed upon my mind. And that chapter in my life is now, as you say, closed for good. Larry Lynx will never be heard of again in the boxing-ring."

The disappearance of the promising young boxer, Larry Lynx, from the purlieus of the Ring excited a good deal of comment in sporting circles; but none of the sporting gentlemen interested in the young boxer ever ascertained the reason. Few knew what had become of Larry Lynx, and those few were Greyfriars juniors, with whom Mr. Lascelles was never less—but rather more—popular, because he had been both Master and Boxer!

THE END.

(Another splendid, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., next Tuesday, entitled: "The Greyfriars Cricketers!" by Frank Richards. There is sure to be a record rush for this number, so make certain of your copy by ordering it in advance!)

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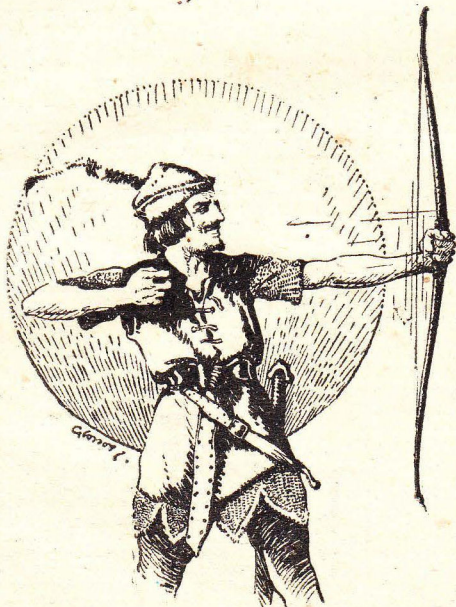
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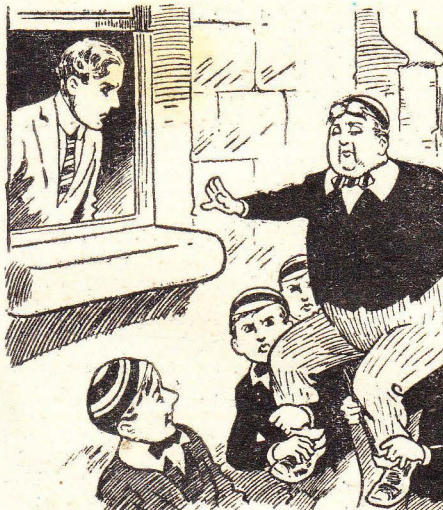
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CAPTAIN TUBBY MUFFIN!

When Tubby, the new captain of Rookwood, exerts his authority, there's trouble for somebody—and himself!

FUN AT ROOKWOOD!



Tubby Takes Command!

There's Fun, Thrill, and Drama in this Splendid Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., the famous Chums of Rookwood School.

BY
OWEN CONQUEST

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The New Captain of Rookwood!

"CAPTAIN TUBBY!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Hurrah!"
There was a roar of mingled laughter and cheering in the old quadrangle at Rookwood School.

Bulkeley of the Sixth looked out of his study window, with a puzzled expression on his face.

A peculiar scene met his gaze. Nearly all the Lower School of Rookwood seemed to be in the quad, where the dusk was falling. An extraordinary procession was passing within view of Bulkeley's study window.

First came Jimmy Silver & Co.—the Fistical Four of the Fourth Form. On their shoulders they supported a fat figure—that of Tubby Muffin—and it needed all four of them to keep the fat Tubby successfully in his elevated position.

Round them, and following them, came a swarm of the Fourth, the Third, and the Shell. Classics mingled with Moderns.

Bulkeley looked on at the scene in amazement.

Why Tubby Muffin should be chaired round the quadrangle was a mystery to the former captain of Rookwood.

Tubby was distinguished for nothing but his circumference—though that, certainly, was very distinguished indeed.

Tubby's fat face was quite beatific in expression. He was enjoying himself, as he was impressed with a due sense of his own importance.

Everybody else seemed to take the matter more or less as a joke; but to Tubby Muffin it was extremely serious.

Teddy Grace was beating a tin can with a cricket-stump, by way of musical accompaniment, and Mornington added to the musical honours with a pair of saucepan lids, which served as cymbals.

"Crash, crash! Bang! Jingle!"
"Hurrah!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Upon my word!" murmured Bulkeley, staring from his window. "What on earth can it mean? They'd better stop that row!"

Bulkeley was about to throw open his window and call to the "processing" juniors, but he paused. He remembered that he was no longer captain of Rookwood—and no longer even a prefect. He possessed no more authority now than any other senior in the school.

So he stood looking out in silence. His study door opened, and Neville of the Sixth came in. There was a very peculiar expression on Neville's face, as Bulkeley noted, looking round at him.

"What's that row about, Neville?" asked Bulkeley, with a nod towards the shouting procession in the quad.

"The election's over," answered Neville.
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"All the the seniors stayed away from Hall, as we agreed; but I've just learned the result from Smythe of the Shell."

"Is Carthew elected?"

"No."

"Well, I'm glad of that," said Bulkeley. "Carthew isn't the kind of fellow to make a captain of Rookwood. But I understood that the election would be a walk-over for him, as no other senior would put up. What has happened?"

Neville pointed to the window. "That's happened," he answered. "The juniors put up a candidate—Tubby Muffin of the Fourth!"

Bulkeley started. "What utter nonsense!" he exclaimed.

"Nonsense or not, they did it, and Muffin of the Fourth has been elected captain of Rookwood—by an overwhelming majority, too," said Neville, with a grimace. "The seniors boycotted the election, and the juniors weren't likely to vote for a bully like Carthew. A few did, I think, but they didn't count. Muffin of the Fourth is captain of the school."

"My hat!"

Bulkeley turned to the window again, and stared out at the uproarious procession. The juniors were celebrating their victory, such as it was. They were making a great deal of noise—rejoicing in unaccustomed freedom, in fact. For since Bulkeley's dismissal by the Head had been followed by a "strike" of the prefects, in protest, the Lower School were no longer in dread of those great Panjandrums of the Sixth.

It was as in the old days, when there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

"This is simply absurd!" exclaimed Bulkeley at last. "It's turning the election, and the captaincy itself, into ridicule!"

Neville smiled.

"I fancy that's the idea," he answered. "In fact, I'm sure of it. Some of the Fourth—Jimmy Silver and his friends—are at the bottom of it. They think the Head will come round, and reinstate you, old chap, rather than have that fat little duffer as captain of the school."

Bulkeley frowned thoughtfully. "It's ridiculous!" he said.

He opened the window as the procession came along by the windows of the Sixth, and called out to Jimmy Silver.

"Silver!"

"Halt!" sang out Jimmy.

"Hurrah!"

"Hullo, Bulkeley!"

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Bulkeley. "What are you playing the fool like this for?"

"Oh!"

Tubby Muffin blinked at Bulkeley. On the

shoulders of the Fistical Four, he was nearly on a level with the Sixth-Former at the study window. Tubby raised a podgy forefinger, and wagged it reprovingly at George Bulkeley's frowning face.

"Shut up!" he said.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Shut up!" commanded Tubby loftily.

"You're nobody!"

"Hurrah!"

"Don't cheek Bulkeley, you fat duffer!" growled Jimmy Silver.

But Tubby did not heed.

He was taking himself very seriously as captain of the school—very seriously indeed—and he intended that his importance should be recognised and acknowledged. He brooked no rivals, and he did not intend to have another "Richmond in the field," so to speak.

"You were captain of Rookwood, Bulkeley," he said, more loftily than ever. "Now I'm captain! You've got to obey my orders. We obeyed your orders, didn't we, when you were captain? I'm going to have some discipline in this school, I can tell you!"

There was a roar of laughter from the procession. Tubby, in his new state of dignity, was entertaining.

"Go it, Tubby!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want no cheek from you, or any of the Sixth," went on Tubby. "The Sixth don't amount to much in this school now. I'm going to be fair all round, though. I sha'n't cane you, Bulkeley—"

"Wha-a-t!"

"Unless you ask for it. But if there's any cheek from you, I shall give you the ashplant. Bear that in mind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bravo, Tubby!"

"So put that in your pipe and smoke it, Bulkeley!" said Tubby Muffin. "You're nobody! You're less than nobody! And if you— Yarooooooh!"

Tubby Muffin broke off, with a loud yell, as the Fistical Four let him down with a run. The new captain of Rookwood disappeared all of a sudden from his elevated position.

Bump!

"Yooooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Tubby the Great!

TUBBY MUFFIN sat on the cold, unsympathetic quadrangle and roared. The procession roared, too, with laughter. But Tubby Muffin was not laughing. He roared with anguish. "Varooh! You silly asses! Wharrrer you bumping me for? Don't you know how to treat a captain of the school? Ow, ow, ow!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. glared down at him.

"If you cheek Bukkeley," said Jimmy Silver, in measured tones, "we'll bump you till you burst!"
 "You fat chump!" said Arthur Edward Lovell. "If you cheek Bukkeley—"
 "We'll scalp you!" said Raby.
 "We'll boil you in oil!" said Newcome impressively.

Tubby Muffin blinked up at the Fistical Four in wrath and dismay. They had been his firmest supporters at the election. But this, certainly, was not the support a captain of Rookwood had a right to expect.

It began to dawn upon Reginald Muffin that his captainship was not being taken with proper seriousness.

"Look here," he howled, in great wrath, "you cheeky rotters, who's captain of Rookwood, I'd like to know?"

"Bukkeley is—or he's going to be," answered Jimmy Silver. "You're a silly stopgap, till the Head comes round. See?"

Tubby scrambled to his feet.
 "You cheeky ass!" he roared. "I'll show you whether I'm captain of Rookwood or not, Bukkeley!"

Bukkeley stared at him from the window.
 "Throw me out your ashplant!" commanded Tubby Muffin.

"What?"
 "Your ashplant—sharp!"

"Your little idiot!" was Bukkeley's reply.
 "Buck up—I'm going to cane Silver!"

"Cane me!" yelled Jimmy Silver.
 "Yes, rather! Captain of the school canes when he chooses, doesn't he?" demanded Tubby.

There was a yell of laughter. It was pretty certain that the new captain of Rookwood would not be allowed to exercise his new authority to that extent. There was much disillusionment in store for Reginald Muffin.

Jimmy Silver chuckled.
 "Never mind the ashplant," he said. "Come on, you fellows; we haven't talked to Carthew yet."

"Up with Tubby!"
 Up went Reginald Muffin again to the shoulders of the Fistical Four. He was borne along to the window of Carthew's study.

Mark Carthew of the Sixth was in his study, with a black brow and a heart full of rancour. At the last moment, unexpectedly, his ambition had been foiled; the election he had counted on as a walk-over had turned into an overwhelming defeat for him, and to add to the bitterness of his humiliation, he had been defeated by so absurd a rival as Muffin of the Fourth.

It was a well-deserved punishment. He had deserted the cause of Bukkeley, and abandoned the rest of the prefects in their strike—for this! He had earned the contempt due to a "blackleg," in order to see the fat and egregious Tubby elected captain of the school over his head.

And the Rookwood electors evidently meant to "rub it in." They banged under Carthew's window, and there was a roar.

"Wake up, Carthew!"
 "Carthew! Carthew!"
 "Yah!"
 "Hürrah!"

The window did not open, but the prefect's face could be seen within, pale with anger and chagrin.

"Make him come out!" ordered Tubby Muffin. "Bust the window if he won't open it!"

"He's a prefect, you know," murmured Jones minor.

"Captain of the school has authority over all prefects," answered Tubby. "Carthew is under my orders, isn't he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "My hat! I suppose he is," said Arthur Edward Lovell. "Captain of the school is always head prefect. Tubby is a prefect in virtue of his position as captain. That's Rookwood law."

"Jolly good law, too!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.

"Carthew," shouted Tubby Muffin truculently, "open that window at once! I order you!"

The window flew open, though probably not in obedience to Tubby Muffin's order. Mark Carthew's furious face looked out.

"You young scoundrels—!" he began.
 "Silence!" commanded Tubby.
 "The prefect did not heed."

"Stop this at once!" he exclaimed. "Go indoors immediately. You will take five hundred lines all round!"

"Yah!"
 "Blackleg!"
 "That's it!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin. "Give it him! You're a bully, Carthew! You're a cad! I'm going to keep you in order!"

"Bravo, Tubby!"
 Carthew's face was a picture.
 "Muffin," he gasped, "come to my study at once! I'll give you the-ticking of your life!"

Tubby Muffin indulged in a scornful sneer.
 "I don't think!" he retorted. "It's you that's going to have the licking, Carthew. I'm down on bullies. Remember that I'm your superior now, now I'm captain of the school!"

"You fat fool!" roared Carthew.
 "You forget yourself," said Tubby, with dignity. "That isn't the way to speak to the captain of Rookwood, Carthew."

"Come to my study!" roared Carthew, brandishing a cane at the fat Classical, who was unfortunately beyond his reach.

"Rats! You come to my study!" answered Tubby. "In fact, I order you to. Come to my study in half an hour, Carthew. Don't fail!"

"You—you—you—" spluttered Carthew.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on," said Raby. "Tubby's rather a weight. Good-bye, Carthew—and don't forget to come up to the Fourth Form passage to be caned!"

And the procession marched on, leaving Carthew gesticulating at his window in a state of fury that was quite Humnish.

The procession "processed" to the School House doorway, where it came to a halt at last. The celebration was over, and Tubby's weight was telling on the Fistical Four, sturdy as they were.

Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, looked out as Tubby Muffin was set down on the steps.

"Boys," he exclaimed, "this—this disturbance—you must really—"

"Only celebrating the election, sir," said Jimmy Silver. "There's always a bit of noise on election nights, you know, sir."

"Yes, yes; but—but—" Mr. Bootles blinked at Tubby Muffin over his glasses. "Quite so; but—but—"

"It's all right, sir," said Tubby Muffin cheerfully. "I can keep the juniors in order, Mr. Bootles."

"What—what?"
 "Go to your studies!" said Tubby, with a wave of his fat hand. "Order, please! Leave them to me, Mr. Bootles!"

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Bootles. "Captain Tubby Muffin was a little too much for him. He beat a retreat, and the crowd of juniors dispersed in a more or less orderly manner."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Cancelled!

"PREPOSTEROUS!"
 Thus Dr. Chisholm.

The Head of Rookwood was frowning, evidently very much annoyed. Mild little Mr. Bootles blinked at him, and said nothing.

"Preposterous!" repeated the Head.
 He stared at Mr. Bootles almost aggressively, as if daring him to deny that it was preposterous. But Mr. Bootles didn't! He knew better than to argue with the somewhat autocratic old gentleman.

He had reported the result of the captain's election to the Head, and he could not help wondering how Dr. Chisholm would take it. It was pretty clear that the Head was not taking it in good part.

"Preposterous!" said the Head for the third time, as the Fourth Form master did not speak. "Unheard of! A junior captain of Rookwood—absurd! Such a thing has never been heard of!"

"Certainly not—before now!" assented Mr. Bootles. "There is, however, no rule laid down upon the subject, I believe."

"Such a rule was not necessary; it is a matter of common-sense," said the Head tartly. "Only a Sixth Form prefect can be captain of the school. This election is an absurdity."

Mr. Bootles nodded assent to that. He was quite of the Head's opinion there, but he did not quite see what was to be done. The election was "au fait accompli," and it was rather too late to make new rules on the subject.

"I fully understood that Carthew would be elected," continued the Head. "He has my approval. He is the only one of the prefects who had not set himself in opposition to my authority. He has a sense of duty."

Mr. Bootles coughed.
 "He does not seem popular in the school, sir," he murmured.

"A sense of duty does not always make a prefect popular, Mr. Bootles. Carthew, at least, knows what is due to his headmaster. This election is an absurdity, and the result must be cancelled. I shall take steps to that end immediately. Pray request Carthew to come to my study, Mr. Bootles."

"Certainly, sir!"
 Mr. Bootles withdrew, perhaps glad to leave the presence of the angry old gentleman.

Dr. Chisholm was pacing his study with a knitted brow when Carthew of the Sixth tapped discreetly at the door, and entered.

The Head's brow cleared a little as he glanced at the prefect—the only prefect, at present, that Rookwood School could boast.

"This is an extraordinary occurrence, Carthew," said the Head.

"I agree with you, sir," said Carthew, in the meek, ingratiating tone he always adopted towards the Head. "I was very desirous, sir, of carrying out your wishes, I did my best—"

"I am sure of that, Carthew. You have my complete confidence. I shall not forget that you returned to your duty at once, when the other prefects took up their present inexcusable attitude."

"Thank you, sir!" said Carthew meekly.
 He was well aware that his conduct was looked upon in a very different light by the rest of Rookwood. Most of the Rookwood fellows knew exactly how much "duty" had been Carthew's motive in deserting the prefects. But it was the Head whom Carthew desired to propitiate.

"This election will be cancelled!" said Dr. Chisholm. "I shall not dream for one moment of allowing such a result to stand."

"I suppose so, sir."
 "A new election will be ordered, and you will stand again, Carthew."

"Certainly, sir!"
 "The result will, no doubt, be different; if not, I shall take still more drastic steps!" said the Head. "I assure you of my continued support as a reward for your faithfulness to duty."

"You are very kind, sir."
 "I have written this notice," added the Head. "Kindly post it on the board for me, Carthew."

"Certainly."
 The prefect left the study with the paper in his hand. He read it in the corridor, and smiled.

A few minutes later it was pinned on the notice-board for all Rookwood to read and comment upon.

A numerous crowd gathered before the board. In the crowd was the new captain of Rookwood, and he snorted with great indignation over the Head's paper.

"Rot!" said Tubby Muffin emphatically. "Check! That's what it is—check!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've a jolly good mind to go to the Head and tell him so!"
 "Do!" chuckled Smythe of the Shell. "We'll come and carry you away afterwards—what's left of you."

Tubby Muffin snorted again, but he decided not to go to the Head. He was captain of Rookwood, certainly; but the Head was rather too terrible an old gentleman for Tubby Muffin to face at close quarters. Baring the lion in his den was not in Reginald Muffin's line.

There was much comment on the Head's notice, which had been rather expected by the juniors. It was pretty certain, anyway, that the Head would not have allowed the election to stand without interference.

The notice stated briefly that the late election was cancelled, and that a new election would be held on Monday to fill the vacant post of captain of the school.

"Isn't a vacant post at all, you know," said Tubby Muffin, in a greatly aggrieved tone. "The Head's right off the mark."

"Can the Head cancel an election?" inquired Putty of the Fourth. "Isn't he getting a bit over the limit?"

Jimmy Silver rubbed his nose thoughtfully.
 "Blessed if I know!" he answered. "I suppose the headmaster has power to cancel an election. But it comes to the same thing."

THE POPULAR.—No. 221.

We have the power to elect the same candidate over again, if we choose."
 "And we shall jolly well choose!" said Conroy.
 "Yes, rather!"
 "Tubby's the man!" grinned Lovell.
 "Kuffin for our money!"
 "Hear, hear!"
 Tubby Muffin beamed.
 "That's right!" he exclaimed. "You fellows stand by me, and I'll stand by you. The Head can't cancel an election a second time. We won't take any notice of him if he does!"
 "Ha, ha!"
 "And I'll tell you what," continued Tubby. "After Monday's election even the Head can't make out that I'm not the captain of the school. And the first thing I'll do will be to cane Carthew before all the chaps."
 "Bravo!"
 "We'll back you up, Tubby!"
 "Of course, I shall expect to be backed up!" said Muffin, with dignity. "Loyal support is what I want!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 There was no doubt that Reginald Muffin would get plenty of loyal support. As Jimmy Silver put it, Rookwood would keep on giving the Head Tubby Muffin till the Head gave them Bulkeley. And Jimmy added that they could keep up that game quite as long as the Head could.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tubby Takes Command!

MONDAY was a day of some excitement at Rookwood School.
 Rookwood was still without prefects—with the exception of Mark Carthew, who was careful not to over-exercise his solitary authority. Carthew's aim was to conciliate the fellows as much as possible till the election was over. He restrained his bullying propensities, and he was remarkably civil even to fags in the Second Form.
 Carthew hoped to catch votes—and he hoped, too, that the Head's displeasure would prevent a ridiculous candidate like Muffin from being put forward again.
 But it killed not, as a novelist would say. Carthew was too well known for his "soft saviour" to have any effect on the fags; and, besides, the "lark" of electing the egregious Tubby appealed to their sense of humour. And the fact that they were, in a perfectly constitutional way, "dishing the Head" appealed still more to the juniors.
 The "strike" of the prefects still continued, and, though the Head gave no sign, the other masters were growing restive.
 A great deal more work fell upon them in consequence of the prefects' strike. A prefect was not merely an ornament, by any means. They had their uses and their duties—and now their duties fell on the masters.
 Mr. Bootles had to see lights out for his Form, and to attend to many other matters that had usually been taken off his hands by a prefect. The supervision of the games, too, was a rather serious matter, and certainly little Mr. Bootles was not the man to take the Fourth Form in charge at cricket practice.
 And the masters could not be everywhere at once. Sliding down the banisters, shrill whistling in the passages, "rows" in the studies and the Common-room, became frequent and painful and fleg.
 Probably all the staff would have been very glad if the Head had decided to close the matter by reinstating Bulkeley, and thus conciliating his supporters. But the Head did not waver. The fact that the whole school was against his decision only rendered him the more determined; and he was, to do him justice, far from suspecting that his firmness partook of the nature of obstinacy.
 He would have been surprised, as well as shocked, if he had known that the Rookwooders regarded him not so much as a firm man as a mulish one.
 After lessons on Monday the new election took place in Big Hall.
 Rookwood came to it in a swarm.
 The seniors stood out of the proceedings, as before. The Sixth were solid behind Bulkeley, and the Fifth followed the Sixth. In fact, the seniors regarded the proceedings not only with disdain, but with a certain grim satisfaction. Their captain was rejected by the Head—and the Head could

make the best of Tubby Muffin—and they charitably hoped that he would like it!
 Carthew's hopes of a majority had been faint, and they were soon dissipated. The election was a still more overwhelming triumph for Reginald Muffin of the Fourth. His majority was well over ten to one, and could have been larger if more votes had been wanted.
 Loud laughter and cheers greeted the announcement of the result.
 Tubby Muffin beamed on his majority.
 He had received the loyal support he desired, and he was once more captain of Rookwood, in spite of the cancellation of the first election.
 Tubby seemed two or three inches taller as he rolled out of Hall, in the midst of cheering.
 He grinned at Carthew, who was striding away with a savage brow.
 "Beaten you again, old top!" he remarked cheerily.
 Carthew gave him a furious look.
 "Don't scowl at me," continued Tubby.
 "None of your cheek, Carthew! For two pins, I'd— Yoop!"
 Tubby Muffin went spinning as the enraged prefect smote him, and he rolled along the floor with a loud yell.
 "Carthew strode away."
 "Yow-ow-ow-ow!" roared Tubby Muffin, sitting up dazedly. "Yow-ow! I'll thrash you! I'll cane you! Yoop! Gimme a hand up, somebody! Wharrer you all cackling at? Ow!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 Putty of the Fourth helped Tubby Muffin to his feet, and the fat Classical clung to him, gasping.
 "Where's that rotter?" he panted.
 "Mizzled!" answered Jimmy Silver, laughing.
 Tubby raised a fat hand commandingly.
 "Silver!"
 "Ha, ha! Yes, my lord!"
 "Go and tell Carthew to come to my study at once!" ordered Tubby Muffin. "I'm going to put the stopper on his cheek."
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "And bring me a cane!" added Tubby.
 "You can get Bootles' cane from the Form-room. I authorise you to do so."
 "You authorise— Oh, my hat!"
 "Do as I tell you, Silver! Tell Carthew I expect him in my study in five minutes. We'll see who's captain of this school, I can tell you."
 And Tubby Muffin gasped away to his study, leaving the juniors yelling.
 "All the same, Tubby's within his rights," said Mornington. "We won't let him cheek Bulkeley; but Carthew's a bully, and he's fair game!"
 "Yes, rather!"
 "I'll give him our giddy captain's message, anyway!" chuckled Jimmy Silver.
 "Go it!"
 Captain Tubby Muffin's authority depended on what support he might get; and the juniors were quite prepared to support him against the unpopular bully of the Sixth. Calling Carthew of the Sixth up for judgment seemed an excellent idea to the Fourth.
 Jimmy Silver followed Carthew at once to his study. He found the Sixth-Former with a black brow. Carthew fixed a savage look on him.
 "Does the Head—" he began. Carthew was expecting a summons to the Head.
 "I haven't come from the Head, old bean," answered Jimmy Silver. "I've an order for you from the captain of the school."
 "What!" roared Carthew.
 "Tubby Muffin—"
 "Oh, don't be a fool!"
 "Not at all," answered Jimmy Silver blandly. "I leave that to you, Carthew; it's your stunt. Tubby Muffin requires you in his study at once!"
 "You—you—"
 "You're to go immediately." Carthew clutched up a cane.
 "Come here, Silver!" he rapped out.
 "No jolly fear!" answered the captain of the Fourth, backing out of the study.
 "I order you—as a prefect—"
 "My dear man, I'm acting under orders of the captain of Rookwood," answered Jimmy coolly. "I suppose you know the captain of the school has authority over prefects?"
 Carthew's reply was a rush, with the cane brandishing in the air. Jimmy Silver scudded down the passage.

"Come back!" roared Carthew, from his doorway.
 "Bow-wow!"
 And Jimmy Silver went cheerily up the staircase to report to the captain of Rookwood. He found Tubby Muffin in his study, with a good many other fellows—all grinning, with the exception of Tubby. The fat Classical had Mr. Bootles' cane in his hand, Lovell having obligingly fetched it from the Form-room.
 "Is he coming?" demanded Muffin, as Jimmy Silver looked in.
 Jimmy shook his head.
 "He's refused, Tubby!"
 "Refused!" thundered Muffin. "Refused to obey the captain of the school?"
 "Ha, ha! Yes."
 "Don't cackle, Jimmy Silver! It's disrespectful!"
 "Oh!"
 "So he's refused to come, has he?" exclaimed Tubby, evidently greatly incensed. "He won't obey the captain of the school? I'll show him! Carthew is going to be canded—very severely canded!"
 "How are you going to do it?" asked Erroll, with a smile.
 "Go and fetch him, Tubby," suggested Mornington. "As the mountain won't come to Mahomet, you know, Mahomet will have to go to the mountain."
 Tubby Muffin shook his head.
 Seriously as he was taking the new powers and authority as captain of the school, he had no desire to tackle Carthew of the Sixth in his study—by himself. Carthew was rather too hefty for that. Besides, as commander-in-chief, Tubby felt that there was no necessity for him to go into action, as it were. It was the duty of his loyal followers—priates, so to speak—to go into action, while he directed operations from headquarters.
 "Silver, Lovell, Raby—" he rapped out.
 "Adsum!" grinned the juniors.
 "Newcome, Mornington, Erroll—"
 "Here!"
 "Conroy, Pons, Van Ryn—" "
 "Here we are, mighty chief!" grinned the Colonial Co. in the doorway.
 Tubby raised a fat hand commandingly.
 "Fetch Carthew of the Sixth here," he said.
 "Oh!"
 "I authorise you to use force!" said Tubby grandly. "As captain of the school, I authorise you, and will see you through. If Carthew won't come, carry him."
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "Get a move on!" rapped out Tubby.
 "But—" began Erroll.
 "Silence!"
 "Wha-a-a!"
 "Obey orders, and no back-chat, please!" said Tubby, frowning. "Who's captain of the school, I'd like to know? Fetch Carthew here! I command you! Go!"
 And Jimmy Silver & Co.—after a grinning glance at one another—went.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Captain's Orders!

TUBBY MUFFIN sat down again with lofty content.
 His followers were obeying orders, which—to Tubby's fat mind—was exactly as it should be. True, they were obeying with their tongues in their cheeks, but that did not matter—Tubby wasn't aware of that.
 Jimmy Silver & Co. intended to suit themselves exactly how far they obeyed the orders of the new captain of Rookwood. But when it suited them to do so their obedience was prompt. It suited them in this case. Handling the bully of the Sixth was no trouble—it was a pleasure—and the thought of the prefect being canded by Tubby of the Fourth made them chuckle with glee. And, as captain of the school, Tubby was acting within his rights; and certainly Jimmy Silver & Co. were acting within their rights in obeying him—if they chose!
 The juniors realised that a Fourth Form captain had his uses; it enabled them to deal with the Sixth in a hitherto undreamt-of manner.
 True, if the other seniors interfered, there was no doubt that Tubby's followers would be driven in rout from the Sixth Form passage. But they were not likely to interfere on behalf of the "blackleg" who had

sold them. If they did not, Cardew hadn't much chance against nine sturdy juniors.

The cheery nine arrived in the Sixth Form passage, and Jimmy Silver hurried Carthew's door open. There was a whiff of tobacco-smoke in the study. Mark Carthew was consoling himself with a cigarette.

He threw it hastily into the grate as his door flew open, and started to his feet, catching up an ashplant.

"Carthew, you're wanted!" shouted Lovell. "Clear out of my study!" exclaimed the prefect angrily.

"You're wanted!"
"Captain's orders!"
"This way, Carthew!"

Carthew came that way—with a rush. Lovell yelled as he caught the ashplant with his shoulder, and Conroy roared as he captured the next "lick." But the bully of the Sixth had no time for more.

Jimmy Silver was gripping him, and Raby and Newcome got hold, and Pons and Van Ryn piled in, and Carthew was borne backwards. He went down on his carpet with a crash, the juniors sprawling over him.

"Hands off!" shrieked Carthew.

"Pile in!" yelled Jimmy Silver.
"Down him!" roared Lovell.
"Hurrah! Down him!"

Like a wave the invaders flowed over the unhappy bully of the Sixth. Carthew struggled desperately, but he could not throw them off. The odds were much too great even for the big Sixth-Former.

His arms and legs were captured, and Morny took a good grip on his back hair, while Pons and Van Ryn captured an ear each.

Carthew, still wriggling, was a prisoner; he could not do much more than wriggle with so many hands on him.

"Bring him along!" shouted Raby.

Carthew, gurgling and wriggling spasmodically, was brought up to the Fourth Form passage, and to the doorway of No. 2, where the new captain of Rookwood sat in state.

Jimmy Silver & Co. whirled him into the study and set him upon his feet, dishevelled and breathless.

"Here he is, Muffin!"

"We've brought the boarder!"

Carthew stood panting for breath, with a crimson face, and in a state of fury that was beyond words.

Tubby Muffin rose to his feet, with a lofty look, and picked up the cane.

"Carthew!" he rapped out.

"Groooh!"

"You laid hands on me, the captain of Rookwood! I'm going to cane you!"

"Grooggh!"

"I'm going to maintain discipline in this school, or know the reason why!" said Muffin. "Hold out your hand, Carthew!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared Tubby. "How dare you fags laugh!"

"Fags!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver. "Oh, my hat!"

"Draw it mild, fatty!"

"Do you want to be caned, too, Jones minor? You'd better be careful. Now, Carthew, hold out your hand! Sharp's the word!"

"Hold out your hand, Carthew!" roared the juniors, in great merriment.

Carthew did not hold out his hand. Having recovered his breath, he made a rush at Tubby Muffin. The new captain of Rookwood roared as the bully of the Sixth seized him.

"Yaroooh! Help! Buck up!"

The cane was snatched from Tubby's fat hand, and Carthew, grasping the fat Classical by the collar, laid it on Tubby.

Whack, whack, whack!

It was a most disrespectful way to treat the captain of the school. It was very painful, too, as Tubby's fendish yells testified. Carthew laid the cane on as if he thought he was beating a carpet.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yoop! Help! Rescue! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whack, whack!

and Tubby's frantic yells rang through the study and to the end of the passage. In those awful moments the captain of Rookwood probably repented of having sent for Carthew.

But Jimmy Silver came to the rescue, and the other fellows followed his lead. Carthew was seized and dragged off, some of the juniors getting lashes of the cane in the process.

But the bully of the Sixth was downed again, in spite of his furious resistance. And the juniors did not let him go after that. He was rather too dangerous to be let loose.

Carthew disappeared under seven or eight juniors on the floor, who pinned him down by sheer weight. His nose was grinding into the carpet, as Putty of the Fourth sat on the back of his head. A wild and inarticulate gurgling came from the unhappy senior.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Tubby Muffin. "I'm hurt! You rotters, why didn't you dragginoff? Yow-ow-ow-ow! Yaroooh! I'll cane the lot of you! Oh crumbs! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"All serene now, Tubby—"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Aren't you going to cane Carthew?" chuckled Lovell.

"Ow! Oh, yes, rather! Gimme the cane!"

The cane was handed to the fat junior, and he gripped it, with a vengeful gleam in his eyes. It was Tubby's turn now, and Carthew was evidently going to get it hot and strong. Certainly he had asked for it by the way he had treated the captain of the school.

"Hold him!" exclaimed Tubby. "Face down—that's it! Pin him, you know! Mind you don't let the beast gerrup! That's important!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, then! Count five hundred, Jimmy Silver!"

"Five hundred! Oh crumbs!"

"No; a thousand!" said the vengeful

Tubby. "I'm going to give him a thousand! Keep clear!"

Whack!

Part of Carthew was left clear for the licking, the juniors standing or sitting on the rest of him to keep him pinned to the carpet. The cane came down with all the strength of Tubby's podgy arm. It rang like a pistol-shot, and it was answered by a fearful yell from the Sixth-Former.

Whack, whack, whack!

Wild yells from Carthew answered every whack. Tubby was laying it on, not wisely but too well. The prefect struggled furiously, but quite in vain; he was too well held. Whack, whack, whack!

"How many's that, Jimmy?" gasped Tubby, pausing for breath.

"About a dozen!" gasped Jimmy. "I think that will do, Tubby!"

"Shut up!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Don't argue with me!"

"Oh!" stuttered Jimmy.

"I'm captain of Rookwood! I'm going to give him a thousand, and you're to count. Shut up!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Tubby Muffin was laying it on again. He was smarting from the cane himself, and so long as he smarted he was not likely to think that Carthew of the Sixth had had enough. It was fortunate for the hapless prefect that Tubby Muffin was not an athlete.

There was a step in the passage, and Smythe of the Shell came through the laughing crowd of juniors.

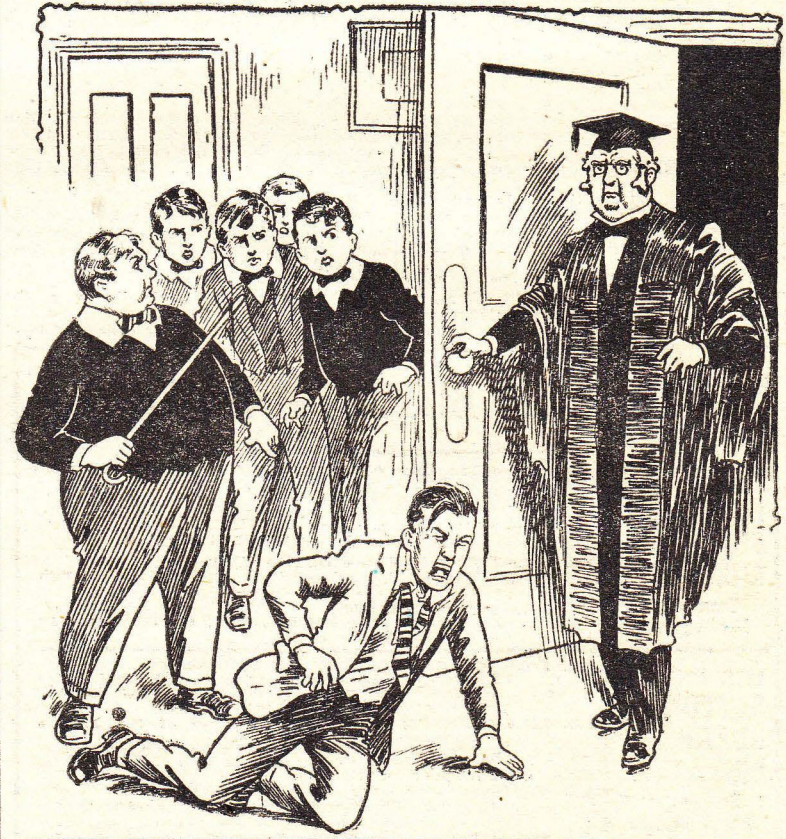
"You've got Carthew here?" he asked.

"Oh, my only aunt!"

Adolphus Smythe stared at the scene in amazement, as Tubby Muffin laid on the cane again.

"You—you—you're whacking a prefect!" he gasped.

"Captain of the school can whack anybody



THE HEAD INTERRUPTS! "Cave! The Head's coming!" gasped Flynn. The juniors released Carthew as Dr. Chisholm's step was heard in the passage, outside. The prefect sat up, howling with pain, as the Head appeared in the doorway. Dr. Chisholm gazed at the scene speechlessly. (See Chapter 6.)

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The High Hand.

JIMMY SILVER & CO., for a moment or two, were laughing too much to go to the aid of the hapless captain of Rookwood. In those few moments Carthew put in a good many lashes with the cane,

he likes, can't he?" retorted Tubby Muffin independently. "If I have any cheek from you, Smythe, I'll whack you!"

"Will you, by gad!" said Adolphus.

"Yes, I will!" roared Tubby truculently, "I'm going to have discipline in this school, I can tell you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, gad!" said Adolphus. "That fat idiot is too funny to live! Look here, you kids, the Head's sent me for Carthew. He's in Carthew's study now, waitin' for him. He looks waxy."

"Phew!"

"Better let him clear!" said Mornington.

"Rot!" exclaimed Tubby. "I've only given him about twenty! You're not counting, Jimmy Silver! You'd better be careful. If you don't want some of the same, I'm going to give him a thousand!"

"But the Head—" said Lovell.

"Let the Head wait!"

"Good old Tubby!" grinned Mornington. "Isn't he swelling? Mind you don't bust, like the giddy frog in the fable, fatty!"

"Shut up!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-yoop! Help!" came in frantic tones from Carthew. "You young villains! Help! Yoooop! Help!"

"The Head will hear this!" said Smythe, with a scared look.

Tubby Muffin snorted.

"Let him hear!" he answered. "The Head's no right to interfere with the captain of the school executing his duty."

Flynn put an excited face into the study doorway.

"Cave! The Head's coming!" he gasped.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Hold him!" shouted Tubby Muffin, as the juniors crowded off Carthew. "Keep him pinned! I haven't finished yet. He's got to have a thousand—"

"You fat idiot! The Head—"

"Bother the Head!"

"Look here—"

"Hold Carthew, I tell you!" roared Tubby Muffin. "Do you hear? Aren't I captain? I order you!"

His new dignity had evidently got into Tubby Muffin's head with an intoxicating effect. But, captain as he was, his order was not obeyed. The juniors released Carthew as Dr. Chisholm's step and the rustle of his gown were heard in the passage outside.

The prefect sat up dazedly, howling with pain, as the Head appeared in the doorway—majestic.

Dr. Chisholm gazed at the scene speechlessly.

The juniors outside the study had fled, but there were nine or ten inside the room, and they were cornered. They showed a remarkably unanimous desire to avoid meeting the Head's eyes.

All, excepting Tubby Muffin. That egregious youth was quite "beyond himself," so to speak; "swank" had mounted to his head like new wine. He stood, cane in hand,

and confronted the Head, the juniors spell-bound at his audacity. But Tubby was not aware that he was being audacious. He was acting with proper dignity as captain of the school, that was all!

"What—what—" The Head found his voice at last. "What does this scene of ruffianism mean?"

"Come in, sir!" said Tubby Muffin cheerily.

"What?"

"You're welcome to witness Carthew's punishment, sir," said Muffin, with dignity.

"I have been compelled to give Carthew of the Sixth a rather severe licking, sir."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"Insubordination, sir," explained Tubby, as the Head blinked at him, speechless again.

"Carthew was wanting in proper respect to the captain of the school. He actually laid hands on me—me, sir, the captain of Rookwood. I've had to give him a rather severe warning."

"Yow-ow-ow!" came from Carthew, in tones of deep anguish.

"Muffin!" thundered the Head.

"Yes, sir?"

"You—you have dared to assault a prefect—"

"Not at all, sir! I've caned him."

"Caned him—caned a prefect—you, a junior in the Fourth Form!"

"Captain of Rookwood, sir," said Tubby Muffin respectfully but firmly. "The captain of the school has authority over the prefects, sir."

"Boy!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Muffin, I—I think you must be out of your senses. Give me that cane!"

"Are you going to cane Carthew, sir?"

"No!" thundered the Head. "I am going to cane you, Muffin."

Tubby jumped.

"C-c-cane me!" he stammered.

"Yes, decidedly. Hold out your hand!"

Tubby Muffin blinked at him.

"B-b-but, sir," he stammered, "the—the captain of the school can't be caned, sir! It's—it's against all the rules! Nobody ever heard of the captain of Rookwood being caned! Oh, no, sir!"

"You utterly absurd boy—"

"Excuse me, sir, that isn't the way to speak to the captain of the school."

"What?"

"It's liable to cause insubordination among the fags, sir," said Tubby Muffin. "Captain of the school expects to be supported by the Head, sir. It's always been the rule."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered the Head. "How dare you laugh at the absurdities of this ridiculous boy! Muffin, give me that cane at once, and hold out your hand!"

"But, I—I say, sir—"

Tubby Muffin broke off in dismay, as the Head jerked the cane from his hand and took him by the collar. The cane rang upon

Tubby's plump person, and Tubby's yell resounded far and wide.

Carthew staggered to his feet, and looked on, gasping. Tubby Muffin wriggled in anguish under the infliction.

He had woke up, as it were, and descended with a rush from his exalted position as captain of the school, and he was once more a fag of the Fourth, yelling under an unusually severe licking.

It was a painful awakening for the new captain of Rookwood!

"Yow-ow-ow! Yow-wow-ow!" howled the hapless captain of the school. "Oh! Ah! Ow! Stoppit! Yoop! Yah! Phew! Oh crumbs!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked on in stony silence. They had rescued Tubby from Carthew's grasp, but they could not rescue him from the Head. The captain of Rookwood had to take care of himself when he came into conflict with the headmaster, and he did not seem quite equal to the task.

"There!" exclaimed the Head. "Now, Muffin, I trust that will be a warning to you, you utterly absurd boy!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Carthew, kindly come with me."

"Yes, sir," gasped Carthew.

He was wriggling painfully as he followed the Head from the study. He had been well licked before the Head arrived, and that was some solace to the juniors. Tubby Muffin was beyond solace, however, for the present. He was rocking with woe and anguish.

"Yow-wow-wow!" he moaned. "Oh dear! Ow-yow! Is that the way to treat the captain of the—yow-ow!—school? Oh dear! The Head never caned Bulkeley—yow-ow-ow! You fellows ought to have stopped him—wooop! I—I say, what's a captain of the school to do, you fellows, if the Head goes on whopping him just as if he's a—yow-ow-ow!—fag?"

But there was no answer possible to that question. Jimmy Silver & Co. really didn't know what it was proper for a captain of the school to do under such circumstances, and Tubby Muffin was left to work out the problem for himself. But the general opinion of the juniors was that Tubby's days as captain of Rookwood were numbered.

And they were!

That evening a new notice appeared on the board in the Head's hand, and it was read with keen curiosity by crowds of Rookwood fellows. The notice was brief, but to the point. It stated that Mark Carthew of the Sixth Form had been appointed captain of the school by authority of the headmaster, and it was signed by Dr. Chisholm.

"Appointed captain of the school, without an election!" said Jimmy Silver, with a deep breath. "That's rather thick."

"Unconstitutional!" said Lovell.

"Cheek!" said Mornington.

"The Head can't do it!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"But he's done it, by gad!" remarked Smythe of the Shell.

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" he said. "The Head's overridden all our rights of election, and appointed a captain of the school! We refuse to recognise any such captain!"

"Hear, hear!"

"We refuse to acknowledge Carthew as captain of Rookwood, and any fellow who does acknowledge him will be sent to Coventry—"

"Bravo!"

There was a roar of assent. Carthew of the Sixth had reached the goal of his ambition, but it did not look as if he would find the captaincy a bed of roses!

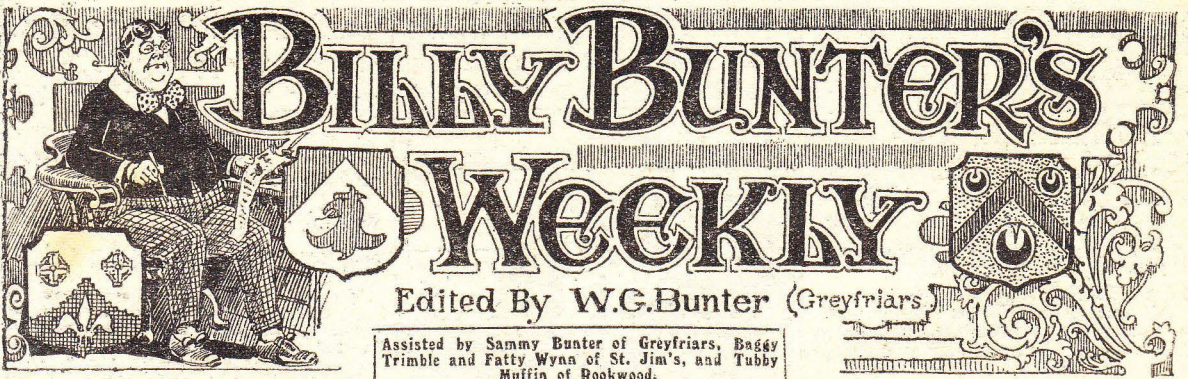
THE END.

(The juniors of Rookwood have made up their minds not to have Carthew at any price — and when juniors come up against their own headmaster there is bound to be trouble. Every reader of the POPULAR should make a point of reading next Thursday's remarkable story of Jimmy Silver & Co., entitled "The Campaign Against Carthew!" by Owen Conquest.)

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THE POPULAR.—No. 221.

There's Fun and Drama in Next Week's Story of Rookwood!



Supplement No. 118.

Week Ending April 14th, 1923.

A GROSS INJUSTISS!

By Sammy Bunter.

"BUNTER miner! You were torking!" The deep, base voice of Mister Twigg tinkled through the Form-room.

"I wasn't! I never! I didn't!" I cried wildly.

"What!" roared Twigg. "Do you dare to deny it? I heard you with my own eyes!"

"But I assure you, sir—" "Enuff!" cried Twigg sternly. "You will write out an indisposition of two hundred lines!"

"It's a crool shame!" I whimpered. Twigg looked revolvers at me—I mean daggers.

"Another word, Bunter miner," he said, "and I shall detain you for the afternoon!"

"It ain't fare!" I hooted. "I shall go and lay my grievance before the Head!"

"At that minnit the door of the Form-room berst open, and who should come staking in but the Head himself!

"Hallo! What's all the merry rumpus about?" he asked.

"This boy Bunter, sir," said Twigg, "is ink-orrivable. Just look at him! He's got all over his face!"

The Head frowned.

"I'm fed-up with you, you young rotter!" he cried, in his magisterial toans. "You keep on getting into hot water—"

"Why, he hasn't had a bath for weeks!" chuckled Dicky Nugent.

"Dry up, Nugent!" thundered the Head. "Bunter miner, I've a good mind to give you a jolly good licking!"

The Head was standing with his back to the fire as he spoke, and the tale-end of his gown caught alight.

"It's a burning shame, sir!" I cried. "Mister Twigg said I was torking, and I wasn't! Buy the way, sir, it mite interest you to know that you're on fire!"

"Grate jumping-crackers!" gasped the Head, leaping about a yard in the air. "Put me out, sumboddy!"

I got hold of a gallon jar of ink, and herled the contents over the blazing gown. Then a crowd of us got hold of the Head, and dragged him towards the door.

"Hi! What's the little game?" he roared.

"We're putting you out, sir!" I said meekly. "You told us to!"

But instead of being grateful, the Head detained the whole class for the afternoon!

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By Billy Bunter.

MY DEAR READERS,—I won't detain you (as Mr. Quelch said when a fellow had got all his sums right), but I just want to say a few words about our Special Detention Number.

I looked up my Dickshunary to find the meaning of the word detention. It said, "Detention" means "incarceration." That's just like a Dickshunary. It eggspains a word of nine letters with a word of thirteen!

I then looked up "incarceration," and found that it meant "detention." So I was no forrader. However, Alonzo Todd, who is a walking en-cycle-peedia of general nollidge, came to my reskew, "Detention, my dear Bunter, means keeping back, restraining, imprisoning. If Mr. Quelch detains you for the afternoon, it means that you must stay in all the time."

I thanked Alonzo for his eggsplication, which put an idear into my head. Said I to myself, said I, "What about a Special Detention Number, Billy? It will go like hot cakes. Your readers will simply revel in it. They will rise up and call you blessed."

So hear we are with our Grand Detention Number, which is far and away the finest issue of my WEEKLY which has appeared until next week.

"What have you got up your sleeve for next week, Billy?" I can pickcher you asking. Ha, ha! I have a rare treat in store, and I should advise you to rush round to your noose agent at once, and wisper horsely in his ear, "Don't forget to reserve me a copy of next week's POPULAR!" If you don't have a copy reserved, you will be in the soop, and find yourself in a dreadful stew. So pay heed to my words of warning, and fly to your noose agent at once. (If you haven't an airplane, fly on your feet, using your ears as propellers!)

I will now wind up, as the servant-girl said when she got the alarm-clock ready overnight.

Yours sincerely,
YOUR EDITOR.

DETAINED!

By Dick Penfold.
The Greyfriars Tame Bard.

FRANK NUGENT'S face was falling fast. As through the Form-room door he passed, muttering to his chums, aghast, "Detained!"

"Good gracious, Franky!" Wharton cried.

"We want you down on Little Side." But Nugent's feeble voice replied: "Detained!"

"What rotten luck!" groaned Johnny Bull.

"A shadow hangs o'er Greyfriars School. We find this fatuous, frabjous fool "Detained!"

"Oh, stay," Bob Cherry cried, "with us! Let frenzied Quelchy fume and fuss!" But Nugent said, "'Twas ever thus—" "Detained!"

"We'll lose the worthy match, I guess," said Hurree Singh, in great distress. But Nugent groaned, in bitterness: "Detained!"

Frank Nugent's comrades then withdrew, and Franky looked exceedingly blue. "The sorriest day I ever knew!" "Detained!"

Through Form-room windows he espied The happy throng on Little Side. "Old Quelchy is a beast!" he cried. "Detained!"

But Mr. Quelch, the downy bird, This epithet of Nugent's heard, Frank got an extra hour (my word!) "Detained!"

Billy Bunter's four fat Subs contribute to The "Weekly" again next week.

THE POPULAR.—No. 221.

Supplement I.]

Laugh and Grow Fat! Read "Billy Bunter's Weekly" Weekly!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PUNISHMENT ?

Some St. Jim's Celebrities state their Views on this "Painful" Subject.

TOM MERRY:

My favourite punishment is one which is awarded, and then cancelled! Mr. Bailton gave me five hundred lines the other day. Just as I was crawling dejectedly out of his study he called me back. "On second thoughts, Merry," he said, "I will rescind your punishment." I promptly proceeded to dance a horn-pipe down the passage!

FATTY WYNN:

My favourite punishment is being compelled to eat a dozen doughnuts, at the point of the trick-et-stump! This is what you might call "capital" punishment!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY:

I must confess, dear boys, that my favourite punishment is detention. I love to sit in the Form-room and dream of the next new suit I'm going to purchase. I map out the colour scheme of my fancy waistcoat, and of my socks and ties; and I dream of glossy silk toppers and shining patent-leather shoes. Detention is a ripping punishment to a fellow who dotes on dress.

BAGGY TRIMBLE:

My favorite punishment is a public flogging. To some fellows this is a terrible ordeal, and they yell before the birch comes down. But a Trimble can always take as many as thirty strokes with iron forty-tude. Have you ever seen a Trimble tremble? Of course you haven't! I throw my arms round old Taggles' neck, and hold on tight, while the Head belabers my back with the birch. But I never make a mermer, and I always come up—or, rather, get down—smiling. To tell the truth, I simply revel in public floggings!

MONTY LOWTHER:

My favourite punishment is the rod—and a hundred lines. You see, I am a keen angler, and I haven't a rod and line of my own. So if the Head gives me the rod, and one of the masters awards me a hundred "lines," I shall be well set-up with fishing-tackle for the rest of the term!

EPHRAIM TAGGLES:

Which I makes so bold as to say that my favourite punishment is the sack—always provided it happens to be a sack of coal, or firewood! I don't hold with any other form of punishment.

MANNERS MINOR:

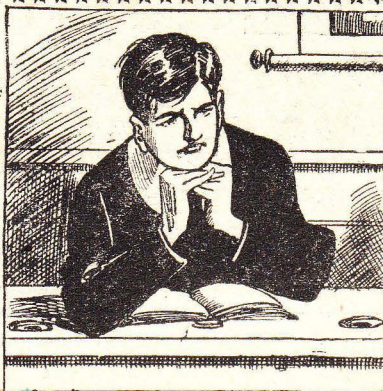
I haven't got a favorite punishment all forms of punishment are cruel and savidge the birch and the cane ought to be abolished and so did impotts and gatings if there were no punishments there would be no crime some of you may poo-poo this idea but it's plain lojick!

THE KITCHEN CAT:

My favourite punishment is to be thrown into a churn of milk.

THE PECULAR.—No. 221.

DETENTION RHYMES!



BY TEDDY GRACE
(The Rookwood Rhymer.)

I'm sorry for poor old Van Ryn,
Whose face never wears a broad grin.
Of trouble, no doubt,
He can never keep out,
And that's why he's always "kept in!"

A fellow whose name I won't mention,
Received a long term of detention.
He's still sitting there
In distress and despair,
And soon he'll be ripe for his pension!

I know a young fellow named Gower,
Whose face is decidedly sour.
In the Form-room he sits,
Having dozens of fits,
For he won't be released for an hour!

Peele grinned, as a large lump of toffee
He dropped in his Form master's coffee.
The reckless young coon
For the whole afternoon
To the punishment-room must "buzz
offe!"

I feel mighty sorry for Raby,
He broke down and cried like a baby.
He's either been whacked,
Or lectured, or smacked,
Or detained for the afternoon, maybe!

That hot-headed youth, Tommy Doyle,
Says "Manders wants boiling in oil!"
But instead of old Manders,
Who gives the chaps "handers,"
It's Tommy himself who doth "boil!"

Tubby Muffin can't spell for a pension,
To his lessons he won't pay attention,
So his Form master said,
With a shake of the head,
"You must now take a 'spell' of
detention!"

Mark Latirey, the cheeky young pup,
In the Form-room once started to sup.
He gorged for a while,
With a satisfied smile,
But the Form master soon "shut him
up!"

Detention is simply sublime,
When you read a nice book all the time,
Or pick up a pencil,
Or other utensil,
And "go for" your master—in rhyme!

I once was detained for a week—
I had to "mug" Latin and Greek.
I was feeling so fufious,
It hardly seems curious—
That I "let myself go," so to speak!

HOW TO ENJOY DETENTION!

Some Useful Hints by Valentine
Mornington of Rookwood.

Of course, the amount of enjoyment you can squeeze out of an afternoon's detention depends on the number of fellows who are detained at the same time as yourself. If you are the single, solitary victim, it is rather too difficult to devise ways and means of making the time pass pleasantly. One of the most soothing pastimes is to draw caricatures of your Form master on the blackboard, with suitable inscriptions underneath. A good alternative is to take an exciting story of Dick Turpin into the Form-room. You will become so absorbed that the time will pass on feather wings!

Should there be a couple of you detained, you can make quite a merry afternoon of it. You can kick off by playing a thrilling game of noughts-and-crosses. This can be followed up by a game of leap-frog over the desks. If you are wise, you will smuggle a pair of boxing-gloves into the Form-room, and indulge in a friendly spar. You can also have a wrestling match, rolling in fierce, frantic frenzy from one end of the room to the other. By the time your period of detention is over you will go to your tea with keen appetites, and say to one another, "What a perfectly stunning afternoon we've had!"

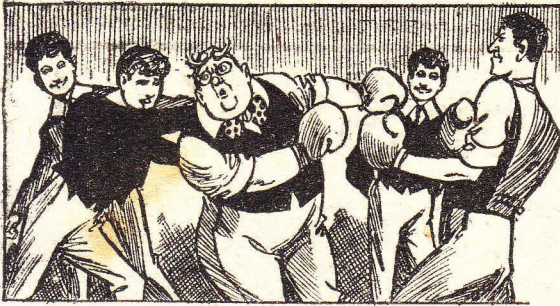
If it happens that a whole crowd of you is detained, there is no limit to the lively larks you can have. If there are a dozen of you, a six-a-side footer match is the proper caper. Shift all the desks up against the walls, giving yourselves a clear space in which to operate. A number of handkerchiefs, wrapped inside a large duster, will make a ripping football. The drawback to a real football is that it has a tiresome habit of smashing every windowpane it happens to hit. A Form-room footer match should consist of a quarter of an hour each way. The door and the fireplace make suitable goals. It will be as well to lock the door before the game commences. Then, if a master or a prefect happens on the scene, you will have time to clear away all traces of the conflict.

Some fellows hate and loathe detention. They talk of it as if it were penal servitude. They have only themselves to blame if they choose to make a funeral of it, instead of a picnic. Personally, I simply love being detained. I can always find ways and means of improving the shining hour. "Form-room walls do not a prison make, nor window-bars a cage!" You can be as happy and free as the proverbial sandboy if you go the right way about it. I know some fellows who simply pine for detention, and they deliberately misbehave themselves in class in order to get it. But there's a certain amount of danger in doing this. You might get a jolly good swishing instead!

There is just one point which I have left out of my calculations. Your Form master might be present all the afternoon! How can you enjoy yourselves under his eagle gaze? This is rather a poser; still, it can be done. One of you can pretend to faint, with the result that the Form master orders you to carry him out. You can carry him out into the quad, and pay a flying visit to the tuck-shop, where he will soon revive! Then, when you get back to the Form-room, another fellow can have a turn at fainting, and so on. It's a nice game, played slow; but be careful not to overdo it! Form masters are horrid beasts when they suspect that their legs are being pulled!

[Supplement II.]

The Scream of the Week—Next Week's Special "Postman" Issue!



Forced to Fight!

By FRANK NUGENT

(Of the Greyfriars Remove.)

BILLY BUNTER trembled. It was not the stern eye of Mr. Quelch which made Bunter tremble. It was the haunting thought that he would have to face Bolsover major in fistic combat.

Morning lessons were in progress. And the great Bunter-Bolsover bout had been fixed for the afternoon. It was Wednesday; therefore the afternoon would be free for the great event. Billy Bunter was to be butchered to make a Greyfriars holiday, as Skinner rather ruthlessly put it.

This is how the trouble arose. Early that morning Bolsover major met Billy Bunter in the Remove passage, and fired at him, at point-blank range, with a water-pistol. A jet of water took the fat junior full in the face.

"Gug-gug-gug! Oh, you beast!" spluttered Bunter. "I'm not going to stand this sort of treatment! I must ask you to meet me in the gym, Bolsover, and I'll knock your head off!"

It was quite an empty threat. And Bunter had no serious idea of carrying it out, or even attempting to.

To the fat junior's utter consternation, however, Bolsover took the thing seriously.

"All right, my fat tulip!" he said. "I'll meet you in the gym at two o'clock. And then we'll see whose head will be knocked off. It won't be mine."

Billy Bunter tried to back out. He said he was only joking when he challenged Bolsover to fight. Then he said that his threat was merely a figure of speech.

But Bolsover would have none of it. Bolsover insisted upon the fight taking place. Bunter had thrown down the gauntlet; and the bully of the Remove had accepted the challenge. So there was nothing more to be said.

Several fellows had witnessed the scene in the passage. And they held Bunter to his word.

Small wonder that the fat junior was worried as he sat at lessons in the Remove Form-room. He would as soon have encountered Joe Beckett or Jack Dempsey as Bolsover major.

"How can I possibly get out of it?" groaned Bunter to himself.

Suddenly a brain-wave occurred to him. He would misbehave himself in the Form-room, and get himself detained for the afternoon.

Detention was not pleasant. But it was preferable to being knocked round the ring by Bolsover major.

Having formed his plan of campaign, Bunter produced a slab of toffee from his pocket, and proceeded to devour it in full view of Form and Form master.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes lighted on Bunter at once.

"Bunter!" thundered the Remove master. "How dare you consume sticky

and obnoxious comestibles in the Form-room, sir? You will throw away that unwholesome compound into the waste-paper basket, and in order to teach you a lesson, I shall—"

"Detain me, sir?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"Certainly not, Bunter. You will take two hundred lines!"

"Oh crumbs! Must I stay in this afternoon and write them, sir?"

"No, Bunter. You will write them in your study this evening."

Billy Bunter groaned. His first attempt to get himself detained having come unstuck, so to speak, he embarked upon a fresh attempt. Screwing up a piece of paper into a ball, he hurled it at the guileless and unsuspecting head of Alonzo Todd, who sat in the front row.

Zipp!

"Wow!" yelled Alonzo, caressing the back of his cranium. More by accident than design, Bunter had hit the target.



Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Who threw that missile?" he demanded.

"Guilty, sir!" said Bunter, rising in his place.

"This is the second time I have had occasion to speak to you this morning, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Ahem! I suppose you're going to detain me for the afternoon, sir?"

"Your supposition, Bunter, is incorrect. You will stand out before the class, and be caned!"

"Ow!"

Things were not working out at all well for the unhappy Owl of the Remove. He had received an impot; he was now to receive a licking; but he could not secure the coveted punishment of detention.

Mr. Quelch administered three stinging cuts which made Bunter squirm and yell.

An hour elapsed before Bunter dared to essay a third attempt at getting detained. This time he pretended to go to sleep in the Form-room. He allowed his

head to drop on to his chest; then, closing his eyes, he emitted a snore which reverberated through the room, nearly making the windows rattle.

"I'm bound to get it this time!" reflected Bunter.

And he got it. But it was not detention that he got. It was a sharp rap on the knuckles with Mr. Quelch's pointer.

"Wretched boy!" thundered the Form master. "You have had the unparalleled audacity to sink into a state of somnolence during the lesson. If you transgress again, I shall take you before the headmaster!"

"I—I'd rather be detained, sir, if you don't mind," said Bunter.

"What!" gasped Mr. Quelch, in amazement.

"I simply love detention, sir," Bunter went on. "I fairly revel in it. I love to sit in the Form-room all the afternoon counting the flies on the ceiling!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove rocked with laughter. They knew perfectly well why Bunter was hankering after detention. He wanted to dodge the coming conflict with Bolsover major. Try as he would, however, he could not get himself detained.

Morning lessons ran their course, and the position was still the same.

After dinner, instead of betaking himself to the gym, Bunter went along to the Form-room. He was quickly run to earth by a crowd of juniors.

"Time for the scrap!" said Skinner.

"Can't come!" said Bunter.

"Why can't you?"

"Detained!" said Bunter briefly.

"Faith, an' who detained ye, Bunter darlint?" asked Micky Desmond.

"Mr. Prout—I mean, Wingate—that is to say, Loder—I mean, all three of them!" stammered Bunter wildly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bring him along!"

There was no escape for the Owl of the Remove. He was marched along to the gym by force. Bolsover major, his brawny arms bared, and his hands encased in boxing-gloves, was waiting for his prey.

Bunter's jacket was dragged off, and his hands were thrust into boxing-gloves. Then he was pushed into the ring, and the great fight started.

It ended almost as soon as it began.

Only one blow was given; only one blow was received. Bolsover major was the generous giver; Billy Bunter the recipient.

The fat junior crashed to the floor like a giant oak. And he took good care not to rise until the laughing crowd had dispersed. Then he picked himself up and limped sorrowfully away, having quite determined not to issue any more challenges to Bolsover major.

THE POPULAR.—No. 221.

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. DEFIANT!

When the new headmaster arrives at Cedar Creek to take the place of Miss Meadows, he finds the school up in arms against him!

TROUBLESOME TIMES!

Cedar Creek on Strike!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Early Birds!

BILLY COOK, the foreman of the Lawless ranch, raised his bushy eyebrows in surprise.

The ranchman was standing at the door of his cabin, with a steaming pannikin of coffee in one hand and a huge chunk of corn-cake in the other.

The foreman was finishing his breakfast as the early sunrays came creeping up over the prairie.

Down the path from the ranch-house came a clatter of hoofs.

And Billy Cook, lowering his pannikin from his bearded lips, ejaculated:

"By gosh!"

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless came trotting down the trail, and they drew rein to greet the surprised ranchman.

"Top of the morning, Billy!" called out Bob cheerily.

"You ain't off to school yet?" asked Billy Cook.

"I guess so."

"Early birds, you know!" said Frank Richards, with a smile.

"It's a good two hours before your time," said the ranchman. "What little game are you up to now?"

And Billy Cook wagged his head at the two schoolboys.

"Nothing like being early, Billy, you know," said Bob Lawless. "We've got a new headmaster coming to-day, too."

"I heard about that, too," remarked the foreman. "I hear that Miss Meadows ain't no longer mistress of Cedar Creek."

"That's so."

"Fired by the trustees?" said Billy.

"Correct!"

"It's an all-fired shame!" said Billy Cook emphatically. "Why, sirs, that little she-critter, Miss Meadows, was the neatest filly that ever stepped in the Thompson Valley!"

The chums of Cedar Creek laughed.

Billy Cook's admiration was genuine and well-founded. But they wondered how Miss Meadows would have liked to hear herself described as a "filly."

"It wasn't your popper's doing, Bob," went on Billy Cook. "I guess it was Mr. Grimm and Old Man Gunten that did the trick, and Mr. Lawless agin it."

"That's the case," said Bob. "My father stood up for Miss Meadows at the School Trustees' meeting, but he was out-voted."

"A gol-darned shame!" said Billy Cook. "And if I was a younker at school, Bob, I guess I'd kick up a shindy. The purtiest little she-critter that ever did step in the Thompson Valley!" added the ranchman warmly.

Bob Lawless smiled.

"Perhaps there's going to be a shindy, Billy," he answered. "Perhaps that's why we're going to school two hours early this morning. Mum's the word, though!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 221.

A Rousing Yarn of the Backwoods of Canada, dealing with the Great Rebellion at Cedar Creek School.

And, with a wave of the hand to the ranchman, the chums rode on towards the timber, leaving Billy Cook staring after them with a peculiar expression on his bearded face.

In the dim light of early dawn Frank Richards and his Canadian cousin trotted on.

They had left the ranch-house before anyone else in the building was astir, and had brought their breakfast—a frugal one—in their pockets, to eat as they rode.

The chums had their plans for that day, which, for excellent reasons, they did not want to explain to Mr. Lawless just yet.

They munched cold beef and crackers as they trotted on in the fresh, clear air, and stopped at a spring for a draught of clear, cold water to wash it down.

In the invigorating atmosphere of British Columbia, and accustomed to outdoor life, the sturdy schoolboys did not feel the need of tea or coffee or any other stimulant.

They were all the better, from the point of view of health, without such luxuries, and so they did not miss their usual breakfast very much.

They rode on into the timber, where they found their chum Vere Beauclerc waiting for them at the fork of the trail on his black horse.

The Cherub was also an early riser that morning.

"Hallo! Here we are again!" called out Bob cheerily. "Still feeling game to go on the warpath, Cherub?"

"You bet!" answered Beauclerc.

"We shall find a good many of the fellows there," said Bob, as the three chums rode on together. "I guess they're all game. You haven't mentioned the matter to your popper?"

Beauclerc smiled.

"Better not yet," he said. "My father is indignant at the way Miss Meadows has been treated, but I don't know what he'd think of the idea of a school on strike. I don't think he'd disapprove, only he couldn't very well say that he approved in so many words."

"Correct!" said Bob. "Same with my popper. It's up to us to see that Miss Meadows gets justice. She'd be as mad as a hornet, I guess, if she knew we were backing her up like this; but that don't alter the case. Old Man Gunten isn't going to fire our schoolmistress at his own sweet will."

"No fear!" said Frank Richards most emphatically.

The trio rode at a gallop by the forest trail to Cedar Creek School.

The glimmering creek and the school-buildings came in sight at last.

The sun was higher now, but the hour was still early, and at that hour, as a rule, there was no sign of life about Cedar Creek.

On this especial morning, however, there were a good many signs of life.

The school gates were not yet opened, but

outside the gates seven or eight fellows were collected.

They had arrived earlier than Frank Richards & Co., having a shorter distance to cover to the school.

There was a shout as the three rode up and jumped off their horses.

"Hyer we are!" bellowed Eben Hacke.

"Waiting for you, old scouts!" grinned Chunky Todgers. "Here we are, as large as life, ready to scalp Old Man Gunten if he shows up."

"Hurrah!"

"And the noo 'cadmaster, if 'e shows up?" said Hopkins, the Cockney of Cedar Creek.

"We won't 'ave 'im at no price, as sure as I'm 'Aroid 'Opkins!"

"Ear, 'ear!" grinned Bob Lawless, in playful imitation of the Cockney.

"Gate not open yet?" said Frank Richards.

"We've got to get in!"

"Black Sam isn't up yet," said Tom Lawrence.

"I guess that makes no difference," said Bob. "I'll soon have the gate unbarred."

Bob Lawless rode his horse close to the palisade, and stood on his saddle; and then drew himself to the top of the wall.

He swung himself actively over, and dropped into the school enclosure.

A minute more, and the bars of the gates were removed and the gate swung wide.

"Come in!" shouted Bob.

And the schoolboys crowded in, greatly excited.

They had met at that early hour at Cedar Creek School for an extraordinary purpose, and what the outcome would be no one could even guess.

But Frank Richards & Co., at least, were determined; and so long as they were in the lead, the rest were pretty certain to follow.

Most of the fellows, indeed, regarded the matter as something of a "lark," but it was a lark which would have its serious side.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Cedar Creek Means Business!

"GENTLEMEN and galoots—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, Bob!"

Bob Lawless had mounted upon a bench in the big playground, and his comrades gathered round him.

In the distance the doors of Mr. Stimmer's and Mr. Shepherd's cabins were seen to open.

The two assistant masters of Cedar Creek, astounded by that early and noisy arrival of a crowd of schoolboys, were looking out to see what was the matter.

But the crowd did not heed them; all attention was fixed upon Bob Lawless.

"Gentlemen and galoots," continued Bob, "we've met here—"

"Bravo!"

"To stand up for our rights, as free Canadian citizens—"

Loud cheers!

"And to back up Miss Meadows, our



Stirring Scenes at Cedar Creek Next Week! Watch Out!

respected mistress, who has been fired by the trustees—"

"Grooms for the trustees!"
"Gentlemen, the matter's a simple one," went on Bob, waxing eloquent. "Miss Meadows is a lady we all respect. She turned Kern Gunten out of the school for gambling, and leading other fellows to gamble, after warning him more than once. Could she have done anything else?"

"Correct!"
"Old Man Gunten is chairman of the School Trustees, and he got his mad up, and called a meeting. My popper voted for Miss Meadows; the other two, Old Man Gunten and his friend Grimm, out-voted him. They had the power to sack Miss Meadows, and they did it. Miss Meadows is gone."

"Shame!"
"To-day Old Man Gunten moseys in, to introduce our new headmaster in Miss Meadows' place," continued Bob. "Now, we're going to talk plain Canadian to Old Man Gunten."

"Hear, hear!"
"Trustee or no trustee, we don't take any notice of him."

"Never!"
"As for the new master, I don't know anything about him, except that his name's Peckover. But good, had, or indifferent, he doesn't come here."

"Hurrah!"
"As he may be a good sort, we'll put it to him politely," said Bob. "But, in any case, he's not going to be allowed to take on Miss Meadows' job."

"No fear!"
"We're standing up for Miss Meadows. She don't know it, and she mightn't like it; but there it is. And we're not going to give in till Old Man Gunten toes the line and lets Miss Meadows come back."

"Bravo!"
The roar of cheering woke every echo of Cedar Creek.

Black Sam, the stableman, was staring on from a distance, and Sally, the cook, was looking out of a window.

Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Slimmey were advancing towards the excited group, with surprise in their faces.

Both the assistant masters sympathised with the schoolmistress, and Mr. Slimmey, indeed, had sent in his own resignation to the Board.

They were indignant, and they understood the indignation of the Cedar Creek fellows, but this outbreak was rather startling to them.

"What is all this?" broke in Mr. Slimmey. "Lawless, why are you here so early this morning?"

Bob raised his hat respectfully to the young master.

"No harm intended, Mr. Slimmey," he said. "We're on the warpath, that's all."

"What can you possibly mean, Lawless?"

"We're not going to allow a new head to take Miss Meadows' place, sir," said Frank Richards.

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Slimmey seemed too astonished to say more than that.

"My boys, you cannot act in a lawless manner," said Mr. Shepherd. "We can't think of allowin' it."

"Please understand us, sir," said Vere Beauclerc. "We intend no disrespect to you or to Mr. Slimmey. But we won't consent to Miss Meadows being sent away. The whole school is with us in this, though we're not all here."

"Please don't interfere, sir," said Frank Richards. "We should be very sorry to have any dispute with you."

Mr. Shepherd coughed.

Frank expressed it very civilly, but his meaning was clear; the two masters would not be allowed to interfere, in any case.

Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Slimmey exchanged glances, and, after a few moments' hesitation, walked away together.

"It is not our business, I think, Mr. Slimmey," remarked Mr. Shepherd.

"Not at all," said Mr. Slimmey decidedly. "It is a matter for Mr. Peckover to deal with when he arrives."

"He is welcome to deal with it."

And the two masters went back to their cabins.

The lack of intervention by the assistant masters had an encouraging effect on the rebels.

Those two gentlemen, evidently, were not to be feared in any way, and were not likely to offer much support to the new headmaster when he arrived.

Meanwhile, several more fellows had arrived at Cedar Creek, and two of the girls, Molly Lawrence and Kate Dawson.

The crowd numbered sixteen or seventeen now.

The excitement was growing.

It was pretty certain that Mr. Peckover would put in an appearance well before the hour for lessons to commence, and the school-boys were eager to see him, wondering a good deal what he was like.

There was a loud shout from the fellows near the gate as the wheels of a buggy were heard on the trail.

"Here they come!" yelled Tom Lawrence. "There was a rush to the gate.

On the trail from Thompson a buggy appeared, with Old Man Gunten at the reins.

Beside him sat a tall, thin man, with a very square jaw and little keen eyes set very close together.

The schoolboys could guess that this was Mr. Peckover, and they did not like his looks.

Behind him in the buggy sat a heavily-featured lad, with a grin on his face.

That was Kern Gunten, Old Man Gunten's son, who had been turned out of the school for rascally conduct.

The buggy dashed up to the gates and stopped.

Old Man Gunten and Mr. Peckover alighted, and Kern Gunten was about to follow their example, when he saw the crowd and the looks they gave him.

Immediately the grin died away from his face.

He scented trouble, and he decided to remain in the buggy for the present.

Unheeding him, Mr. Gunten and the new master strode in at the gates.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Warm Reception!

OLD MAN GUNTEN glanced in surprise at the crowd of fellows inside the school enclosure.

It was not yet the hour for the school to gather.

The fat, podgy Swiss storekeeper stared at the schoolboys, who returned his stare with interest.

They were not in the least awed by the self-important Mr. Gunten.

"Come here, Richards!" called out Mr. Gunten, recognising Frank.

Frank Richards approached.

"What are you boys doing here so early?" asked Mr. Gunten.

"Oh, we've come," said Frank vaguely.

"I can see you've come!" snapped Mr. Gunten. "As you are here, you may hold my horse."

Frank did not move.

"These are some of your boys, Mr. Peckover," said the storekeeper, turning from Frank.

The new master nodded.

The boys were all regarding him curiously, not at all favourably impressed by his tight jaw and the cold gleam in his eyes.

"Boys," said Mr. Gunten, "this is your new headmaster, Mr. Ephraim Peckover."

There was a dead silence.

Mr. Peckover was looking at the school-boys very curiously.

He was sharper than the storekeeper, and he could see at once that something was wrong.

"I will show you your quarters here, Mr. Peckover," said the Swiss. "I think you will find them comfortable."

Mr. Gunten was a little puzzled himself by the vague atmosphere of unrest that surrounded him, but he led the new master towards the lumber schoolhouse.

Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd were not to be seen.

Under other circumstances, they would naturally have appeared on the scene to greet their new chief, but just now they wisely decided to leave him to deal with Cedar Creek by himself.

To Mr. Gunten's surprise, Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc planted themselves before the porch of the schoolhouse.

The other fellows gathered round them.

Behind them the door had been opened by Black Sally, who was looking out with saucer-like eyes.

But between the new headmaster and the open door there was a great gulf fixed, so to speak, represented by the insurgent school-boys of Cedar Creek.

Bob Lawless held up his hand as the two men came up.

"Halt!" he said.

Mr. Peckover and Old Man Gunten halted in sheer amazement.

"Lawless!" stammered the storekeeper.

"What does this mean?"

"It means halt!" answered Bob.

"Are you mad, boy?"

"I guess not."

"Stand aside at once!" exclaimed Mr. Peckover, apparently making up his mind to assume his new authority at once. "How dare you speak disrespectfully to Mr. Gunten?"

"We don't respect Mr. Gunten, you see," explained Bob.

"What?"

Old Man Gunten's fat face was suffused with rage, and his little eyes seemed to bulge from their podgy sockets as Bob spoke.

"Lawless!" he stammered.

"Listen to me!" said Bob. "Mr. Peckover, I am sorry for your disappointment. We mean no disrespect to you personally. But we have decided that Cedar Creek School shall have no head but Miss Meadows."

"Wha-a-at!"

"Miss Meadows has been fired by a dirty trick," said Bob undauntedly. "Old Man Gunten knows all about it; he did it."

"Are you aware that Mr. Gunten is chairman of the Board of Trustees?" exclaimed Mr. Peckover.

"Yep!"

"You must be out of your senses, boy!"

"I guess not. We're standing by Miss Meadows."

"Boy," thundered Mr. Gunten, purple with wrath, "Miss Meadows is no longer headmistress of this school! She has been discharged. This gentleman is your new headmaster."

"Not at any price!"

"That is enough," said Mr. Peckover, his thin lips coming together in a tight line. "I am not the man to allow my authority to be disputed!"

"Listen to me, sir," said Bob. "We mean—"

"You have said enough, Lawless, if that is your name." Mr. Peckover's cold eyes gleamed. "I shall punish you severely for your insolence to Mr. Gunten."

"I should say so, by gosh!" gasped the enraged storekeeper. "You have full authority from the Board, Mr. Peckover, to enforce discipline in this school."

"I shall not fail, sir."

Mr. Peckover had a stick under his arm.

He let it slip down into his hand, and, with a sudden movement, he grasped Bob Lawless by the collar, taking the rancher's son by surprise, so quick and catlike was his movement.

The next moment Bob was spun round, and the stick rose and fell across his shoulders with sounding whacks.

Bob roared.

"Let go! By gum, let go, or it will be worse for you!" he shouted.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Back up!" shouted Frank Richards.

He rushed to his chum's aid at once.

Mr. Peckover had certainly not expected that.

Frank grasped his right arm, and dragged it down so that the stick could not be used.

At the same moment, Vere Beauclerc grasped the new master's other arm.

Mr. Peckover struggled furiously in their grip.

"Release me!" he thundered. "How dare you!"

But instead of releasing him the school-boys tightened their grip, and Bob Lawless grasped him, too.

Old Man Gunten stood rooted to the ground, staring as if he could not quite believe the evidence of his eyesight.

It seemed like a horrid dream to him as Mr. Peckover was whirled off his feet, his stick torn away, and the new headmaster was sent spinning back into the playground.

Mr. Peckover staggered back helplessly half a dozen paces, and then collapsed, measuring his length on the ground.

He lay there gasping.

Then Mr. Gunten seemed to recover his senses, and he made a spring towards the schoolboys.

In an instant half a dozen pairs of hands were laid on the fat storekeeper, and he went spinning after the new master.

THE POPULAR.—No. 221.

Crash!
He landed on his back, with all the breath knocked out of his podgy body.
Side by side the new headmaster and the trustee lay sprawling, gasping, and from the crowd of schoolboys round the porch came a breathless cheer:
"Hurrah!"

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Nothing Out!**

MR. GUNTEN sat up.
He blinked like an owl at Frank Richards & Co. as he sat in the dust and gasped.
The fat storekeeper was so surprised that he seemed hardly to know what had happened yet.
He staggered up at last, however, with bulging eyes and flaming face.
He realised that it was no horrid nightmare, but plain and sober fact, that he, great man as he was, had been collared and treated as if he were of no more account than any "hobo" who tramped the trails of the Thompson Valley.
He spluttered with wrath.
"By gad!" he gasped. "By gad! You young scoundrels! Oh, ah, oh!"
Bob Lawless pointed to the gates.
"There's your way, Mr. Gunten," he said. "Rascal!"
"Same to you, old scout, and many of them!" answered Bob cheerily. "Better keep your hands off, Mr. Peckover," he added, for the schoolmaster seemed to be about to spring at him. "You'll get hurt if you don't."
"Boy," gasped Mr. Peckover. "I am your headmaster."
"Nothing of the kind."
"Rats!"
"Bosh!"
It was a roar of repudiation from the Cedar Creek fellows, and it made it quite plain that they did not intend to acknowledge Epicraim Peckover as their headmaster.
The schoolmaster turned to Mr. Gunten.
"This mutiny must be quelled, sir," he said.
"I guess so!" gasped Old Man Gunten.
"I reckon so, Mr. Peckover. You're empowered to take any measures you choose; you have my authority."
"There are assistant masters here, I believe, and servants."
"Sure!"
"Call them, then, to our assistance, and these young rascals shall soon be reduced to order."
"Good!" said Mr. Gunten.
He gave the rebels of Cedar Creek a venomous look, and strode away to the cabins occupied by the assistant masters.
Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd were outside the cabins, looking on from a distance, and conversing in low tones.
They glanced rather grimly at the fat gentleman as he came puffing up.
The two young men knew what he wanted, but they did not look as if Mr. Gunten would get what he wanted.
Neither did Mr. Gunten address them in the most tactful way; he was too furious for that.
"What are you loafing here for?" he thundered, as he came up.
"What?" ejaculated Mr. Slimmey, blinking over the gold rims of his glasses at the irate storekeeper.
"Can't you see what's going on?"
"Perfectly well, Mr. Gunten."
"Isn't it your duty to keep your non-founded boys in order?" roared Mr. Gunten.
"Lay hold of something—sticks or anything—and come and help!"
Mr. Shepherd eyed him calmly.
"Help restore order, do you mean?" he asked.
"Of course I do, you pesky jay!"
The Gentle Shepherd smiled.
"You appear to allow yourself a very great freedom of language, sir," he said quietly. "As it happens, Mr. Slimmey has sent in his resignation, as a protest against Miss Meadows' unjust dismissal. I have decided, after consultation with him, to follow his example. We are not, therefore, under Mr. Peckover's orders, or under yours, Mr. Gunten."
"Confound you!" burst out Mr. Gunten.

furiously. "I believe you're in league with those young scoundrels!"
The Gentle Shepherd made a step towards him.
"Moderate your language, please!" he said sharply.
"What!"
"Address me civilly, or—"
"Or what?" roared the storekeeper savagely.
"Or I will knock you down!" said Mr. Shepherd coolly.
"By gad, and so will I!" said Mr. Slimmey. "You cannot bully us, Mr. Gunten. You have caused this riot by your shabby treatment of Miss Meadows, and you can deal with it yourself. I leave Cedar Creek this day."
"And I go with you," said Mr. Shepherd. "Come, Mr. Slimmey, let us pack and get away. We cannot remain while this is going on, and countenance it, and certainly we cannot assist those who have dismissed our respected colleague."
Mr. Gunten, gasping with rage, raised his fat, clenched fist.
The Gentle Shepherd looked him in the eyes and waited. But the fat fist dropped again and unclenched.
Mr. Shepherd smiled slightly, and went into his cabin.
"You're sacked!" roared Mr. Gunten. "Do you hear? Sacked! Discharged! Fired! Get out!"
He received no answer from the masters, and he strode away with a purple face.
Catching sight of Black Sam, who was staring at the crowd at the porch, he called to the negro.
"Come here, man!"
Black Sam came up.
"Your help is wanted," said Mr. Gunten. "You know me, I suppose?"
"Me know Mass' Gunten," agreed Black Sam, showing his teeth in a grin.
"That gentleman, Mr. Peckover, is the new headmaster here. You are to assist him in dealing with those boys. Get a cart- whip!"
Black Sam shook his head.
"Me 'bey Missy Meadows," he said. "Missy Meadows gib me orders. No take orders. If Missy Meadows no come back, me go."
Mr. Gunten trembled from head to foot with rage.
Even the black man of all work had raised his heel against him, and to be defied by a "nigger" was the last straw.

His rage overflowed, and he raised his hand and struck at the negro's black face with all his force.
His blow did not reach the mark, however. A black hand gripped his wrist so hard that the fat man gave a yell of agony, and Sam's black face grinned at him.
"You white trash!" said Black Sam contemptuously. "Low white trash, Mass' Gunten! You vamoose!"
He swung the fat storekeeper round by the wrist, and sent him spinning away.
Mr. Gunten staggered several paces, gasping, and Black Sam walked back stolidly to his own quarters.
From him, it was clear, there was no assistance to be had.
Almost foaming by this time, Mr. Gunten returned to the new schoolmaster, who was waiting near the porch with a black brow.
"Well, sir?" snapped Mr. Peckover.
"The assistant masters refuse to help; they're resigned," choked Mr. Gunten. "Even the nigger is cheeky! Good gad!"
Mr. Peckover set his lips.
What was to be done in that strange conjunction of circumstances was a mystery he could not solve at present.
His cold eyes were gleaming, and there was no doubt as to what he would have liked to do, but the power to do it was not in his hands.
The insurgent schoolboys had watched Mr. Gunten's progress with grinning faces, a good deal encouraged by his failure to obtain help.
Mr. Gunten turned to the boys at last.
"You will be punished for this!" he gasped. "Come and punish us!" jeered Chunky Todgers.
"We're ready for you, you foreign trash!" roared Eben Hacke.
"Come on, Fatty!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I order you to make way, and allow your schoolmaster to enter the house!" spluttered Mr. Gunten.
"Go and chop chips!"
The storekeeper clenched his hands.
"Do you know what will happen to you if you persist in defying authority. I shall call on the sheriff for assistance."
"Call, and be blowed!" answered Bob Lawless.
"You will be turned out of the school, Lawless!"
"Well, I'm not turned out yet," said Bob coolly; "and there'll be some trouble first, Mr. Gunten."
"That's enough from you, Mr. Gunten," said Frank Richards. "You'd better go, and take your new schoolmaster with you!"
"Vamoose the rascal!" hooted Lawrence.
Chunky Todgers came out of the doorway with a cushion in his hand, and it whizzed through the air.
There was a howl from Mr. Gunten as it caught him under his double chin.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Now light out!" shouted Chunky. "You'll get some more if you stay there, Old Man Gunten! You make us tired!"
"Vamoose!" came in a threatening roar. Mr. Gunten and his companion hastily backed away. They did not want any more cushions. And a jeering roar followed them from the crowd at the porch.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

"Fired!"

IT was close upon school-time now, and more and more boys and girls were arriving at Cedar Creek.
Most of them gathered round Frank Richards & Co. at the porch.
It was easy to see upon which side in the dispute their sympathies lay.
Even those who did not join in the revolt gave the rebels their moral support, as it were, and wished them well.
There was a buzz of excited talk while Mr. Gunten and Mr. Peckover, at a distance, were consulting desperately as to what was to be done.
Outside the gates, Kern Gunten still sat in the buggy, feeling thankful that he had had the sagacity to remain there and not venture within the walls.
There was no question of classes that morning.
Nobody went into the school-room.
The unaccustomed holiday added to the

**Result of Notts County
Picture-Puzzle Competition.**

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

J. BOARD,
Dowel Street,
Honiton, Devon.

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

Mr. J. Board, Dowel Street, Honiton, Devon; T. Jobson, 2, Charlotte Street, Tidal Basin, E. 16; Tom Loynd, 17, Clementina Terrace, Carlisle; Robert Scott, 424, Parliamentary Road, Glasgow; Fred Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2.

Fifty-one competitors with two errors each divide the ten prizes of 5s. each—one shilling being added to the prize-list to make up a round sum. The names and addresses of these prize-winners can be seen on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

There are few older football teams in the country than Notts County. It goes back practically to the commencement of the game. The club made swift headway, and reached a magnificent position on the First League table. Since then, fortune has ebbed and flowed.

general excitement, and perhaps to the general cheerfulness.

Frank Richards & Co. had laid it down as a law that no more lessons were to be done at Cedar Creek until Miss Meadows came back; and in that, at least, they had hearty and unanimous support.

While the buzz of discussion went on Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Slimmey were seen to leave their cabins together with bags in their hands.

"How is it going to end?" murmured Molly Lawrence.

"It's going to end in Miss Meadows coming back, I reckon!" said Bob confidently. "Don't you be afraid, Molly."

"But—but—" murmured the girl. "We're going to give Old Man Gunten our ultimatum—good word that!" chuckled Bob. "Come on, you chaps!"

Frank Richards & Co. marched to the spot where Mr. Gunten and Mr. Peckover were standing talking in low tones.

A cheering crowd followed them. "Made up your mind yet, Mr. Gunten?" called out Bob.

The storekeeper scowled by way of reply. "Is Miss Meadows coming back?" demanded Frank Richards.

"No!" roared the storekeeper.

"Then the school's on strike till she does come!" said Bob Lawless determinedly.

"We won't have lessons, we won't allow lessons to be given, and we won't have your pesky new schoolmaster. So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it, Mr. Gunten!"

The storekeeper clenched his podgy hands.

"Enough of this!" he said, in a gasping voice. "For the last time, will you receive your new master and submit to his authority?"

"Nope!"

"Never!"

"No fear!"

There was no doubting the earnestness of that reply, which was yelled at Mr. Gunten by thirty voices.

"Then I shall leave Mr. Peckover here, and go at once for the sheriff!" said Mr. Gunten, in a choking voice.

"You can go for the sheriff, or for the governor-general if you like!" answered Bob. "But you won't leave Mr. Peckover here! We don't want him, and we won't have him! That's flat!"

"Mr. Peckover, kindly remain here till I return!" said Mr. Gunten, taking no heed of Bob.

"Certainly, sir!" said Mr. Peckover. "You will lose no time?"

"Rely on me!"

Mr. Gunten walked away to the gates, where his son was waiting in the buggy.

The new schoolmaster took a step towards Mr. Slimmey's cabin, with the intention of remaining there till Old Man Gunten returned with the necessary force to restore order.

But Bob Lawless meant business—and his followers meant it, too.

At a sign from Bob the schoolboys made a rush and surrounded the new master.

Mr. Peckover halted, his eyes glittering.

"Stand back!" he said, between his teeth.

"Collar him!"

"Fire him out!"

The angry man struck out fiercely on all sides as he was collared by the schoolboy strikers.

Two or three of them yelled, but Mr. Peckover's blows were soon stopped, as he was seized from every side.

He was whirled over in the grasp of many hands, and was swept from the ground and carried bodily after Mr. Gunten.

In a yelling crowd, the schoolboys rushed down to the gates, with Mr. Peckover struggling and wriggling in their midst.

Mr. Gunten spun round in the gateway, his eyes almost starting from his head at the sight of what was happening.

Without heeding the storekeeper, Frank Richards & Co. rushed Mr. Peckover up to the buggy, and tossed him bodily into it.

Kern Gunten gave a loud howl as the schoolmaster crashed upon him, and they disappeared into the bottom of the buggy together.

"Good gad!" stuttered Mr. Gunten dazedly. Bob Lawless and Frank Richards caught him by the arms.

"Jump in!" rapped out Bob.

"What?"

"Jump in, or you will be chucked in! Sharp's the word!"

"I—I—I—"



FIRED OUT! Frank Richards & Co. rushed the wriggling headmaster down to the gates, and tossed him bodily into the buggy. Kern Gunten gave a loud howl as Mr. Peckover crashed upon him, and they disappeared into the bottom of the buggy together. "Hurrah! Fire them out!" yelled the excited schoolboys. (See Chapter 5.)

"Oh, chuck him in!" roared Chunky Todgers.

"Let me go! I—I will get in!" gasped the storekeeper.

"Get a move on, then!"

The fat storekeeper scrambled wildly into the buggy.

Frank Richards took the horse's head, and led him round into the trail, while Mr. Gunten and his son and the schoolmaster sorted themselves out in the vehicle, gasping and furious.

"Off!" shouted Bob.

"Off they go!"

Frank gave the horse a light flick, and the animal, startled by the shouting, dashed away up the trail, the buggy rocking behind him.

Mr. Gunten made a grasp at the reins and controlled the horse, but he did not stop.

The fat gentleman was glad enough to get away from the excited school, and Mr. Peckover had no desire whatever to remain there by himself—he had too much regard for his skin.

A roar from the Cedar Creek crowd followed the buggy as it spun away up the trail to Thompson.

The vehicle vanished from sight with a clatter of hoofs.

Mr. Gunten was gone, and his new schoolmaster with him; and Cedar Creek was left to itself.

"Well," said Bob Lawless, with a deep breath, "we're in for it now, you chaps!"

"I guess so!" said Chunky Todgers. "Who cares?"

"In for a penny, in for a pound!" said Frank Richards. "Old Man Gunten will bring the sheriff and his men. Are we going to give in?"

"No fear!"

"I guess we can't handle the sheriff as we did Old Man Gunten," said Tom Lawrence, with a whistle.

"I guess we're not giving in unless Miss Meadows comes back!" said Bob Lawless.

"Hear, hear!"

"Cedar Creek is on strike, and the strike goes on till we get justice!" continued Bob. "No time to lose. The sheriff will be along before the day's much older. Every fellow that isn't ready for a fight to a finish had better hop out while he's got a chance. We're going to bar the gate and hold the school against all comers!"

"Bravo!"

"All the girls and all the kids had better go home," said Bob, in a business-like way. "There will be some hard knocks, most likely, and pretty faces mustn't get damaged. Every chap who stays after the gate is barred is in it to the finish, even if we wind up in the calaboose at Thompson!"

And Bob Lawless, like a good general, put his plans into execution at once.

The little scholars and the girls departed, accompanied by the few who did not care to keep on to the end.

Frank Richards & Co. and a score of other choice spirits remained, and they barred the gate and prepared for defence.

Ere long, they knew, outraged authority would be there, with force to back it up; and it would be a grim struggle.

How the affair would end no one could foresee; but upon one point Frank Richards & Co. were grimly determined—there was to be no surrender, and until their beloved schoolmistress was reinstated the school would remain on strike.

THE END.

There will be another Splendid Story of the Chums of Cedar Creek, entitled: "The Siege of the Lumber School," next week.

AN OUTCAST AND WANDERER!

Dick Redfern starts out on his first morning in London with the world at his feet. But the end of the day finds him weary and dispirited. What chances has he of finding work—of earning a living? He is without a friend in the whole great metropolis!

DICK REDFERN'S FATE!

But the end of the day finds him weary and dispirited. What chances has he of finding work—of earning a living? He is without a friend in the whole great metropolis!

ALONE IN LONDON!

A Wonderful Story that will make a great name in the history of the "Popular"!

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.**The Drama of the Night!**

MONTEITH! Wake up—wake up at once!"

Mr. Ratcliff bent over the slumbering form of the New House prefect, and gave it a shake. "Do you hear me, Monteith?" he snapped.

The prefect rolled over in bed with a yawn. It was one o'clock in the morning, and the conditions were very cosy—in bed. Outside, the wind howled fitfully, making windows rattle and doors bang.

"Gerraway!" murmured Monteith drowsily. "Rising-bell hasn't gone yet." "Wake up!"

Mr. Ratcliff's voice rose to a shrill crescendo.

Monteith heard the voice—he could hardly help doing so—but in his slumberous stupor he imagined it was the voice of his fog.

"Buzz off, you young idiot!" he growled. "I told you not to call me until seven."

"Monteith!"

"Buzz off, I tell you! I'm too fagged to turn out now; but I'll lay my ashpant across your shoulders in the morning for disturbing my sleep. Clear off, you young sweep—" The prefect's voice trailed off drowsily.

Mr. Ratcliff, finding that shaking was no use, resorted to more drastic measures. He took Monteith's nose between his thumb and forefinger, and tweaked it violently.

"Yoooooop!"

James Monteith sat up in bed with a wild yell of anguish. He blinked at Mr. THE POPULAR.—No. 221.

Ratcliff in the half-light; then he gave a gasp.

"Great Scott! I—I'd no idea it was you, sir—" he stuttered.

"Apparently not, or you would not have addressed me as a young idiot and a young sweep!" said Mr. Ratcliff icily. "Get up at once, Monteith."

The prefect thrust out a pair of pyjama-clad legs from beneath the bed-clothes.

"Is anything wrong, sir?" he asked.

"I should not rouse you at one o'clock in the morning if there was nothing amiss," said the Housemaster. "One of the junior boys—Redfern—has run away from the school!"

"My only aunt!"

Mr. Ratcliff frowned.

"Pray do not make use of such opprobrious expressions, Monteith."

"Sorry, sir. You say Redfern has bunked?"

"Certainly not! I should be the last person in the world to make use of such a word as 'bunked,'" said Mr. Ratcliff sourly. "The boy has run away. I apprehended him in the quadrangle a few moments ago, but he outwitted me, and got away."

Monteith lighted a candle and hurriedly dressed.

"Can't see why Redfern should have run away," he muttered.

"I will explain the circumstances," said Mr. Ratcliff. "Last evening I gave a lantern lecture to the junior boys of both Houses. I arranged for Redfern to operate the magic lantern. He gave me his word of honour that he would use the slides in their proper order. Instead of doing so, he changed them about, so

that the wrong pictures appeared, and did not fit in with my lecture."

Monteith gave a low whistle.

"If Redfern broke his word of honour, sir, he's a cad," he said.

"Quite so," said Mr. Ratcliff. "I took him before Dr. Holmes, who ordered him to apologise to me for having covered me with ridicule in the Lecture Hall. This Redfern refused to do. He was therefore sent to the punishment-room for the night. By a clever subterfuge, he made his escape, and has run away from the school. I want you, and two other prefects, to go in pursuit of him at once."

Monteith nodded.

"I'll wake Gray and Webb, sir," he said, "and we'll soon get on Redfern's track. You say he hasn't been gone long, sir?"

"That is so, Monteith."

"Have you any idea which way he went, sir?"

Mr. Ratcliff stroked him chin thoughtfully.

"I should imagine he would go to the railway station, with the idea of catching the mail train, which stops at Rylcombe at one-thirty," he said. "That is only a surmise on my part. Still, you might do worse than call at the station first."

Monteith glanced at his watch.

"It's nearly ten past one now, sir," he said. "We shall have to hustle. You can rely on me to do my best to bring Redfern back within the hour."

"Thank you, Monteith."

Mr. Ratcliff retired to his own quarters, confident that the search party would soon succeed in capturing the runaway and bring him back to the school. Monteith, now thoroughly awake, lost

"The Return of the Wanderer!"—Next Week's St. Jim's Tale!

no time in rousing Gray and Webb, his fellow prefects. They were as reluctant to turn out as Monteith had been; but when he explained the urgency of the situation, they jumped out of bed and scrambled into their clothes.

"We'd better bike down to the station," said Gray. "It'll be quicker."

Monteith nodded.

"Buck up!" he said.

The trio were soon battling their way across the windy quad to the bicycle shed. They lighted their lamps, and rode their machines down to the school gates.

Taggles, the porter, was awakened by the simple expedient of throwing gravel at his bed-room window. His head, surmounted by a tasselled nightcap, was thrust through the aperture.

"Wot's up down there?"

"It's all right, Taggles," called Monteith. "We're not burglars. One of the kids has bolted, and we're going to bring him back. Shy down your keys so that we can open the gates."

Taggles, the porter, was awakened by grumbling and growling.

"Nice goings hon, hindeed!" he muttered. "Galiwantin' around in the middle of the night, as ever was!"

The keys were under Taggles' pillow. He fetched them, and tossed them down to the prefects in the gateway.

Gray picked them up and unlocked the gates. Then the prefects passed through with their bicycles, and rode rapidly away in the direction of the station. Fortunately, they had the wind behind them. It would have been well-nigh impossible to have cycled in the teeth of the gale.

"It's a toss up whether we shall find Redfern at the station," said Monteith. "Still, as Ratty says, we might do worse than try the station first."

"And if we draw blank——" said Webb.

"We must go on to Wayland."

"I don't fancy the idea of fooling away the night on a wild-goose chase," grumbled Gray.

"Nor I," said Monteith. "But I promised Ratty I'd do my best to bring the young sweep back."

As a matter of fact, the three prefects were on the right track.

It was to the railway station that Dick Redfern had wended his way.

Reddy was entirely innocent of the charges which had been laid against him. He had not changed the lantern slides; he had not broken his word of honour. And this was why he had refused to apologise to Mr. Ratcliff when the Head ordered him to do so. He could not apologise for something he had not done.

Having been sent to the punishment-room, Reddy had imagined he was to be expelled next morning. He had no intention of submitting to the humiliating ordeal of public expulsion; and finding a way of escape, he had taken it with both hands, so to speak.

His plans for the future were vague and indefinite. But he was not unduly worried. He would go to London and tramp around until he found a job. He was not without previous experience, having once worked in a newspaper office.

Redfern was now pacing up and down the dimly-lit platform of Rylconbe Station.

Apart from a sleepy-eyed porter, the junior was the only person on the platform.

The night mail was signalled, and at any moment Reddy expected to see it swing round the curve with a glimmer of lights.

Presently it came. And at the same instant Dick Redfern saw three tall forms appear on the platform. He knew instinctively that they were St. Jim's fellows, sent to fetch him back, but in the uncertain light he could not identify them.

Reddy did not lose his head and dart wildly away, though he might well have been excused for doing so. He saw that the train was slowing up, and he boarded it before it stopped.

Opening the door of an empty first-class carriage, Reddy leapt nimbly inside. But he didn't stay there. He passed right through the compartment, opened the door on the other side, and jumped out on to the metals. Then he faded away into the darkness.

Monteith, Gray, and Webb knew nothing of these manoeuvres, beyond the fact that Redfern had boarded the train. They had seen him do that.

"Hop in quickly!" muttered Monteith. "The train only stops here a couple of ticks. Any carriage will do! We know that Redfern's on the train, and we'll collar him at the next stop—Wayland Junction."

The three prefects jumped into the nearest carriage. There was a shout of "Right away!" and the mail train puffed its way out of the little station.

Dick Redfern, safe from his pursuers, gave a chuckle.

"This has queered my chance of getting to London to-night," he muttered. "Still, I've given those fellows the slip. Wonder who they were? Prefects, I expect. They seemed pretty tall."

Now came the problem as to how Dick Redfern should pass the remainder of the night.

The next train to London did not leave until seven in the morning. There were nearly six hours to kill.

It was too late to go hunting for lodgings. In any case, this course would have aroused suspicion.

"I'll find a barn or a shed somewhere," mused Redfern.

He tramped across several fields, and eventually he came across a little wooden shanty, which he decided would answer his purpose.

The floor of the shanty was littered with straw, and Reddy threw himself down upon it, and made himself as comfortable as possible.

"This isn't exactly a first-class hotel," he murmured as he composed himself to slumber. "Still, it's better than nothing, and I can't pick and choose."

Before dropping off to sleep he reviewed the events of the evening. His whole world had changed during the last few hours.

First came the lantern-lecture given by Mr. Ratcliff, and the affair of the slides. Then the scene in the Head's study, when Reddy refused to apologise. Then his banishment to the punishment-room, and his escape therefrom. And, finally, his outwitting of the three prefects.

Now there was the future to be considered. But Reddy wisely decided to go to sleep, and not meet troubles halfway. He closed his eyes, and made his mind a blank. And he was soon in the arms of Morpheus.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Fighting for a Pal.

ST. JIM'S was in a state of seething excitement next morning.

Dick Redfern had run away. That was the first bombshell. And everybody wondered how Reddy had managed to escape from the confines of the punishment-room.

Three prefects had been sent to bring the runaway back. That was the next piece of breathless news. The prefects had returned, baffled and exasperated. The runaway was still at large!

Monteith, Gray, and Webb had explored every compartment of the train when it reached Wayland, only to find that the bird had flown.

"Fancy old Reddy doing a bolt!" exclaimed Lawrence, of the New House. "I jawed to him last night, through the keyhole of the punishment-room, but he didn't say he was going to bunk."

"Made up his mind at the last minute, I expect," said Owen.

"This is all Ratty's fault," growled Figgins. "If he hadn't tried to inflict his mouldy lantern-lecture on us this wouldn't have happened."

"I don't believe it was Reddy who mixed up the lantern-slides," said Fatty Wynn.

"I'm jolly certain it wasn't!" said Lawrence. "I asked Reddy myself, and he assured me that he didn't touch the beastly things."

"But he must have done," said Chowle.

All eyes were turned to the cad of the Fourth.

"What makes you say that?" asked Owen.

"Well, use your own common-sense," said Chowle. "The slides were in a box in Ratty's study. Ratty sent Redfern to fetch them, and Redfern thought it would be a fine jape to mix up the slides. There was nobody there to see him do it. The box was on the right-hand side of the table as you enter the door——"

"Hallo! You seem to know a mighty lot about it," said Lawrence with a searching glance at the cad of the Fourth.

Chowle flushed. He realised that he had let his tongue run away with him.

"How did you know the box of slides was on the right-hand side of the table, Chowle?" demanded Figgins.

"Well——that's where Ratty always keeps them," stammered Chowle.

"Chowle seems to be jolly familiar with the geography of Ratty's study," said Owen. "I believe he could throw some light on this."

Chowle looked very uneasy. The eyes of every fellow in the Fourth Form dormitory were fixed upon him accusingly.

"Are you fellows suggesting that it was I who muddled up the lantern-slides?" he asked.

"Yes; it's just the sort of rotten trick you would do!" said Kerr.

Lawrence strode towards Chowle and gripped him by the collar.

"If you did it, own up!" he said fiercely.

Chowle struggled to shake himself free.

"Leggo!" he panted. "I don't know anything about the beastly slides. It must have been Redfern who tampered with them."

"But Reddy would never break his word of honour," said Owen. "He solemnly promised Ratty that he wouldn't meddle with the slides, and I don't believe for one moment he did. Somebody must have gone into Ratty's study beforehand and played the jape."

"And that somebody was you, I believe!" said Lawrence, shaking Chowle like a rat. "Own up, you rotter!"

But Chowle was not likely to confess at this stage. Matters had gone too far for that. He was guilty, right enough; and if he had owned up at the beginning

he would have got off with a swishing. But the blame had fallen upon another. Dick Redfern had been made the scape-goat, and he had run away from the school in consequence.

If Chowle owned up now, after so much mischief had been done, it would mean a public flogging at least. And Cyril Chowle was too weak-kneed to brave such an ordeal. He decided to brazen it out.

Lawrence, furious at the thought that there had been a miscarriage of justice, shook Chowle, until his teeth rattled. But he didn't get a confession out of him.

"I had nothing to do with it, I tell you!" gasped Chowle. And he was so insistent that at last Lawrence let him go.

But Dick Redfern's chums had no intention of letting the matter rest there.

They were convinced that Reddy was innocent. And they decided to go and interview the Head with the object of clearing Reddy's name.

Tom Merry & Co. were equally convinced of Dick Redfern's innocence. They discussed the affair with Lawrence and Owen before breakfast; and when the meal was over a little deputation made its way to the Head's study. The deputation consisted of the Terrible Three of the Shell, Lawrence and Owen, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Gussy insisted on joining the deputation, because, as he pointed out, a fellow of tact and judgment was needed.

Dr. Holmes was seated at his desk. He looked very worried, as if he carried the weight of the world on his shoulders.

The Head had sent a telegram to Redfern's father, asking if the junior had arrived home. And he was awaiting a reply to his wire.

Mr. Ratcliff was present in the Head's study. He was looking more sour and irritable than ever. He had just been telling the Head of the events of the night before.

It was Edgar Lawrence who led the deputation into the Head's study. He took the lead by virtue of being Redfern's best chum.

Dr. Holmes looked up, with a frown. "What is the meaning of this—or—wholesale invasion?" he demanded, as the six juniors filed in one after the other. "We've come to see you about Redfern, sir—" began Lawrence boldly.

The Head raised his hand. "I wish to hear nothing concerning that wretched boy," he said sharply. "He has been guilty of the most abominable conduct—"

"He's not guilty, sir!" Six voices rang out in chorus. Mr. Ratcliff glowered at the juniors. "You forget yourselves!" he said harshly. "How dare you make a scene in the headmaster's study? It is monstrous!"

"Leave them to me, Mr. Ratcliff," said the Head, with asperity. "I will deal with them. Have you boys any special reason for saying that Redfern is not guilty?"

"There's only one reason, sir, but that's all-sufficient," said Tom Merry. "Dick Redfern would never break his word of honour."

"But he has done so—"

"Pway pardon me, sir," interjected Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "but I think you have done Wedfern an injustice."

The Head's brow grew black as thunder.

"D'Arcy! How dare you?"

"I do not mean to be disrespectful, sir," said the swell of St. Jim's. "But you don't know Wedfern as well as we do. We've nevah yet known him to

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break his word of honah. It's a thing he would nevah dweam of doin'. He pwomised Mr. Watcliff he would not interfere with the lantern-slides, an' he kept his pwomise."

"On the contrary, he broke it," said the Head. "He deliberately changed the slides, and showed the pictures in their wrong sequence, in order to hold up Mr. Ratcliff to ridicule."

"That is so," snapped the House-master.

"Redfern's not guilty!" broke out Owen. "If he had played such a prank, he'd have been perfectly willing to own up, and face the music."

"Yes, rather!" chimed in Lawrence. "Redfern didn't do it. I'll stick to that, if it means my being fired out of the school."

The Head rapped sharply on his desk with his clenched hand.

"This wild outburst will not help Redfern's case one iota," he said. "I appreciate your loyalty to a friend, but justice must be done. There can be no sentiment in this matter. I am satisfied that Redfern is guilty. I sent him to the punishment-room, intending to flog him this morning, for the dual offence of tampering with the slides and refusing to apologise to Mr. Ratcliff. The reckless boy escaped from the punishment-room during the night, and his present whereabouts are unknown. But I have no doubt he will soon be found and brought back to the school, when I shall have no alternative but to expel him."

"But he's innocent, sir!" protested Lawrence.

The Head rose to his feet. "I refuse to hear another word in championship of that wretched boy," he said sternly. "Leave my study at once, all of you."

Mr. Ratcliff flung open the door, and fairly pushed Lawrence and Owen into the corridor. The other members of the deputation followed.

Out in the passage, the juniors exchanged glum glances.

"No go!" said Manners lugubriously. "Well, to tell the truth, I hardly thought we should be able to convince the Head," said Tom Merry. "We didn't go about it in quite the right way, to begin with. If Gussy hadn't ruffled the Head's feathers by taxing him with injustice—"



Do you like a yarn with a thrill in every line—a story that grips and keeps you breathless with excitement from first word to last? If you do, you'll like this new thriller of the racing track, which commences in this week's BOYS' REALM (out on Wednesday, April 11th). "Behind the Wheel" is the finest motor racing story ever written—don't miss a line of it!

BOYS' REALM 2

Every Wednesday.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy! I considah I showed great tact—"

"Br-r-r!"

"Anyway, it's a wash-out," said Lawrence despondently. "Old Ratty seems to have poisoned the Head's mind against Reddy. He'll be sacked as soon as they've found him. Poor old Reddy!"

"They haven't found him yet," said Monty Lowther. "And if they mean to sack him as soon as they collar him, let's hope they never will."

"Hear, hear!"

The party broke up, and Lawrence and Owen walked dejectedly back to the New House.

Life at St. Jim's would not be the same without their chum. Already they missed him sorely.

They kept a watchful eye on the postman, in the hope of getting a line from the runaway. But no letter came. Redfern was wise enough not to betray his whereabouts by a postmark.

"We must live in hopes, that's all," said Lawrence. "I'm pretty certain that Chowle's at the bottom of this business, and that sooner or later he'll give himself away."

"The sooner the better," said Owen. And they left it at that.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Stroke of Luck!

MEANWHILE, what of the runaway?

After a sound sleep in the wooden shanty which he had discovered, Dick Redfern awoke to the glory of a Spring morning. Blue skies and bright sunshine, and the twittering of birds greeted Reddy when he emerged from his sleeping-quarters.

Redfern washed his face and hands in the brook near by, drying himself with a towel he produced from his haversack.

There was no immediate prospect of breakfast. That would have to wait.

"Now for London Town!" muttered Redfern glumly.

He was surprised to find himself in such good spirits. The glorious morning probably had something to do with that. Had it been a wet or a muggy morning, things might have been different.

Dick Redfern set out with a light step and a light heart for the railway station.

He half expected to see some St. Jim's prefects on the platform, waiting to pounce upon him. But his luck was in. It did not seem to have occurred to anybody to intercept the early train to London.

The sleepy-eyed booking-clerk did not take any particular notice of Dick Redfern when the latter bought his ticket. He issued it without comment, and Reddy boarded the train in the ordinary way, when it came in.

By nine o'clock he was in London. And here he felt no further fear of pursuit. The mighty metropolis, with its teeming millions, was the safest hiding-place in the world.

Redfern had a little money in his pocket, and he was likely to need it.

The first item on the programme was breakfast. Reddy entered a modest-looking restaurant, and ordered eggs and bacon, hot rolls, and coffee. He had fasted for many hours, through force of circumstances, and the feed bucked him up, and made him feel his own man again.

"That's tons better," he said to himself. "Now I must alter my appearance a bit. I'll wear my raincoat over my Eltons, and I shall have to buy an

ordinary cap in place of this one. I don't want to advertise the fact that I'm fresh from St. Jim's."

The alterations to his attire having been completed, Reddy set out in quest of lodgings. Eventually he obtained a bed-sitting-room at a house near Victoria Station. It was not a luxurious room, but Reddy was not in a position to pick and choose.

"Now I must start looking for a job," he said. "Wonder if I shall fall on my feet, or if I shall have to chase around for days?"

As he stepped briskly through the London streets, his thoughts strayed to St. Jim's.

He would sorely miss the green playing-fields, and the comradeship, and the thousand and one things that helped to make school life enjoyable. Yet he did not regret having taken the plunge and run away.

"The truth will come out in time," he said philosophically. "The fellow who mixed up Ratty's lantern-slides will own up, and my name will be cleared. Lawrence and Owen will stand by me, anyway. I can count on that."

It was towards Fleet Street that Dick Redfern vended his way. He hoped there might be a job going on one of the papers. But he soon made the discovery that it was not easy to walk into a job without references. He went and saw several editors, and they wanted to know who he was and where he came from. They eyed him with a certain amount of suspicion. And as he was not able to produce any credentials, they showed him the door.

This went on pretty well all day, until Dick Redfern was tired and footsore.

He had started out that morning with the world at his feet, or so it seemed. But the end of the day found him weary and dispirited. He retired early to bed at his lodgings, hoping for better luck next day.

The next day happened to be Saturday.

Redfern pursued his quest for a job all the morning, but without result.

In the afternoon none of the offices of the weekly journals were open.

"I shall have to mark time till Monday morning, and try again then," was Reddy's reflection. "Meanwhile—"

His attention was suddenly arrested by a number of motor-buses. They were packed with passengers and bound for Homerton.

"What's on at Homerton, I wonder?" mused Reddy.

Then the explanation dawned upon him in a flash. His favourite footer team—Southampton—was in town. They were due to play Clapton Orient that afternoon.

Instantly Reddy brightened up. He forgot, for the time being, his disappointing search for work. Time enough to worry about that, he reflected, when Monday morning came.

"I'll go and see the Saints!" he exclaimed. "It will be like a tonic to see my old favourites!"

He jumped on a passing bus, and fought his way to the top, and felt quite excited as he was whirled away northwards.

The turnstiles were clicking merrily when Redfern reached the ground.

"Not much fun being wedged in among the crowd," thought Reddy. "I'll get a seat in the stand."

He got a very good one, too—right in front. Next to him sat a young fellow of about two-and-twenty, with a notebook resting on his knees.

Redfern glanced curiously at his com-



DICK REDFERN AT HOMERTON! The match had been in progress about a quarter of an hour when a startling thing happened. The reporter of "The Athlete" suddenly fell back in his seat with a blanched face and closed eyes. Instantly Redfern bent over the young man. "I'm whacked!" muttered the reporter. "Can't keep going any longer!"

(See Chapter 3.)

panion. The fellow looked white and worn, as if on the verge of collapse.

It was on the tip of Reddy's tongue to ask if there was anything the matter; but he reflected that it was no concern of his, and said nothing.

Presently the teams came out, and roars of applause went up from all parts of the ground.

"Play up, the Saints!" shouted Dick Redfern, craning forward to take stock of the men he admired.

The young man with the notebook smiled faintly.

"Southampton supporter?" he queried. "Yes—a red-hot one!" was the reply.

"Good! Let's hope we shall see a decent game. Dashed if I feel like reporting it, though!"

Redfern looked interested. "Are you a newspaper man?" he asked.

"Yes. Reporter on the staff of the Athlete. I've been a bit overworked lately, dashing about all over the country. What with a Cuptie here, and a boxing-match there, and a golf tournament somewhere else, my hands have been pretty full."

"You don't look very fit," said Redfern.

"And I don't feel it. I had a nervous breakdown once—a couple of years back—and I remember feeling exactly like I do now when it came on. Hope I'm not booked for another. Hallo! Now they're off!"

The young reporter's attention became focused upon the match. His keen eyes took in every phase of the play, and his pencil fairly raced across the paper.

Dick Redfern found himself interested in his companion almost as much as in

the match. He divided his attention between the two.

The game had been in progress about a quarter of an hour when a startling thing happened.

The reporter of the "Athlete" suddenly fell back in his seat, with blanched face and closed eyes. His notebook and pencil clattered to the floor.

Instantly Redfern bent over the young man, and loosened his collar, and did what he could to revive him.

Presently the reporter opened his eyes. "I'm whacked!" he muttered. "Can't keep going any longer."

"Here's a bobby," said Redfern, as a policeman hovered into view in front of the enclosure. "He'll arrange for you to be taken home."

"But my report—it's got to be in tonight!"

"Perhaps I can do it for you," said Reddy. "Don't you worry."

"But you—you—a kid! You can't do it!"

"I'm an old hand at reporting footer-matches," said Redfern cheerfully. "I'll take over the job, and hand in the report at the office of the "Athlete" this evening, if you'll let me."

"I say, that's awfully decent of you!" "Rats! It's a pleasure. I'll tell the editor you were taken queer at the match. Would you mind telling me your name; by the way?"

"Winthorp," was the reply.

Redfern picked up the notebook and pencil and got busy. Meanwhile, the policeman assisted the young reporter from the ground, and had him sent home in a taxicab.

Dick Redfern found it quite a simple

(Continued on page 27).

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Tell Your Pals to Look Out for "The Outlaw King!" It's Coming Along!

CAPTURED AT LAST!

Dick Neville comes up against the greatest sheriff of the country, and falls into a cleverly-laid trap!



A 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. The two comrades meet with many adventures on the broad highway, making many friends and enemies. They fall in with a party of gamsters, Captain Spott & Co., who have in their clutches a young nobleman, Sir Cecil Stanhope of Basing Hall. Sir Cecil is almost penniless when the two highwaymen arrive at the hall, but the latter conspire together to devise a scheme of clearing out the thieves. Their plot turns out a great success, the hall is rid of the "guests," and Sir Cecil saved from ruin just in time.

Soon after the departure of Captain Spott & Co., Turpin and his chum ride forth from Basing Hall in search of further adventure.

(Now read on.)

ON THE ROAD ONCE MORE!

"WHERE to now, sir Knight?" said Turpin, as they trotted down the Hutton road. "These little crusades of yours are very amusing, and I think Sir Cecil Stanhope may thank his stars he met you. But they do not fit the pockets, and my purse begins to feel light. I went over the knaves we tied to the trees, but the rascals had but a few guineas between them."

"You have helped yourself indirectly to Sir Cecil's money, then?" said Dick, rather gruffly. "For if those rogues had any, that is where it came from."

"And cheap, too, at the price of ridding himself of the Spott crew," said Turpin imperturbably. "I find one guinea as good as another, Dick. But my very pistols itch to meet some fat burgess with a belt full of gold. I never took hand in so many unprofitable labours before I met you, my gay young crusader. Where shall we turn next?"

"Away to the southward," replied Dick. "A day's journey, and then we will turn to our profession in earnest. If I'm to be hanged at last, I'll have something in payment for it. But it is not well to make a stir too near to Raiphi's school, and as the country will soon be humming with us here we will leave it to settle down. I can pay a flying visit to Ralph whenever necessary, till the time comes to strike home. I will tell you of that anon."

For three hours they rode, putting up for the night at a turf-cutter's hut at last, for Turpin opined it was best to leave inns alone after their recent escapades. Next day they were on the road betimes, and towards evening, as they came out upon the

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lonely heaths beyond Harboro', Turpin announced his intention of leaving his comrade for a few hours.

"I must strike across country by the mile-stone here, Dick," he said, "to settle a little matter, of which I will say nothing at present. It may prove to our joint profit later on, as I will explain to you to-night. You ride on and await me at the Cenyer's Arms at Boxley, which is a good little hostelry, and safe as the daylight for gentlemen of our profession. This not ten miles ahead, and you will be there by dark. It will be near midnight before I join you."

He waved his hand, and rode away at right-angles across the heath, leaving Dick wondering what was in the wind.

"He is not wont to be so mysterious," thought Dick. "Nor have I known him to pull off so suddenly before. But it is a queer day when Turpin does not know what he is about."

He pushed on at a canter, gaining the higher part of the road, where trees and coppices fringed the way, and the light was dimmer as it filtered through the branches that nearly met overhead.

"I begin to feel the lack of him already. What a merry rogue he is! 'Twould be little sport to ride the highways without him. Hallo, yonder comes a traveller, and in no good humour, by the sound of him!"

A large, bulky form on horseback was approaching slowly, and a torrent of curses came from the rider. He bestrode a fine, handsome chestnut, which had fallen almost dead lame in its near fore, and he flogged the poor beast savagely.

"Get on, you lagging, good-for-nothing sloth!" he cried, lashing it brutally with a heavy hunting-whip. The poor beast winced and staggered, but it could bear no weight on its lame foot, nor go any faster. "Get on! Am I to be late for dinner? Hang you, I'll cut the lazy hide off you!"

Dick's blood boiled at the sight, for

nothing made him more savage than cruelty to a horse, and he pressed forward.

"For shame, sir!" he said hotly. "Are you mad to flog a lame horse like that? Get down and lead him like a man, or he will never stand on four sound legs again."

"Blood and hounds!" cried the stranger, a big, portly man, richly dressed, and with a bullet-head and brick-red face. "What the fiend is it to you? Mind your own affairs, puppy, or I will serve you worse than the horse!"

Dick's reply was to whip out a long, black pistol.

"By the rood," he said, "I had no thought to strip you, and, in truth, business was not in my mind; but you have fairly earned it! Down from that horse and out with your purse, or he will go home riderless! Quickly, for I am in no mind to wait!"

The man looked into Dick's pistol-muzzle blankly, and then fairly gasped with rage. He was beyond speech.

"Move no hand towards a weapon, unless you want a bullet through your skull!" said the young highwayman. "Down with you, sirrah!"

"A highwayman!" shouted the stranger. But he dismounted rapidly enough, glaring at Dick the while.

"Poot!" he cried, as he stood in the road. "You have put your own neck in the noose! Do you know who I am?"

"I shall be blithe to hear," said Dick. "For if I find you ill-treating a horse again I will cure you of it for good and all. I let you off with a fine this time, provided you pay it swiftly."

"Braggart! I am Vincent Grafton of Claverhouse, lord of this manor and Justice of the Peace, and the terror of evildoers! You had best ride for your life, you know, and make the best of it."

"They call me Dick o' the Roads," said the young highwayman coolly, "and better men than you have threatened me, to their own undoing. For the last time, your purse, for my finger itches upon the trigger!"

The magistrate, seeing there was no help for it, surrendered his well-filled purse with another oath. He was a good enough judge of men to see that Dick would be as good as his word.

Dick dismounted, took the purse, motioned the man back, and advanced to the lame horse. He unrid the girths rapidly, threw the stirrup-irons away, took the saddle off, and flung it into a boggy ditch by the roadside. He took the bridle off, unhitched the bit, and flung it far into the wood, and replaced the bridle as a plain halter round the neck. Then he took the magistrate's whip, tore the thong off, and broke the crop across his knee.

"You may now lead the horse home," said Dick coolly. "I doubt you are not man enough to ride him without saddle or bit. Be thankful I have not laid the thong about your shoulders! You were very near it. Away with you, sirrah, and treasure this as a lesson!"

Paying no heed to the man's muttered threats, Dick mounted Black Satan, and trotted on towards Boxley, well pleased with himself. When a mile or two along the road he pulled out the captured purse.

"Well filled!" he said, opening it. "A very just fine. It is strange that yonder ruffler should be lord of a manor, and magistrate besides. He is wealthy, certainly, but plainly of no birth. But this is a plaguey long road to Boxley, on my word! That is a pleasant-looking cottage yonder, and I am so hungry that even bread and cheese would be welcome, while Boxley is far ahead. Doubtless, the owner will take good payment for half an hour's rest here."

He dismounted, and a fine-looking, white-haired old cottager, poorly dressed, but very neat and clean, came out. The man looked careworn and troubled, but he greeted Dick civilly.

"Can you rest man and beast for a space, good man," said Dick, "for the price of a King George's guinea? We are both weary."

"Come in, sir, and say nothing of payment," said the man. "I shall have little chance of harbouring a guest soon, gentle or simple. You will be the last, I doubt."

Dick hitched Satan to the fence at the back, where some outhouses screened him from the road, and saw to his wants. Then he entered the cottage.

"You have a snug home, indeed, good father," he said, "and well kept. Why should I be the last guest?"

The Trial of Dick Neville—and an Amazing Interruption! See Next Week!

The cottager sighed wearily. "The old place is to be taken from me, sir, and pulled down. Our family—good, honest folk—have lived here for three hundred years past under the Kerrisdales, who were lords of the manor. I would they were back, for they were gentlefolk, and dealt well by their tenants and the poor. But since the present owner bought the manor, two years ago, things are changed. He grinds those who are under him to the utmost farthing, and is bitterly cruel. He is free to do as he likes with his own, and it is not for us poor folk to judge our betters. But it goes bitter hard with me to part with this old place, which he is about to pull down to build a shooting lodge in its place."

"That is hard indeed," said Dick. "My work lies in this neighbourhood, sir, yet I cannot get another cottage, for he has forced up all the rents, so that a poor man cannot live there. Moreover, his agent makes me out to be in his debt, which I know I am not, yet I cannot prove it. So my little household is to be sold up, and I to be turned on the roads."

"Sdeath!" exclaimed Dick. "He is as scurvvy a knave as ever I heard of, this landlord of yours! What is his name?"

"Squire Grafton, of Claverhouse."

"What!" cried Dick. "Do you tell me he has—"

Dick broke off suddenly, for the sound of hoofs outside the gate reached him, and through the window he saw a riderless chestnut horse without a saddle, and a leather halter round its neck, hitched to the fence. He recognised it at a glance, and a grim smile stole upon his lips. He sat down again, in the shadowy corner of the room.

"I think another guest is at your door, good man," he said.

The little gate outside was flung roughly open, the cottager opened the door, and in strode the very man Dick had stopped half an hour before.

"How now, fellow?" he cried roughly. "Have you started to put this place in order against your out-going?"

"I shall be ready when you bid me go, sir," said the cottager, with a sigh.

"You'll go to-morrow, sirrah, for then your lease is up! And a good riddance to you? The place will be pulled down, and the roof shall come off the same day. And, hark ye, for your debt to me you shall labour fourteen days at the pulling down with my men, and the clearing up of the ground after!"

"Will you not spare me the old place, sir?" pleaded the man, clasping his hands. "It tears the very heart out of me to leave it, and I shall be a beggar! I will pay any rent you choose, even to starvation, if you let me stay!"

"Enough!" cried Grafton, striking the table heavily with his whip. "You have cheated the estate long enough with your low rent."

"I am in your power, sir," sighed the cottager.

"Ay, you are," said the squire, with an ugly look, "and you shall know it. I've had hanged ill-luck enough to-day, and some of you shall pay for it! Ninety good guineas gone to a—Hollo!"

He stopped short, and turned a dull, sickly green, as his eyes met those of Dick, sitting quietly in the dark corner.

"The highwayman!" muttered Grafton hoarsely.

The squire of Claverhouse was completely thrown off his balance. That he, the magnate of the borough and a justice of the peace, should fall in twice in two hours with the same highwayman was disconcerting.

"Blood!" he exclaimed. "We hope it will not come to that," said Dick coolly. "I see at present no need to shed any so long as you behave yourself."

"So," roared the landlord, turning savagely upon the astonished cottager, "you harbour thieves and malefactors, do you?"

"I did not know—" stammered Dick's host.

"Stay!" said Dick. "This good fellow knows nothing of the matter. Neither can anything be brought up against him, even by you, Master Justice. But let me point out that you have used two or three unpalatable expressions."

DICK MAKES A RETURN FOR HIS LODGINGS!

THE magistrate's face was dark-red with rage; he gobbled like a turkey-cock. His fingers began to steal slowly over his coat towards his side-pocket.

"Your hand begins to play truant, sir," remarked Dick, producing one of his long pistols, which he cocked and laid on the table. "If you are seeking your pocket to offer me a sugar-plum, allow me to say that I do not care for sweets."

"I was about to offer you a medicine," growled the squire; but his hand went no further.

Dick placed his own weapon to the man's head, reached forward, and drew a short, silver-mounted pistol from his prisoner's pocket. He laid it and his own on the table, the butts towards him.

"For a magistrate, you carry strange medicines," said Dick. "Your authority as a justice must be weak, if you are not safe without arms in your own district."

"Small wonder, with so many gallows-born knaves about the country!" said the justice, scowling at Dick.

The young highwayman looked at the red, squab hands of the speaker, and smiled.

"Perhaps we had better not discuss the subject of birth," he said blandly; "there are other matters to be dealt with of great moment."

"I have nothing more about me—not a

groat!" snarled the squire of Claverhouse; "you have stripped me of all I had."

"Let that pass," said Dick; "it is your manners rather than your money which concerns me. It appears, Master Justice, that you treat your men no better than your horses. From what I have seen, you have used this honest cottager very ill."

"Blood and hounds! What concern is it of yours?" roared the magistrate. "Am I to ask your leave how I shall deal with my tenants? Be not too cock-a-hoop, my ruffler! I shall miss that interesting spectacle."

"You may miss that interesting spectacle," returned Dick; "for if you use another unenvil word, and if you do not instantly moderate your voice and adopt a tone more suitable in addressing your superiors, I shall empty both these pistols into your base and adipose carcase."

"My superiors!" gasped the magistrate. "Certainly, sir. I am your superior, if only by right of capture. This cottager is your superior; for, if of lowly station, he is at least no swaggering bully, and I prefer his manners to yours. Enough!" Dick struck the table sharply. "We will now set right this matter of the cottage. My good host here wishes to remain in it."

"It will be levelled to the ground in three days!"

Dick picked up his pistol. "Can you write?" he said to the magistrate.

"Can I! 'Sdeath," spluttered that gentleman, "this is too much!"

"Excellent! Good man, your name? Silas Bardwell? Master Bardwell, pray bring pens and ink, and set them before your landlord. A sheet of paper likewise. Ah, parchment? Better still. Seat yourself at the table, squire. Square your elbows and begin!"

The magistrate gasped. "Your mouth is no thing of beauty at the best, but it looks better shut. Sit down and write a lease, assigning this cottage to Silas Bardwell and his heirs for 999 years, at the annual rent of a peppercorn!"

"May death strike me if I do!" cried the squire furiously.

"It will strike you with exceeding suddenness if you don't!" said Dick, flicking a speck of dust from the barrel of his pistol.

"I am not sure, on the whole, that it would not be simpler to shoot you. There will then be no question of pulling down Master Bardwell's cottage."

The steely-blue eye behind the pistol-sight convinced the squire of Claverhouse. He took up his pen and began to write at Dick's dictation, and, having some knowledge of the law, the young highwayman drew up a very good and binding lease, by which Silas Bardwell was to pay the lord of the manor one peppercorn yearly for the messuage and appurtenances of Cross-Roads Cottage.

"Sign it," said Dick—"your full name and titles, please. Very good. You have wax and signet—affix your seal. Add your

HOLDING UP THE SHERIFF!



As Dick came up to the rider he whipped out a long, black pistol. "By the rood! You are not fit to own a horse!" he cried indignantly. "Get down at once, and move no hand towards a weapon, unless you want a bullet!" "A highwayman!" shouted the stranger, looking at Dick's pistol-muzzle blankly. (See page 24.)

name beneath, Master Silas. So. Hand it to me, and I will witness it."

Dick signed, with a flourishing hand, "Richard Neville, late of Faulkbourne."

"An odd signature to be under a lease of yours, Master Justice," he said, with a grim smile, and tossed the parchment across to Silas. "There, friend, please you to accept that in return for the meal and rest you so freely gave me. One good turn deserves another. No Court in England can upset that lease, and the cottage is yours, rent free, for the next thousand years."

"Ah, sir, you are too good!" said the cottager, with brimming eyes. "It is greater fortune than I ever dreamed of!"

"As for you," said Dick, turning to the magistrate, "you have had two good lessons in one day, and I will leave you to think them over, to your great profit and advancement. Do not, after this, maltreat a horse or oppress the poor, lest worse disaster fall on you. Here is your purse back"—he threw it on the table—"none the lighter. It is my rule not to strip the same pigeon twice in one day, so we will call quits."

"We have not done with each other yet," muttered the magistrate, trembling with passion; "my turn is yet to come!"

Dick laughed.

"You are welcome to it when it comes," he said, walking easily towards the door; "take care you do not burn your fingers. To our next meeting, then! Farewell to you, good master Silas!"

And, unhitching Black Satan's bridle from the rails behind the shed, Dick swung on to his back, and trotted away down the road to Boxley.

"Yonder squire is a greater puzzle than ever," he said to himself. "I cannot yet place him. He is no burgess, as I thought, and very plainly no gentleman, either. He may be some ship-master out of the slave trade who has made a fortune; but he does not quite smell of the sea. Either way, the worthy Silas is safe enough—they can now deal with one another as man to man. Neither will the bullying justice noise the matter abroad—it would make him the laughing-stock of the county were it known how he was pinned twice by a highwayman, and forced to give one of his tenants a free lease. Is that Boxley before me here? Ay, and yonder is the sign of the inn which Turpin spoke of. It is growing dark, and he should be there by now. I am all anxiety to hear what it was that took him away in such a hurry."

Dick dismounted, and entered the inn, which was a very cosy little hostelry, and inquired if another traveller, on a black mare, had yet arrived. The landlord smiled discreetly, and replied in the negative.

"I expect a friend shortly," said Dick; "let dinner for two, and of the very best, be prepared, and mull two bottles of your best Gascony."

"It shall be done," said the host, bowing low.

"He evidently knows well enough who we are," thought Dick, leading Satan round to the stable and tending his wants. "It is a snug little place enough, and Turpin guaranteed it safe. He never makes a mistake in these matters. I will stroll along the road a little way to meet him—he cannot be far off."

He walked back a little way along the road, till he came to a crossway, where he hesitated a moment, wondering by which road Turpin would arrive.

As he stood there, a stranger, not ill-dressed, who was coming down the left-hand road on foot, took a glance at Dick, and immediately walked towards him.

"Pray, sir," said the stranger, raising his hat civilly, "are you awaiting a companion?"

"Yes," said Dick, looking shrewdly at the newcomer.

"He upon the black mare?" said the man, with a half-smile.

"May I ask with what warrant you inquire, sir?" said Dick.

"I come from him; and I hope I am so fortunate as to find the gentleman he bade me seek. We will mention no names, but I have a message for the late squire of Faulkbourne."

"You are in the fat at last," said Dick. "What was the message?"

"The gentleman on the black mare finds he may not enter Boxley. He would be

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IMPRISONED!



Dick Neville sat down on a wooden bench and stared moodily at the prison wall. "What a fool I was to have been taken in by that simple trick," he muttered. "The game is up at last, and the gibbet is my portion!" (See this page.)

glad to see you at the little shaw yonder, where he has news of importance to communicate."

"Then I had better get my horse," said Dick.

"Not so. There will be no need. He said it would be but a few words he would have to say, and then you would return to Boxley. I am to take you to him."

"So?" thought Dick. "What has happened, that Turpin cannot come to the inn? He has lit upon some matter that needs haste, and does not wish to be seen in Boxley, I doubt. Lead on, sir!" he added aloud to the stranger.

They started for the little wood that had been mentioned, and Dick looked at his companion curiously.

"You have been riding hard, sir," said Dick.

"Ay!" laughed the stranger, looking down at his boots, which were flecked with the troth that comes from a hard-riden horse.

"Did I not see you in the hostelry when I was ordering a repast?"

"Possibly," said the man, looking rather disconcerted. "I left my horse there, having ridden in to give you this message. It was not wise to speak to you there, so I made a detour to meet you on the road. Our mutual friend was most anxious I should not fail to find you. Here is the shaw," he added, as they reached the wayside copse. "Come in towards the thicket here, and our friend shall give you his message. I will call him."

He gave a shrill whistle, and at the same moment clapped his long arms round Dick's body, and held on with all his strength.

With a cry of wrath, the young highwayman tried to wrench himself away, but the whistle had brought six or seven lusty fellows dashing out of the copse, and they flung themselves instantly on Dick. He struggled furiously, and sent two of them flying with the breath knocked out of their bodies; but he could not draw a weapon, and they overpowered him by sheer weight. Down he

went, with the assailants on top of him, and in a few moments they had bound his arms tightly to his sides and disarmed him.

"So much for Dick o' the Roads!" said the man who had decoyed Dick to the place.

"You treacherous dog!" cried the young highwayman. "You are one of Hector's mongrel crew, then! You and your six rufflers could not take me without playing the fox! I would have made short work of you, but for the lie that put me off my guard!"

"I know nothing of Hector, unless he is another candidate for the gallows," said the man. "As to my strategy, I think it a very pretty one, and I grieve that it does not please you. I am not paid to fight pitched battles with young gentlemen of the roads. It is my duty to take them whole and sound, that they may be duly and decently hanged as an example to those who stray from the straight and narrow path. Good Dick o' the Roads, I am the head bailiff of Great Baxford Court House, and I take you on the information of his Worship of Claverhouse, whom you this day put in peril of his life and robbed of his gold."

"Do I owe my capture to him?" muttered Dick; and the thought was a harder blow to his pride than the danger.

"Nay, rather to me," said the head bailiff. "I have taken more highwaymen in this small district than any man in England. And now, by your leave, we will escort you to the court-house."

"I will give you credit for a neatly-laid capture," said Dick, as they marched off. "It is a great comfort for me to know the squire of Claverhouse had so little to do with it. To fall into the hands of a fool is humiliating, and when you mentioned his name I feared I had done even that. A shrewd court-bailiff is another matter, and I suppose it was your duty to lie. You did it well!"

"I am flattered," said the bailiff, with a pleased smile. "You must understand that it is not a personal matter with me. I know of your career, and somewhat admire it. It is a pity you should be hanged. Yet be very sure that Claverhouse, whom I have never seen in a worse humour than to-day, will commit you, and there is nothing for it but the gallows. Yet, cheer up! When you are swinging in chains on Gorse Hill, I will come and sit below you sometimes of a night to bear you company, and to remind me of the very pretty capture I made by Boxley Wood!"

AN AMAZING INTERRUPTION!

"THAT ever I should have been such a fool!" thought Dick savagely, as he paced up and down the dimly-lighted cell at Great Baxford Court House. "I had not even a hand on the butt of a weapon. Yet how plausibly the fellow lied!"

He sat down on the wooden bench, and stared moodily at the wall.

He had ridden in on the squire of Claverhouse's command, and overheard me ask the landlord of the inn if my friend on the black mare had arrived. That gave him the clue wherewith to decoy me away. I wonder if he guesses my friend was Turpin? Thank goodness, he is safe, at least! I think he will be a little sorry when he knows what has befallen his old comrade.

"Well, it was my own fault. If I only had — Pah! What is the use of thinking of it now? I have foiled a score of schemes ten times more subtle and dangerous. To be taken by this simple trick, without the chance of striking a blow—I, who swore I would die weapon in hand, and never let any man take me to the gallows! Well, the game is played, and the gibbet is my portion. There is no Sir Henry Stanhope to win a pardon for me this time. Nothing on earth can help me now!"

Grimly he laid down on the hard truckle-bed, for the night was advanced, and composed himself to sleep. This peri did not keep him awake, and not till the gaoler brought him his meagre fare in the morning did he rise. The cooped-up cell drained Dick's spirit more than a bleeding wound would have done, but he bore it with a stiff lip.

Neville Has Been Caught at Last! Where is His Comrade, Dick Turpin?

The door opened, after a dreary hour had passed, and the head bailiff appeared.

"You are called upon for the court," he said, smiling.

Dick was brought into the old oak-framed court-room, and placed in the prisoners' dock. The usual crowd was there—the county attorneys, the tipstiffs, the witnesses for the cases; and on the bench, alone in his glory, sat the red-faced squire of Claverhouse, whose face turned yet a deeper tinge, and whose deep-sunk eyes gleamed with savage satisfaction as his gaze fell on Dick.

The worthy magistrate of Bullyhouse was noted the county over for his blustering tirades from the bench, and his favourite hero was Judge Jeffreys, whose manners and speech, as handed down, he imitated to the best of his capacity. But to-day he fairly surpassed himself.

"Of all the beasts that crawl, there is none more foul than a highwayman, nor any highwayman more vile than the one you see before you. Look upon him, all who are in the court! Mark him well! He is fruit for the gallows. Ripe! Ripe! We are about to pluck him now! See him tremble and cover! See his cheeks blanch and grow white!"

Dick laughed aloud, so coolly and clearly, that everyone in the court stared the harder.

"I had not thought it till you gave me the news," he said; "but I have seen others cower and grow white, no longer than yesterday."

The magistrate became speechless with rage. His face turned the colour of a purple dahlia.

"Ha! But no, I will not return him to the cells again for this insolence! Nay, it were better to send him the quicker to the gallows! Master bailiff, into the witness-box with you, sirrah, and let us have your evidence!"

The bailiff was sworn, and gave his testimony as to the capture of Dick at Boxley Wood.

"And I think, your worship," he concluded, "that the prisoner has a companion of much the same character as himself, and whom I hope soon to place before your worship. When at the inn he spoke of a comrade upon a black mare, who, I doubt not, is another highwayman. I may say I am on the man's track, and he will not long elude me."

"Are there any more witnesses?" asked the magistrate. "There is no need to call them. The prisoner is outlaw and forfeit on twenty counts. Answer, fellow! Are you or are you not Richard Neville, known for your crimes as Dick of the Roads?"

"None should know it better than you," replied Dick.

"We shall cure that tongue of yours shortly! The assizes commence in two days, and I shall commit you to them for immediate trial, which will occupy no more time than it takes to hang a dog, for your crimes are known! You shall dry in chains, knave! Listen now to your doom! I commit—Od's death!"

The magistrate broke off, his face changing colour, and started as if dumb-struck at the back of the court. The pause made everybody look round, and as Dick followed the squire of Claverhouse's gaze, he stared in amazement and dismay.

Among the spectators, looking straight at the magistrate, with a cold, clear grin, was Richard Turpin himself.

For a moment the justice seemed at a loss what to do. His face was an unhealthy colour, and his jaw had fallen. But everyone present gazed, not at the magistrate, but at the strong, dark face of the highwayman.

"Tis Dick Turpin!" said a voice, cutting sharp through the silence.

(Included in next week's fine programme will be another long instalment of our powerful serial.)

ALONE IN LONDON!

(Continued from page 23.)

matter to describe the changing fortunes of the game. Thanks to a close study of League football he knew the name of every player on the field.

Although a keen Southampton supporter, Reddy was not blind to the sterling play of the Orient team. He reported every incident fairly and faithfully exactly as it occurred.

As soon as the match was over Dick Redfern hurried away to the office of the "Athlete." He stepped straight into the editor's sanctum. Here he was confronted by a rather stern-faced gentleman, who sat in a revolving-chair. This gentleman, Reddy rightly assumed, was the editor.

"Who are you?" demanded the latter. In a few words Reddy explained the position.

"Poor old Winthrop!" muttered the editor. "This means another nervous breakdown, I expect. But surely you couldn't have reported the match for him? You're a mere kid!"

"The job's done, sir," answered Redfern. "If you'll allow me to use a typewriter, I'll transcribe my notes. I'm sure you'll be satisfied, sir."

The editor nodded. "All right!" he grunted. "You can try your hand at it, if you like."

"Oh, thanks, sir!" "There's a machine outside which you can use," said the editor.

Reddy left the room, and found the machine in an outer office. He was soon making the sparks fly.

When the report was finished, and handed to the editor, that gentleman perused it in growing amazement. He had expected to see a clumsy, amateurish effort. He had been quite prepared for such phrases as "Bill Jones kicked a fine goal," or "John Brown chucked his weight about." Instead of which he read a well-written account of the tussle at Homerton.

"You've had a little previous experience, kid," the editor said.

"Yes, sir."

"I suppose you're already in a job?" "No, sir; I'm wanting one," said Reddy eagerly.

"Would you care to take Mr. Winthrop's place—just a temporary engagement?"

Dick Redfern jumped at the offer. He had indeed fallen on his feet, and he felt like executing a cakewalk on the editorial carpet.

Reddy was instructed to report at the office on Monday morning, and take up his new duties.

From the Fourth Form at St. Jim's to temporary reporter on the "Athlete" was a big jump, and Dick Redfern walked on air as he made his way back to his lodgings. The fates had been kind to the fellow who was Alone in London.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's topping tale of St. Jim's.)

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2.—Consolation Prizes of 2s. 6d. will be awarded from week to week to those competitors whose efforts show merit.

3.—The coupon below entitling you to enter for this competition must be either pasted on to a postcard, in which case your line must be written IN INK directly beneath it, or enclosed separately in an envelope with your last line effort attached.

4.—Competitor's name and full postal address must accompany every effort sent in.

5.—Entries must reach us not later than April 19th, 1923, and MUST NOT be enclosed with entrance forms for any other competition. They must be addressed "Magnet Limerick No. 1," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

6.—Your Editor undertakes that every effort sent in will receive careful consideration, but he will not hold himself responsible for coupons lost or mislaid, or delayed in the post. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of acceptance.

7.—This competition is open to all readers of the Companion Papers, but the result each week will appear only in the "Magnet."

8.—It is a distinct condition of entry that your Editor's decision must be accepted as binding in all matters. Acceptance of these rules is an express condition of entry.

THE "MAGNET" LIMERICK COMPETITION.

No. 1.

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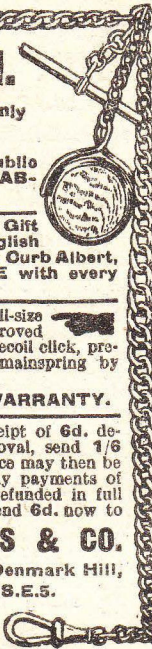
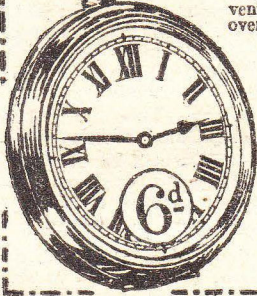
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