

THE REBELS STILL HOLD OUT!

The amazing situation at Cedar Creek School is growing very serious for all parties concerned. Mr. Gunten is still held at bay—but how long can the schoolboys keep back the invaders?

TOPPING BACKWOODS TALE!

No Surrender!



A Topping story of the Rebellion at Cedar Creek School, introducing Frank Richards & Co.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Still Holding Out!**

MISS MEADOWS! "By gum!" There was a buzz of excited voices in the lumber schoolhouse at Cedar Creek.

Miss Meadows, the Canadian schoolmistress, had dismounted from her pony at the gates, and, with the rein over her arm, she walked towards the schoolhouse.

Frank Richards & Co. crowded at the windows.

Miss Meadows' face was very grave. It was evident that she knew of the peculiar state of affairs ruling at Cedar Creek.

Frank Richards glanced rather dubiously at his chums, Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc.

The lumber school was "on strike" as a protest against the dismissal of Miss Meadows, but it was very doubtful whether the Canadian girl would approve of her cause being championed in that way.

In fact, it was pretty certain that she would not.

Certainly her expression, as she came towards the schoolhouse, could not be construed as approved or satisfied.

"I say, this is too bad!" said Bob Lawless, with a comical expression of dismay. "We're standing up for Miss Meadows, and she looks as if she's come to rag us!"

"I guess it's going to be a jaw!" remarked Chunky Todgers.

"And we can't answer Miss Meadows as we did Mr. Gunten," said Vere Beauclerc, with a smile.

"No fear!"

Miss Meadows caught sight of Frank Richards & Co. at the window nearest the barricaded door of the schoolhouse, and she stopped under the window.

The schoolboys saluted her politely.

"Good-morning, Miss Meadows!"

"So glad to see you again, ma'am!"

"Very kind of you to give us a look-in, Miss Meadows."

Apparently the schoolboys of Cedar Creek were trying the efficacy of the "soft answer" in turning away wrath.

But the schoolmistress' face did not relax. She eyed the rebels of Cedar Creek very sternly.

"Richards!"

"Yes, ma'am?"

"What does all this mean?"

"Ahem!"

"I have been informed by Mr. Gunten of the state of affairs here," said Miss Meadows.

"It is shocking, Richards!"

"Ahem!"

"It appears that the whole school is in revolt!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "Mr. Gunten, the chairman of the board of trustees, has been driven away—"

"Ahem!"

"Mr. Peckover, the new headmaster, appointed by the Board, has been turned out, and refused admittance to the school!"

"Ahem!"

"And all this has been done in my name, Mr. Gunten tells me!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"Ahem!"

"Richards, Lawless, I hope this will cease at once!" said the Canadian schoolmistress.

"The—the fact is, ma'am—" began Frank Richards—"the fact is, we're on strike at Cedar Creek."

"Absurd!"

"It's on your account, ma'am."

"That is very wrong of you."

"Oh!"

"The fact is, we mean business!" said Bob Lawless resolutely. "Old Man Gunten had no right to dismiss our schoolmistress to put in a friend of his own, especially a pesky coyote like that galoot Peckover."

Miss Meadows coloured a little.

Her sudden and unjust dismissal from her post at Cedar Creek had been a bitter blow to the schoolmistress.

"My dismissal, Lawless, is my affair, not yours," she said.

"Ours, too, ma'am!" said Bob. "We don't want to lose you, you know. And it wasn't fair play. And we stand up for fair play at Cedar Creek."

"Hear, hear!"

"We won't have the new man, Peckover, at any price!" said Bob quietly. "We won't let Old Man Gunten run the school on his own. We're keeping up the strike till our schoolmistress comes back. If you've come now to take your place here as headmistress, Miss Meadows, you've only to say the word, and the strike's over this minute!"

"I—I have not! It is not that," said Miss Meadows hastily. "But Mr. Gunten called on me and asked me to use my influence to restore order here."

"Cheeky old rascal!" exclaimed Frank Richards indignantly.

"Richards!"

"Well, so he is, ma'am! He has no right to ask you to interfere, after dismissing you. It's like his nerve!"

"I should jolly well think so!" exclaimed Beauclerc warmly. "Let his new headmaster restore order, if he can!"

"I guess he can't work the oracle," grinned Eben Hacke.

"No takee any!" remarked Yen Chin.

"My dear boys," said Miss Meadows. "I—I am very grateful to you for the interest you appear to take in my affairs. But I cannot allow this. You must not act lawlessly in my name."

"But we're not, ma'am," said Frank Richards. "We're acting in our own name. We won't allow our schoolmistress to be sent away. That's the point."

"This state of affairs is very distressing to me."

"Not so distressing as it is to Old Man

Gunten, ma'am," said Bob. "He'll come round in the long run, and do the right thing, I guess."

"But if he does not do what you call the right thing, Lawless—"

"Then we keep on strike!"

"Yes, rather!"

"This cannot continue," said Miss Meadows. "I entreat you, my boys, to cease these proceedings at once and admit Mr. Peckover to authority here."

"Do you tell us as our schoolmistress, ma'am?" asked Frank.

"I cannot do that, as I am no longer your schoolmistress, Richards."

"Then we're not bound to obey you, ma'am; and it can't be done. But there's an easy way of settling the matter. Tell Mr. Gunten that if you come back as headmistress of Cedar Creek order will be restored at once, and there won't be any more trouble."

Miss Meadows smiled slightly.

"I cannot give Mr. Gunten that message, Richards."

"Very well, ma'am; the strike goes on."

"But, my dear boys," said the distressed schoolmistress, "you are laying up for yourselves severe punishment!"

"I guess not!" said Bob confidently. "We've been here some days now, and we've got the best of it so far. Old Man Gunten put the sheriff on to us, but the sheriff didn't cut any ice with us, ma'am. Then the old fox—"

"Lawless!"

"I mean, the old galoot brought the Red Dog gang along from Thompson, and they tried it on," said Bob. "Fancy that for a school trustee! They tried to smoke us out like badgers; but the cowboys came along from the ranch, and the Red Dog gang were glad to light out. I guess they won't come back again, either. Now, Old Man Gunten is at the end of his tether, and he's asked you to chip in. Like his cheek!"

"I guess it shows he's weakening," remarked Chunky Todgers. "He's afraid of the authorities hearing what's on here, and inquiring into the matter. He wouldn't stay on the board of trustees long if they knew about his setting the Red Dog crowd on us!"

"I guess not!" said Bob.

"But—but—" said Miss Meadows. "Your parents—"

"There's the rub!" said Bob. "We started here twenty strong, but some of the chaps' fathers have humped along and called off some of us. But there's still a dozen here, and we'll hold Cedar Creek against all comers!"

"Your father, Lawless—"

"My poppa won't interfere, Miss Meadows. Old Man Gunten started the trouble, and he's leaving it to Old Man Gunten to end it."

Miss Meadows sighed.

"Then you will not cease this?" she asked. "Can't be done, ma'am, till Old Man Gunten sees reason."
 "Then I have wasted my time coming here," said Miss Meadows.
 "Sorry, ma'am," said Frank Richards respectfully. "But we feel that we're in the right, and we're bound to hold out."
 Miss Meadows said no more.
 With a clouded face she turned away and mounted her pony, and rode out of the gates of Cedar Creek.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.
 Chunky is Too Hungry!**

FRANK RICHARDS wrinkled his brows a little as he looked after the graceful form of the Canadian school-mistress, disappearing on the Thompson trail.
 "All serene, Franky," said Bob Lawless. "It was a thundering cheek of old Gunten to ask Miss Meadows to chip in after sacking her for nothing. I wonder she consented."
 "That old galoot's mean enough for anything," said Chunky Todgers. "We're not giving in!"
 "It shows he's at the end of his tether," said Beauclerc. "He simply must come round in the long run. He can't touch us here."
 "And the authorities will be down on him sooner or later," said Hacke. "This can't go on much longer without a lot of talk."
 Frank Richards nodded.
 "We're holding out!" he said.
 "Yes, rather!"
 "Dinner-time!" remarked Chunky Todgers, and he led the way to the dining-room.
 The rebels of Cedar Creek were cheery enough as they assembled for dinner.

They had had an exciting time, but so far they had succeeded in holding the fort, and they did not doubt their ability to continue to do so.
 The schoolboy garrison had had a narrow escape when Old Man Gunten called in the Red Dog crowd to deal with them, but they had survived it.

And the fact that the Swiss storekeeper had been driven to ask Miss Meadows' assistance showed that he was getting desperate.

For three or four days now the revolt had continued.

The garrison had been reduced in number, for the reason that some of the boys' parents had taken a serious view of the matter, and had ridden over to the school to call their sons out of the barricaded schoolhouse.

But Frank Richards & Co. were still there, and they had had enough supporters to enable them to bid defiance to Gunten.

There was a strong feeling in the section on the subject of Miss Meadows' dismissal, and some of the boys' fathers took the same view as Rancher Lawless, that Old Man Gunten had started the trouble, and could end it without any assistance from them.

For two or three days now the rebels had been left alone, Mr. Gunten perhaps hoping that they would get tired of the adventure, and disperse of their own accord.

But they were not getting tired of it, by any means.

Chunky Todgers, indeed, averred that striking was ever so much better than lessons; and, really, there was something to be said from that point of view.

There was one cloud on the horizon, however.

As many of the Cedar Creek scholars took their midday meal at the school, there was a good supply of provisions on hand, which had been very fortunate for the schoolboy rebels; but feeding the garrison all day long had made a very serious inroad upon the supply.

And Chunky Todgers, whose appetite was of gargantuan proportions, had made some terrific raids upon the supplies, till a severe application of Bob's trail-ropes had warned him off.

The schoolboys turned out after dinner to take exercise in the playground.

Doors and windows of the schoolhouse were still securely barricaded, but one window was left open for egress and ingress.

A sentry was posted at the gate to give warning, in case of the approach of the enemy, in which case the rebels were to retreat into their stronghold at once.

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Chunky Todgers did not leave by the window, however.

He waited till the rest of the garrison were out of doors, and then he scudded into the kitchen where the provisions were kept.

Chunky did not mean to "play it low-down" on his comrades, by any means; he really did not stop to think.

All he thought of was that he was still hungry, and that there were some eatables within his reach.

That was enough for Chunky, and, throwing all other considerations to the winds, he proceeded to "scoff" the supplies in the larder.

Fortunately, Bob Lawless had his suspicions.

Chunky was devouring stale bread, the last of the butter, and making huge inroads upon the final cheese, when Bob Lawless came back with a trail-rope in his hand.

He did not stop to speak. The coiled rope descended upon Chunky's fat person with a terrific swish, and Chunky jumped with a wild yell.

"Yah! Grooogh! Groooch!"
 In the sudden shock the cheese had gone the wrong way, Chunky's mouth being a little too full.

Swish, swish!
 "You greedy gopher!" roared Bob Lawless, as he laid on the trail-rope. "Take that—and that—and that!"

"Gerrooogh!" spluttered Chunky. "Yoooch! Stoppit! I'm chok-chok-choking! Yaaaaa-uuuch!"

Swish, swish!
 "Groogh-hoooh-yooogh!"
 Spluttering wildly, Chunky Todgers bolted for his life, with Bob behind, still making rapid play with the rope.

Chunky went head-first out of the open window, and landed on his fat hands and knees, roaring.

"Hallo! What's the row?" called out Frank Richards.

"Scoffing the grub!" shouted Bob. "Collar him! I want to give him some more!"

He clambered out of the window, but Chunky was up before he could be collared and streaking across the playground.

"After him!"
 "Rope him!" yelled Eben Hacke.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Chunky ran like a hare, in spite of the weight he had to carry, with all the garrison of the lumber school whooping in pursuit.

The unfortunate glutton dodged round the outbuildings and the wood-pile, and then round the schoolhouse, with the chase close at his heels.

At last he clambered on the roof of Mr. Slimmey's cabin, where he was allowed to rest, palpitating.

Bob Lawless shook a wrathful fist up at him.

"I—I say, Bob—" spluttered Chunky.
 "You come down again, and I'll make an example of you!" roared Bob.

"I—I say—"
 "Rats!"

And Chunky remained there, and it was not till dusk that he ventured back into the schoolhouse, when the garrison were all indoors again.

And that evening Chunky Todgers had no supper, as a warning to him, and his sufferings, as he watched the other fellows at supper, were so acute that he almost resolved to "light out" for home, at the risk of having to work on the farm while the school remained shut.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.
 Caught!**

"SOMETHING's got to be done!" remarked Bob Lawless.

It was after supper, and most of the fellows were playing leap-frog by lamplight in the big school-room.

Chunky Todgers sat on a form, with a lugubrious look that might have melted a heart of stone.

Chunky was not feeling inclined to join in the game.

He had eaten only enough for two or three that day, and, consequently, he was feeling famished.

Missing supper was the last straw.
 But his comrades were inexorable, and Chunky Todgers was in the depths of woe.

Frank Richards & Co. were discussing the situation, which was their business as leaders; and Frank and Beauclerc agreed with Bob that "something had to be done."

"I guess Old Man Gunten knows the grub must give out, and very likely he's counting on that," went on Bob. "The fact is, we can't live without grub. I've got a good appetite myself."

"Same here!" said Frank, laughing.
 "If Chunky gets at the grub again we'll boot him out!" said Bob decidedly. "But that won't undo what he's done already, the fat jay. But apart from Chunky spreading himself, it wouldn't have lasted much longer."

"Well, what's the programme?" asked Frank.

"When a fortress is running out of provisions it has to be provisioned," said Bob oracularly. "We've got some dust, anyway. The question is, how to spend it on grub and get the grub here."

Frank whistled.

"What's the answer to that question, old chap?" he asked.

"It's got to be did!" said Bob. "Look here, we're free to come and go, as you like. Suppose two of us clear off now it's dark, and try it on?"

"We couldn't go to Thompson," said Beauclerc. "Old Man Gunten would very likely spot us, and we might be collared. He lives there."

Bob Lawless nodded.

"Thompson isn't the only town in the valley," he answered. "Of course, we shall have to hoof it, as our horses are not here now. We had to send them home to the ranch to be fed. But we can hoof it. A few miles won't hurt us. We can get down to Cedar Camp, buy the grub, and carry it back before dawn."

"I don't see why not," said Frank Richards thoughtfully. "It's risky, but—well, something's got to be done, or we shall be starved out in the long run."

"That's the point."

"We three had better go."

"Nope!" said Bob. "One of us will have to stay here in command. The Cherrub will come with me, Franky, and you can stay here."

"All serene!" said Frank. "I—I suppose it's not likely that Old Man Gunten will be up to such a move?"

"We've got to chance that, I guess."

Bob Lawless and Beauclerc proceeded to make their preparations for the expedition.

There was a collection of cash, to be expended in the store at Cedar Camp, and the chums took two large haversacks to convey the provisions to the school when purchased.

They dropped quietly from the window to the playground.

The night was fine and clear, with myriad stars spangling the deep blue of the sky.

Frank Richards went with them as far as the gates.

Outside the gates, the rough trail to Thompson lay shadowy under the trees, and no sound was to be heard from the timber.

Frank had had a lurking suspicion that a watch might be kept on the school.

Old Man Gunten, certainly, was likely to be too busy in his store at Thompson to have any time for lingering about Cedar Creek; but Mr. Peckover, the new master, was without occupation so far, and the rough crowd who had helped Mr. Gunten before might be still in his pay.

True, the cowboys from the Lawless Ranch had cleared off the Red Dog crowd and taught them a severe lesson.

Still, Frank could not quite believe that Old Man Gunten was taking the present state of affairs "lying down."

He looked up and down the trail suspiciously and listened; but there was no sign of danger.

"All O.K., Franky!" said Bob reassuringly. "We'll mosey off now, and you get back to the schoolhouse and keep watch for us to-night."

"Right-ho!" answered Frank.

Bob Lawless and Beauclerc disappeared into the shadows of the trail, Frank standing at the gates to watch them till the last glimpse of his friends was lost.

For a dozen yards or so the two schoolboys went along the trail towards Thompson, where they had to turn off to take a shorter cut through the forest in the direction of Cedar Camp.

It was dark under the trees, and they slowed down where the trail forked, looking well about them.

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"No Surrender!"

(Continued from page 12.)



A rustle in the thickets started Bob Lawless, and he stopped suddenly.

As he did so there was a rush of feet.

"Look out, Cherub!" exclaimed Bob.

But there was little time to look out.

Three burly, shadowy figures loomed up in the darkness, and the two schoolboys were seized by as many pairs of hands.

They struggled fiercely with their half-seen assailants.

"I guess we've got this lot, anyway!" It was the hoarse, husky voice of Four Kings, the leader of the Red Dog crowd. "Show a glim, Dick!"

Euchre Dick turned on a dark lantern.

It revealed the two breathless schoolboys in the powerful grasp of Four Kings and Dave Dunn.

There was no one else to be seen.

Apparently, the three members of the Red Dog crowd were there without their comrades.

"Lawless—Bob Lawless!" grinned Four Kings. "I know you, my buck! And young Beauclerc—the remittance-man's son—hay? Well, you're roped in!"

"Let us go!" panted Bob.

Four Kings chuckled.

"I guess not!" he answered. "I reckon Old Man Gunten's paying us for this hyer job, and he'll be dancing when he sees that we've got you, the ringleaders of the whole crowd! Any more of you out of doors—hay?"

Bob gritted his teeth.

The two boys were helpless in the powerful hands of the ruffians; and Bob dreaded that Frank Richards, alone at the gate, might be caught defenceless.

"You hear me, yaup?" growled Four Kings, shaking the rancher's son roughly. "Aire there any more of you out?"

Bob's reply was a yell of warning to Frank Richards, who, as he guessed, was still at the gates a dozen yards away.

"Look out, Frank! Don't come this way. get back to the schoolhouse!"

Bob's voice rang sharply through the night. It reached the ears of Frank Richards.

Frank had been looking after his chums on the dark trail, still somewhat uneasy in his mind; but he had been about to turn back to the schoolhouse, when he caught the glimmer of Euchre Dick's lantern under the trees.

The sudden light startled him, and he ran out of the gates, and then Bob's yell of warning fell upon his ears.

Beauclerc shouted, too.

"Cut it, Frank—cut it!"

Four Kings rapped out an oath.

"That's another of them out, then!" he exclaimed. "Mosey after him, Euchre Dick! Rope him in!"

Euchre Dick set down the lantern and ran up the trail to the school gates.

If he could have reached Frank Richards, he had no doubt of adding him to the "bag" of prisoners.

Frank heard his heavy footsteps and ran back into the school enclosure.

His first impulse had been to rush to the aid of his chums; but second thoughts were wiser.

He dashed back to the lumber school at top speed.

After him came Euchre Dick, stumbling in the darkness and muttering oaths.

Frank reached the open window, where Hacke and Yen Chin and several other fellows were waiting for him.

"Quick!" he panted.

"What's the trouble?"

"They've got Bob and Beau; and there's one after me! Help—quick!"

Frank Richards had no time for more; Euchre Dick had reached him.

He spun round as he felt the ruffian's grasp upon his shoulder.

"Help!" he panted.

The next moment he was fighting fiercely with the ruffian.

But out of the window, with a jump, came

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Eben Hacke, and he fastened on Euchre Dick at once; and after him a crowd, all piling desperately on the ruffian.

Only one fellow remained in the lumber schoolhouse.

That was Chunky Todgers.

Chunky Todgers was no funk, and he felt the impulse to take his part in the fray. But another impulse was stronger still, and instead of dashing after his comrades the worthy Chunky dashed away to the kitchen.

He was soon quite as busy indoors as Frank Richards & Co. were without.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

FOUR KINGS grinned at Bob Lawless and Beauclerc in the light of the lantern glimmering in the green, damp grass.

The two schoolboys were securely held by the ruffians, and Four Kings was fastening Bob's wrists with a rope, in spite of his resistance.

Bob was almost pale with rage.

Frank Richards' misgivings had not been groundless after all.

Old Man Gunten was not likely to haunt the vicinity of the lumber school himself—he was too busy elsewhere—but he had retained the services of Four Kings & Co. for that purpose.

It had not been difficult for him to foresee that sooner or later some of the garrison would venture outside the school fence; and the three ruffians had been posted to watch.

Bob and Beauclerc had fairly walked into their hands. But it was too late to think of that now.

They were prisoners.

"Take it smiling!" grinned Four Kings.

"You've had a run for your money, you know. You was bound to get downed in the long run. I guess we're earning Old Man Gunten's dollars easy, as it turns out. My eye! He will lay into you with a rope when we tote you along!"

Bob Lawless breathed hard.

"You'll be hided and sent off home!" grinned Four Kings. "I guess this is the end of a school strike for you, young Lawless; and I reckon the others will soon cave in without you. You was the head of it all. Yank that other young rascal hyer, Dave, and I'll rope him to Lawless."

Beauclerc resisted fiercely; but the ruffians were too strong for him, and they proceeded to tie him to Bob Lawless.

When the two schoolboys were roped together Four Kings stepped out into the trail and started towards the school.

"Time Euchre Dick was hyer with the other varmint!" he muttered. "I reckon I'll see what he's doing. You keep an eye on those critters, Dave."

"You bet!"

Four Kings tramped up the trail towards the school.

Euchre Dick, as a matter of fact, had caught Frank Richards; but he had made the painful discovery that he had caught a Tartar.

The swarm of Cedar Creek fellows piling on him were too much for the ruffian, sinewy as he was.

He rolled over on the ground, with Frank still in his grasp; but five or six fellows had hold of him, and he was soon helpless under their weight.

Frank dragged himself free.

"Hold him!" he panted.

"I guess we've got him!" gasped Eben Hacke.

"Me gottee!" chuckled Yen Chin. "You lendee me knife, and me killee!"

"Yoop!" roared Euchre Dick. "Keep that heathen off! I give in! Let up, gents! I give in, honest Injun!"

"Hold him, some of you!" gasped Frank. "The rest come with me. We've got to help Bob and Beau out of this!"

"I'll sit on him," said Eben Hacke. "Hook it!"

Hacke and Yen Chin and another fellow planted themselves on Euchre Dick, pinning him to the ground.

The rest followed Frank Richards.

Frank was dashing to the gates in so great a hurry that he did not see a shadowy figure before him till he rushed into it at full speed in the gateway.

There was a gasping howl from Four Kings:

"Euchre Dick, you jay——"

For a moment the ruffian supposed that it was his confederate who had rushed into him in the dark. He was soon undeceived.

"Back up!" panted Frank Richards.

He grasped the ruffian, and, in the sudden surprise of the attack, bore him backwards.

Four Kings stumbled, and almost fell.

He recovered, however, and his fierce grasp closed on Frank, who would have fared badly but for the prompt assistance of his followers.

But the odds were on his side, as Four Kings soon found.

From the shadows five or six active fellows swarmed on the ruffian as he grasped Frank, and he was dragged to the ground with a crash.

His head smote the ground with a heavy concussion, and he uttered a howl of anguish.

As he lay dazed Frank's knee was planted on his chest.

"Pile on him!" panted Frank.

But his followers did not need telling.

Four Kings was down, and they realised that it was judicious to keep him there, and they were swarming on him.

Three or four knees were planted on the ruffian, and his wrists were grasped and firmly held.

Four Kings struggled in vain under the swarm.

Frank Richards rose, breathless.

The struggle had been brief, and Four Kings was held down helpless by Frank's comrades.

Frank was thinking of his chums in the timber.

"Keep him safe!" he panted.

"We've got him!"

Frank tore off his belt, and buckled it on the wrists of the ruffian securely, and Four Kings was a helpless prisoner.

Leaving him writhing on the ground, pouring out a string of oaths, Frank Richards dashed out of gates with his comrades.

The lantern was glimmering in the wood, and from the distance they could see Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc, tied together, with Dave Dunn keeping guard over them.

Dunn had stepped out into the trail, staring through the shadows towards the school, and wondering what was happening there.

Frank Richards & Co. came up with a rush.

At the sight of six or seven shadowy forms rushing on him the ruffian sprang back in alarm.

"Oh Jerusalem!" he gasped.

Crash!

Frank hurled himself at the ruffian, and Dunn went spinning.

"Good man!" roared Bob Lawless.

Frank ran to him, dragging out his knife as he did so.

In a moment the sharp blade was sawing through the cords that fastened Vere Beauclerc and the rancher's son.

There was nothing to fear from Dave Dunn. He had picked himself up and fled.

Even for Old Man Gunten's dollars he was not prepared to deal with the whole Cedar Creek crowd.

"Good man!" said Bob, as his hands came free. "I guessed we were gone coons, Frank. Good man!"

Beauclerc picked up the lantern.

"Let's get back," he said. "We sha'n't get to Cedar Camp to-night, Bob."

"I guess not. Come on!"

The schoolboys ran back in a crowd towards Cedar Creek.

It was evident that the expedition had to be given up for that night at least, now that they knew a watch was being kept on the school.

A dim form loomed up in the trail—that of Four Kings, with his hands fastened in front of him by Frank Richards' belt.

Bob Lawless stopped.

"We'll give that critter a lesson!" he exclaimed. "We'll run him down to the creek and duck him!"

Four Kings made a desperate rush into the timber, and went tramping desperately through the thickets.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Well, he won't find it a nice walk home with his hands tied. Let him go."

The rebels of Cedar Creek hurried back to the school.

It was possible that the enemy had reinforcements in the neighbourhood, and they were anxious to be inside their fortress again.

They reached the schoolhouse, where Eben Hacke and his companions were still sitting on Euchre Dick, keeping him prisoner.

The ruffian was pleading to be released, and his position was far from comfortable, with Hacke's bony person planted on his stomach, another fellow standing on his legs, and the Chinnee sitting on his face.

"Hallo! You've got back, you jays!" exclaimed Hacke. "All O. K.! What are we going to do with this rustler?"

"Kick him out!" answered Frank Richards. "You lendee me knife, and me killee!" suggested Yen Chin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Euchre Dick was allowed to rise, and six or seven boots impressed upon him that it would be wise to depart at once; and he departed at a run.

Frank Richards & Co. clambered in at the window again, glad to find themselves safe within walls once more.

Bob Lawless closed the shutter and barred it.

"All O. K. now!" he said. "I reckon Old Man Gunten came very near scoring this time. But a miss is as good as a mile."

"Are we all here?" asked Vere Beaulere. "I'll call the roll," said Bob.

The names were called over at once, and all answered excepting Chunky Todgers.

"My hat! Chunky's still outside!" exclaimed Frank, in alarm.

"I guess I didn't see him," said Hacke. "More likely—"

Bob Lawless gave a yell. "He's after the grub again!"

And he rushed away in great wrath to the kitchen.

Chunky Todgers was there!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Awful for Chunky!

CHUNKY was enjoying himself! Never since the siege of Cedar Creek had started had Chunky Todgers revelled in such plenty.

He was not thinking any harm—in fact, he was not thinking at all; he was simply feeding.

And his feed was a record one.

He had done wonders already, but although the cargo he had taken aboard was extensive, he was still "going it," with a happy smile on his fat face, when his wrathful comrades burst into the kitchen.

Then Chunky ceased suddenly, and he remained transfixed, as it were, with his fork half-way to his mouth.

He realised that after the feast came the reckoning.

"You—you—you—" stuttered Bob Lawless.

"I—I say, I—I was bound to have my supper, you know!" stammered Chunky.

"Have—have—have: you brought the grub, Bob, old chap?"

"No, you fat villain!"

"Hadn't—hadn't you better go for it at once?"

"I—I—I'll scalp you!" shrieked Bob. "Why, you've cleared out nearly everything we had left!"

"Lynch him!" roared Eben Hacke. "Squash him!"

Chunky jumped up in alarm.

"I—I—I—I say!" he stuttered. "I—I was hungry, you know! I—I— Yaroooh! Hands off, you jays! Oh crumbs!"

The schoolboy rebels surrounded Chunky with grim looks.

He had lost no time; and the diminished provisions of Cedar Creek had almost reached vanishing-point.

"What are we going to do with him?" gasped Frank Richards.

"Lynch him!"

"Jump on him!"

"Killee fat Chunkee!"

Bob Lawless raised his hand. "Hold on! There's only one thing can



CHUNKY IS FIRED OUT! Spluttering wildly, Chunky Todgers bolted for his life with Bob Lawless behind, still making rapid play with the trail-rope. Chunky went head-first out of the window, and landed on his hands and knees outside. "I'll teach you to scoff our provisions!" roared Bob. (See Chapter 2.)

be done. Chunky's scoffed all the grub—or nearly all. We can't get in supplies, and we can't starve. I thought it would come to this, anyhow. Chunky's got to go!"

"Eh?"

"He's fat," said Bob. "He will last us a week at least."

"You—you rotter, I know you're only joking!" howled Chunky.

"But who's going to polish him off?" asked Frank Richards gravely, catching Bob's idea at once. "I don't care for the job."

"Me killee!"

"Good! Yen Chin can do the trick," said Beaulere. "He's a heathen, and he won't mind."

"No mindee—me killee and cookee nicey fat Chunkee! You tinkee nicey labbit stew!" said Yen Chin.

"Done!" said Eben Hacke. "I'm sorry for this, Chunky, but you've brought it on yourself."

"I—I say, you're joking, you beast!" gasped Chunky, his fat face growing almost green.

He gave a wild howl as Yen Chin picked up a carving-knife, with a blood-thirsty look. "Keep him off! Yaroooh!"

"Not yet, Yen Chin," said Bob. "We don't want him till to-morrow. You can have what's left of the grub if you like, Chunky. The fatter you are to-morrow the better!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Yes, go it!" said Frank. "Here's a bit of cake, Chunky!"

"I—I—I'm not hungry!" wailed Chunky.

"I say, old chaps—"

"You can go to bed, Chunky," said Bob. "Try to sleep, or you may get feverish, and that will make you tough."

"Yaroooh!"

Chunky Todgers almost staggered to his mattress.

He stole several glances at the schoolboys when they were turning in, but every face was grim and relentless.

There was no sleep for Chunky Todgers that night.

In the middle of the night Chunky

crept to the window, but he found Frank Richards on guard there, and rolled back to his mattress with a groan.

Chunky paid for all his sins that sleepless night.

When morning dawned upon Cedar Creek School, and the rebels turned out, Chunky sought the faces of his comrades with agonised looks.

Yen Chin went into the kitchen, where he was soon heard sharpening a knife. The sound sent a chill of horror to Chunky's heart.

"Bob, old fellow—" he moaned.

"Ready, Chunky?"

"I—I know you're only joking!"

"Go into the kitchen, Chunky," said Frank sadly. "I don't want to see it done. You ready, Yen Chin?"

"Me leady! Killee velly quickee! Where Chunkee?"

"Yaroooh! I—I say—"

"Let him have a trot round the playground first," said Bob considerably. "Keep an eye on him, though."

Chunky Todgers gasped. Once he was out in the playground he was not likely to be rounded up again.

He could scarcely believe his good luck as he dropped from the window.

"Come back!" roared Bob Lawless, as Chunky streaked for the gates. But Chunky did not heed; he was running for his life.

"Bring me a gun, Franky!" roared Bob. "I can pot him from the window!"

Chunky Todgers vanished out of the gates.

There was a roar of laughter in the lumber school, but Chunky, streaking for home, did not hear it. The garrison of Cedar Creek had lost one of its members, and while Frank Richards & Co. held the fort at Cedar Creek, Chunky was sadly at work on the Todgers' farm.

THE END.

(There will be another long, complete story of Frank Richards & Co., entitled: "The Trick That Failed!" next week.)

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