

BEST HOLIDAY FARE—FOUR LONG COMPLETE SCHOOL TALES!

Week Ending  
August 18th.  
1923.

New  
Series.

No.  
239.

# The POPULAR

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EVERY  
TUESDAY.

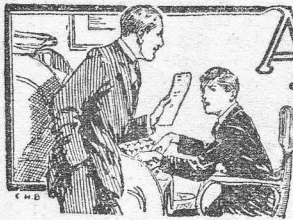
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The Story Book for Boys.



## CHAIRING MORNY, THE HERO OF THE MATCH!

*(The New Captain of the Fourth Returns to the Fold! A great scene of Triumph from the Long, Complete Rookwood Story inside.)*



# A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4.

**J**UST a glance at the thousands of letters that are received at this office, and a look at the bookstalls, is sufficient to show that the "Popular" is the favourite boys' story paper. It goes like hot cakes, and small wonder, for the old "Pop" gives the very cream of fiction. There's never any doubt as to the quality of the goods supplied.

You'll all agree with me when I say that this week's issue is simply great, but let me tell you that next week's will be even GREATER. Yes, next week's bumper issue will take some beating with its first-class budget of stories written by first-class writers.

## A QUARTETTE OF SCHOOL TALES.

That's what the "Popular" always gives, and they are all of the best. In some respects the budget of "completes" may be likened to the four suits in a pack of cards, but there is one big difference. In the "Popular" they are all triumphs!

Now for next Tuesday's "bill of fare."

### "THE MISSING FUNDS!"

By Frank Richards.

You obtain a really excellent idea of the character of Frank Nugent of the Remove Form at Greyfriars. You have been able to find out, from this week's yarn, how all the trouble started in the Nugent family. Dicky is in desperate straits. He must have money to meet a debt of honour, as he insists on calling it. There is no honour attached to it, for Dicky has been playing cards with Ponsonby of Highcliffe. But, anyway, the money has to be found, and Dicky finds it. In a box in his brother's desk there are five pounds, just the amount required to pay this debt. Frank will not lend it to him, so he takes it, and the consequences are unpleasant for certain parties.

### "UP AGAINST JUDGE LYNCH!"

Mr. Beauclerc, the remittance-man, is in a terrible position. He has been accused of attempted murder of the sheriff of Thompson. He is innocent, of course, but there are few who side with him.

There is a rough law in Canada for dealing with rustlers and murderers, and that is Judge Lynch—a terrible thing, truly. It is up against this crude justice—or, in this case, injustice—that Mr. Beauclerc comes. There is no reprieve for him, for he has been condemned by the "roughnecks" of the valley. An eye for an eye, they say. You must see what Frank Richards & Co. have to say about it, in next Tuesday's sensational backwoods story.

### "HOLDING THE FORT!"

By Owen Conquest.

This yarn does not deal with a great battle round a fort, with gallant defenders keeping back the hordes of invaders. It deals with a very generous and unselfish action of four schoolboys of Rookwood, and an old woman who lives in the village.

The Fistical Four of the Fourth Form hear, from a certain party, that Mrs. Wickers of Coombe is to be turned out of her little home by Mr. Shingle, her big, blustering landlord. Mrs. Wickers is a war widow, with a family. Money is needed to save her, and Jimmy Silver & Co. step forward. They answer the call for help in an amazing manner which, you will all agree when you have read the story, is the only way of dealing with such a person as Mr. Shingle.

### "MISS MYRA'S ADMIRERS!"

By Martin Clifford.

Next week's story of St. Jim's School is full of fun and thrills, and without doubt one of the best Martin Clifford has given THE POPULAR.—No. 239.

us. There are humorous moments when you feel that your sides will part with so much laughing, and incidents that grip you with their tense thrill. And, on top of everything else, the plot is original.

You've all met Miss Myra, the charming niece of Mr. Railton, the Housemaster. She appears in this week's splendid tale. Her charming personality captures the hearts of many of the fellows, but of none so much as D'Arcy and Jack Blake. The rivalry between these two chums is keen, and is the cause of a great deal of amusing incidents. There's no doubt about it, they both mean to be the protecting cavalier of Miss Myra. They fight it out between themselves on the cricket-field and in the gym.

### "BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY!"

There are plenty of bookworms about Greyfriars, St. Jim's, and Rookwood, and you can find them at all times. Whether it is summer or winter, their noses are buried deep in books. Some of them are swots of the deepest dye, others are lovers of the bright, thrilling fiction. Now, his worst enemy would never accuse Billy Bunter of being a bookworm of the former category, but of the latter, yes. Bunter likes a novel. He revels in it, if it is full of thrills and daring escapades, and at the moment he has got hold of a very fine book; that is why he has decided to bring out a "Special Bookworm Number" of his famous little paper. You'll all enjoy reading it next week!

### "THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN!"

By Morton Pike.

The world-famous author, Morton Pike, has surpassed himself in next week's long instalment of our wonderful new, romantic serial. He is brilliant, and has worked up the story in a masterly way. He has modelled his characters in the style which has made him so famous amongst the writers of boys' stories, and the "League of Seven" is his masterpiece.

Letters from all over the world have been pouring in—letters of congratulations, and paying homage to the brilliant writer. He deserves all their praise.

It is like looking into a great mirror to read of the wonderful times Morton Pike has portrayed in his story. Everything is so vivid; the delineation so clear. The battles described are so real that one can almost hear the thundering of the guns and the yells of the clashing armies.

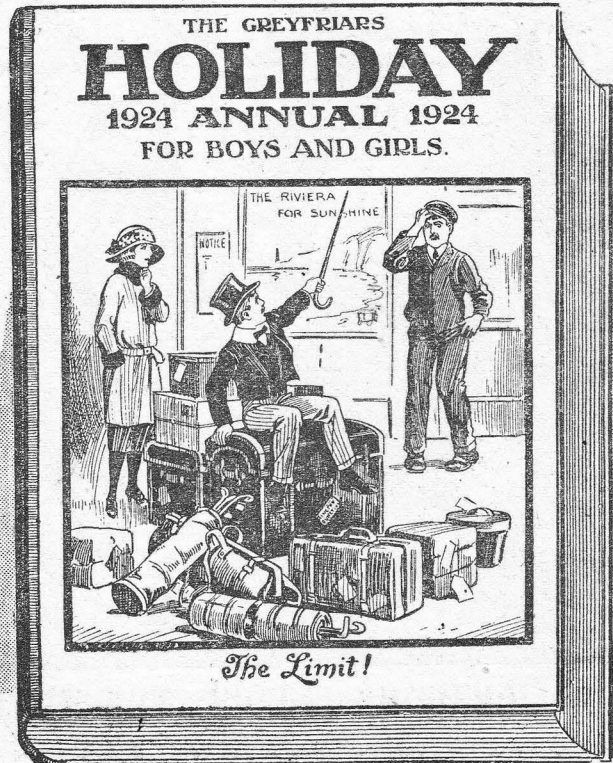
And that is the wonderful programme I have in preparation for all my chums next week. You must let your pals know what is in store, so that they may not miss Tuesday's issue. That would be a great shame.

### JUST A RUMOUR!

A friendly correspondent, who is always on the look-out for something bright and new, asks me whether a report that reached him concerning William George Bunter is accurate, or otherwise. The rumour was to the effect that the porpoise took a quiet week out of his holidays, and performed a record feat in cycling. Details were given. It was stated that Bunter started one moonlight night from the coasts of Kent, and pedalled north when all was nice and quiet. He glided through London, and then shot onwards, making direct for the Arctic Zone. He reached John O'Groats without mishap in time for breakfast. And all this on an ordinary jigger—i.e., a push-bike, so named because it is pushed up the hills. What happened then I know not. Most likely Bunter woke up. Anyway, it seems to me the story has been greatly exaggerated.

Your Editor.

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Mornington realises what an utter fool he has made of himself, and how near he came to disaster at the Heath Bungalow, and he finds that the game is not worth the candle. He decides to turn over a new leaf and do the right thing!

**THE NEW SKIPPER!**

Mornington realises what an utter fool he has made of himself, and how near he came to disaster at the Heath Bungalow, and he finds that the game is not worth the candle. He decides to turn over a new leaf and do the right thing!



# The Captain's Decision!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Story dealing with the adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Chums of Rookwood School.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.****Morny's Last Chance!**

**T**HE most important match of the season!" exclaimed Arthur Edward Lovell impressively.

"We want to win!" remarked Raby.

"And we don't want St. Jim's to beat us on our own ground," added Newcome.

Jimmy Silver was silent. The Fistical Four, of the Rookwood Fourth, were at tea in the end study. Jimmy Silver attended to tea almost in silence. Lovell, Raby, and Newcome put in enough conversation for four.

And all their remarks were on the same subject—Valentine Mornington, the junior captain.

"It's time," said Lovell, with increasing impressiveness, "to put our foot down. Mornington doesn't care a twopenny rap for cricket; he's shown that plain enough. He's hanging on to the captaincy out of sheer obstinacy. He don't want it, but he won't part with it. Dog in the manger, you know. And Morny won't beat St. Jim's."

"Not likely!" agreed Raby.

"With a skipper like that, the team is simply going to the blessed bow-wows!" said Lovell.

"Um!" said Jimmy Silver.

"It's all very well to say 'Um!' but you know it as well as we do!" said Lovell warmly. "You've got to raise the matter in committee, Jimmy. When we meet St. Jim's on Wednesday we've got to have our old skipper, and that's you! Morny's got to stand down! We can't lose cricket matches because he's taken to playing the goat!"

"Um!"

"Otherwise," hooted Lovell, "I shall resign from the team."

"Um!"

"You ought never to have stood aside for Morny. You were an ass—in fact, a silly chump!" said Lovell. "All the chaps want you back. You know you ought to push Morny out, and let us win the principal match of the season. Don't you, you silly ass?"

"Um!"

"If you say 'Um!' again I'll shy the teapot at you!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell, in great exasperation.

The door was pushed open at that point, and the fat face of Reginald Muffin looked in.

"Morny here?" he asked.

"No; blow Morny!"

"Where the thump is he, then?" demanded Tubby Muffin, in an aggrieved tone. "Bulkeley's sent me for him, and I can't find him anywhere. He's not in his study, and he's not in the quad, and he's not anywhere. And Bulkeley's waiting for him."

Lovell gave a snort.

"Inquire at some blessed pub where they

play billiards!" he answered. "That's most likely where you'll find Morny."

"Draw it mild, old chap!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Another snort from Arthur Edward. "Isn't it so?" he demanded. "Doesn't he clear off every day after lessons? Does anyone know where he goes? He doesn't even tell his own chum, Erroll. Morny's at his old games again, and you jolly well know it, Jimmy Silver!"

"I suppose I ain't to tell Bulkeley that?" grinned Tubby Muffin.

"Looks to me as if Bulkeley suspects it!" grunted Lovell. "I know he's had his eye on Morny lately. What's he sent for him for?"

"Blessed if I know; but I can't find him," said Tubby. "I'd better tell Bulkeley he's gone out. I suppose he has gone out."

"And the fat Classical rolled away."

"At it again!" said Lovell savagely.

"He cut cricket practice to-day, and now he's out of gates, nobody knows where. And you're sitting there like an Egyptian mummy, Jimmy Silver, and letting school matches go to pot, because you won't do what you know you ought to do."

"I've been thinking it out," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I've made up my mind, Lovell. I'm going to take a hand."

"High time you did!" grunted Lovell.

"Morny's simply thrown cricket over lately, and he can't expect us to sit down while he loses matches for us," said Jimmy Silver slowly. "If he don't want to do a captain's duty, he should throw up the captaincy. We've got to beat St. Jim's, if we can. We're not going to put up with a defeat to please Mornington."

"Hear, hear!" said the Co., with great satisfaction.

Jimmy Silver had come round to his comrades' way of thinking at last; and, as Lovell said, it was high time.

"Jimmy!"

It was Kit Erroll's quiet voice in the doorway. Morny's chum had a troubled wrinkle on his brow.

"Hallo, Erroll! Trot in!"

"I suppose you don't know where Morny is?"

"Not likely to, if you don't," answered Jimmy.

"I think he went out after lessons," said Erroll. "But—but I can see what you fellows think; but you're mistaken. Morny isn't playing the goat."

"You'd stand up for him, whatever he did!" growled Lovell.

"Well, perhaps I should. But it's the truth. Morny has been a bit reckless lately, as I suppose most of the fellows know," said Erroll, colouring. "But he's chucked that up."

"How do you know?"

"Well, I do know. I don't know what he's gone out for now, but I know it's nothing of that kind."

"Bow-wow!" said Lovell.

"He's very keen about the St. Jim's match," said Erroll.

"It doesn't look much like it," said Jimmy Silver dryly. "He's cut practice again, and he's off colour at cricket. Now he's cleared off again, as usual. Bulkeley wants him, and he can't be found. It's close on locking-up, but he's still out of gates."

"But—"

"I'm bound to take the matter up," said Jimmy Silver. "Somebody's got to. We can't let St. Jim's beat us at home because Morny's tired of cricket. The fact is, Erroll, everybody is fed up with his rot!"

"I'm sure that Morny could explain, if he liked, when he comes in—"

Erroll paused, and glanced along the passage from the doorway of the end study.

"Here he is!" he said. "Come along here, Morny!"

Valentine Mornington came along the passage.

His handsome face wore a very cheery expression. He glanced into the end study, and nodded to the Fistical Four.

"Anythin' up?" he asked.

"Yes!" growled Lovell.

"I'd better tell you," said Jimmy Silver.

"I told you the other day, Morny, that I'd made up my mind that your way of handling things wouldn't do."

"I remember."

"I've stood aside to give you a chance as captain," continued Jimmy Silver. "You can't say you haven't had a chance."

"I can't," agreed Morny.

"And you can't say that I haven't backed you up, Morny."

"Right on the wicket. And now you're fed up?" asked Mornington coolly.

"That's it," assented Jimmy, rather surprised at Morny's way of taking it. "That's how it stands, Morny."

"You want me to resign?"

"Yes."

"I'm not goin' to."

"Then I'm afraid you'll have to be made to," said Jimmy Silver. "I'm sorry, but there's a limit, and you've reached it. But I'd rather give you every chance, if you'd only play the game. So would all the fellows."

"Rot!" came from Lovell.

"Shut up, Lovell, old chap! Look here, Morny, it's pretty well known that you've been kicking over the traces, and playing the goat in your old style."

"That's my bizney, old top!"

"Ours, too, if you're going to captain us against St. Jim's. If you haven't been playing the goat to-day say where you've been. No reason why you shouldn't, if it will bear the light."

Mornington flushed.

"I see your point," he admitted.

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"You're right, in a way. But I can't tell you, as it happens."

Snort from Lovell.

"Why not?" asked Newcome.

"Because I can't!"

Tubby Muffin came rolling along the passage.

"Conroy says Morny has come in— Oh, here you are! Bulkeley wants you in his study, Morny."

"All serene!"

Mornington walked away, and Erroll followed him slowly, leaving the Fistical Four looking very grim. Jimmy Silver's face was set. Every junior cricketer at Rookwood was thoroughly fed up with Morny and his way, and it needed only a word from the former skipper to bring about the new captain's fall. Hitherto, Jimmy had refused to utter that word. But he had made up his mind about it now.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Mysterious!

"COME in!" Bulkeley of the Sixth, the captain of Rookwood School, spoke very quietly and gravely, as Valentine Mornington appeared in his doorway.

Mornington was looking a little grave, too, as he entered the study.

Bulkeley's expression was a warning.

"You wanted to speak to me, Bulkeley?" said Morny.

"Yes."

"Well, here I am."

"You can sit down, Mornington. I've got to speak to you seriously," said the captain of the school.

"Go ahead!"

"Some time ago," continued Bulkeley, "the juniors elected you skipper, in Silver's place. I did not quite approve of this, Mornington; but I did not interfere. But you're probably aware that it's my duty, as Head of the Games, to keep an eye on junior cricket. I've been taking some notice of you lately, Mornington, and I'm not satisfied."

"I'm sorry for that, Bulkeley," said Morny, with unusual meekness.

"You seem to have neglected your duties very considerably, even to the extent of failing to attend matches, and leaving it to others to act in your place. You generally get out of gates as soon as lessons are over, and stay out as long as you can. You've been late in for call-over on several occasions. You've given your Form-master a good deal of trouble in class—neglecting your work, and checking Mr. Bootles, instead of expressing regret. I've not forgotten, Mornington, that you had a very bad reputation when you first came here, and were very near getting expelled from Rookwood. It looks to me as if you've begun again in your old style."

"Oh!" said Morny,

"This won't do," went on Bulkeley quietly. "Apart from your position in the Lower School, you can't go on like this. As Head of the Games, I have to see that you don't play the fool with junior cricket. As head prefect, I'm bound to see that you keep the rules of the school. I require to know now, Mornington, where it is you go after lessons, that keeps you out of gates so constantly."

Mornington drew a deep breath.

His chief feeling, at that moment, was one of relief—deep relief—that he had listened to the wise counsels of his chum, and had of his own accord abandoned the folly into which he had been drawn.

"To-day, as usual, you have cleared off, and nobody seems to know where you have been," said Bulkeley. "I won't go into the past. But you are to tell me where you have been to-day."

"I've been down to Coombe."

"There are places in Coombe, Mornington, where you are not allowed to go any more than any other Rookwood fellow. Have you been to one of those places?"

"No."

"Very good. Then you can tell me, where you have been."

Mornington was silent.

"I'm waiting for your answer," said Bulkeley.

"I've done no harm."

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"I hope not. But where have you been?"

No answer.

The Rookwood captain's face hardened.

"You had your allowance on Saturday, I think, Mornington?"

"Yes."

"Have you the money now?"

"N-no."

"Where is it?"

Silence.

"How much money did you receive from your uncle?"

"Only a quid."

"If you have spent it, what have you spent it on?"

No reply.

"You can refuse to answer me, if you choose," said Bulkeley. "But you cannot refuse to answer the Head, if the matter goes before him, Mornington."

"The—The Head!" stammered Mornington.

"It's my duty to place the matter in his hands, unless you satisfy me. To be plain, Mornington, you are generally suspected of having fallen into your old ways, for which you came within an ace of being expelled from the school at one time. If you are innocent, you have only to explain. I'm ready to hear your explanation."

Morny's face was red, but he did not speak.

Bulkeley waited a few moments, and then rose from his chair, his face very stern.

"I've given you a chance," he said. "I shall have to consider what step to take next, Mornington. For the present, you can go."

Without a word Mornington turned to the study door and opened it. The next moment there was a gasp in the passage, as Tubby Muffin jumped back from the door.

Mornington gave him a furious look.

"You eavesdroppin' cad!" he shouted.

"I—I—I wasn't listening!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin indignantly. "I—I was just coming to speak to Bulkeley! Yaroooh!"

Tubby Muffin roared, as the angry junior smote him, and he sat down with a bump in the passage.

Mornington strode on with knitted brows. Tubby staggered to his feet.

"Yah! Rotter!" he gasped.

Mornington strode on to the staircase without heeding. Some of the Fourth watched him rather curiously as he went upstairs.

"What did Bulkeley want, Morny?" called out Flynn.

Morny did not seem to hear.

"I know what he wanted!" howled Tubby Muffin, coming up breathlessly. "He's going to report Morny to the Head for playing the goat! I heard him!"

In about five minutes nearly all the Fourth knew what Tubby Muffin had heard at Bulkeley's door.

Meanwhile, Valentine Mornington had gone to his study. He found the room empty, and flung himself savagely into a chair. A few minutes later Erroll came in.

"Oh, you're here, Morny! Do you know what the fellows are saying?"

"Hang the fellows!" growled Mornington.

"Tubby is spinning a yarn—"

"Hang Tubby!"

"That's all very well!" exclaimed Erroll, with a touch of impatience. "But you refused to tell Bulkeley where you had been—"

"That's so!"

"Why?"

"I had my reasons."

"You know what he must think, Morny?"

"Let him think it!"

"And the fellows, too—"

"Blow them!"

"Then you won't explain?"

"No; I won't!"

"I'm afraid it's all up with you about the captaincy, then, Morny. It's only necessary for Jimmy Silver to say a word—"

"Bless Jimmy Silver!"

Erroll compressed his lips and was silent. Valentine Mornington gave him a dark and bitter look.

"You think the same as the others, then?" he snapped.

"No!" said Erroll, after a pause. "You told me you'd given up playing the fool, and I believed you—I believe you now! But you can't expect other fellows to have the same faith in you. Why can't you explain?"

"Because—because—" Mornington flushed. "It's not as they think, but I can't explain! Dash it all, I can't! There's a reason! For goodness' sake, give a chap a rest!"

"Very well!" said Erroll quietly. And the subject dropped.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Coming to a Crisis!

"GAIN!"

Arthur Edward Lovell made—or, rather, snorted—that remark.

The Fistical Four were strolling in the quadrangle after lessons the next day, when Mornington came in sight.

Morny was heading for the gates.

He saw the chums of the Fourth, but he did not look at them. But the deepening colour in his cheeks showed that he knew their eyes were upon him. He swung out of the gateway and vanished.

"He, he, he!" came from Tubby Muffin.

"What a nerve, you know! After what Bulkeley's said to him!"

"Br-r-r!" growled Jimmy Silver.

Tubby Muffin rolled away to the gates after Mornington. Tubby was intensely curious; it was his besetting sin. Morny's mysterious excursions excited Tubby's inquisitiveness to a point that was almost painful. And the Paul Pry of Rookwood meant to find out.

"That prying rotter is going after Morny!" growled Raby.

"Oh, bother him!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Let's get along and get some cricket while there's some left."

All the members of the Rookwood junior eleven were at practice, with the exception of Valentine Mornington—and his absence was very freely commented upon. Bulkeley of the Sixth came by while the cricketers were going strong, and he called out to Jimmy Silver.

"Isn't Mornington at practice?"

"N-no!"

"Where is he?"

"Gone out, I think," answered Jimmy Silver reluctantly.

Bulkeley compressed his lips, and walked on without any further remark. The practice went on, and it was dusk when the juniors came back to the School House. Erroll, somewhat to his surprise, found Mornington in Study No. 4 when he came in.

Morny nodded to him with a smile.

"Had some good practice?" he asked.

"Yes. I wish you'd been there, Morny!"

"It wasn't possible. I had an appointment!"

Erroll made no reply to that. The two chums sat down to tea, both of them silent and thoughtful.

"I borrowed two quids of you before I went out," said Mornington, breaking the silence at last.

"That's all right!"

"Don't you want to know what I did with the money?"

"No."

"You don't think I've been squandering it in riotous livin'?" asked Mornington, with a rather sneering smile.

"I don't know what you've been doing, Morny. I think you're making a lot of mystery over nothing!"

There was a tap at the door, as the chums finished tea, and it opened to disclose Jimmy Silver, Lovell, Conroy, Van Rynn, and Dodd; all members of the School cricket committee. They came into the study with rather grave faces.

Mornington looked at them with a mocking expression.

"Trot in!" he said. "Don't mind me!"

"We've come to say something rather unpleasant, I'm afraid, Morny," said Jimmy Silver.

"Fire away!"

"Well, the long and the short of the matter is, that we want you to resign."

"I thought that was comin'," said Mornington, with a nod. "You don't want me to captain you in the St. Jim's match tomorrow?"

"No!"

"That's rather complimentary."

"Oh, cut the cackle!" said Arthur Edward Lovell gruffly. "It's the order of the boot for you, Mornington, and you know you've asked for it!"

"I'm not resignin'!"

"It will come to the same thing," said



Jimmy Silver. "But everything is going to be fair and square. A meeting of the whole club will be held and the matter put to the vote."

"I sha'n't call a meetin'!"  
 "It will manage to meet without your calling it!" remarked Tommy Dodd, with a sniff. "We're fed up with you, Morny."  
 "You want to be present, I suppose?" said Jimmy Silver.

"Not particularly!"  
 "Well, the meeting's at seven, in the Common-room, if you want to come; but please yourself!"  
 "Shut the door after you!" was Morny's unmoved reply.

The visitors left the study with rather angry faces. Mornington's manner of treating their serious decision did not gratify them. The dandy of the Fourth shrugged his shoulders as the door closed behind Jimmy Silver & Co.

"How do you think the vote will go, Erroll?" he asked.  
 "You will get one vote, Morny."  
 "Yours?" said Morny, laughing.

"Yes."  
 "I could bag Muffin's, too, by standing him some tarts," said Mornington, with a grin. "Not worth the tarts, though, as the matter stands. I wonder what those asses would say if they knew the facts?"  
 "Why not tell them the facts, Morny?"  
 "Can't!"

"You'll come to the meeting, I suppose?"  
 "Oh, yes; may as well see the thing through!" yawned Mornington.

"It's rather a pity—I was going to play a really great game to-morrow against St. Jim's. Now, I suppose, I shan't even be in the team. By gad, it's rather a temptation to give Tickey Tapp another look-in!"  
 "You won't do that?"

"Oh, no; I'm done with that rot! I'll come and watch, and give you a cheer when you knock up a century against St. Jim's, old scout!"

Mornington's manner was light and careless; but Erroll could see well enough that it did not indicate his real feelings. Morny felt the blow to his pride keenly enough.

"It's rotten!" he said, after a pause.  
 "After—after the way I've played the fool lately, Erroll, I was beginnin' to understand that I'm not the man for the job I've taken on. But—but the order of the boot— And it's odd, too, that, as it happens, I don't deserve it on this occasion. Can't be helped, though."

And Valentine Mornington shrugged his shoulders again, and dismissed the subject.

His face was smiling when he left the study to go down to the Common-room with Erroll. It was rather past seven then; it was just like Morny to be late for the meeting that was to decide so much for him.

"All the merry family there!" he remarked, as there was a buzz of voices from the Common-room.

The room was crowded with juniors, Classics and Moderns. To the surprise of the two chums, as they approached, the voice of Tubby Muffin was heard.

"Fairly knocked me into a cocked hat, you know; it did, really! He never went to the Bird-in-Hand. He wasn't meeting any old bookies! I can tell you where he went."

Mornington gave a violent start.  
 "By gad!"

"Well, where did he go, you blessed Peeping Tom?" grunted Lovell.  
 Tubby Muffin chuckled.

"It'll surprise you! He—"  
 Tubby broke off suddenly as Mornington strode into the crowded room and grasped him by the shoulder.

"You fat rascal!" he exclaimed fiercely.  
 "Shut up!"

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.**

**What Tubby Knew!**

"YAROOOH!"

"Hold your tongue!"  
 "Leggo!" roared Tubby Muffin.  
 "I say, make him leggo, Jimmy Silver! Yow-ow! You're chook-chook-chook-ing me! Ooooch!"

Morny! exclaimed Erroll, following his chum quickly into the room.

The juniors crowded round in great curiosity and excitement. The Peeping Tom of Rookwood had watched Mornington that



**MORNINGTON IS WILD!** Two or three fellows grasped Morny as he made another angry movement towards the fat Classical. "You keep quiet, old top!" said Conroy. "Let Tubby go ahead!" Mornington breathed hard, but there was no help for it. Tubby's yarn was to be spun! (See Chapter 4.)

afternoon, and he was about to relate his discoveries when the dandy of the Fourth interrupted him. And Mornington's action made the very worst impression upon the Rookwooders.

Arthur Edward Lovell caught Morny by the arm.

"Let go!" he said curtly.

"Mind your own business, Lovell!" snapped Mornington savagely.

"Let go!"

Lovell gripped hard, and Mornington was swung away from Tubby Muffin.

He turned on Lovell fiercely, but two or three fellows interposed.

"Easy does it, Mornington!" said Jimmy Silver.

Mornington panted.

"That fat cad has been watchin' me!" he exclaimed.

"Ow, ow!" gasped Tubby Muffin.

"Wharrer you making such a fuss about, you silly ass? Ow, ow! Ooooch!"

"If you've been spying on me, hold your tongue about it, you fat rascal!"

"I haven't been spying!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin indignantly.

"I happened to walk down to Coombe. I suppose I can walk down to Coombe if I like? Ow!"

"Well, what did you find out?" inquired Peele of the Fourth.

"Yes; tell us that!" chimed in Tracy of the Shell. "It ought to be interestin'."

"Very!" snorted Tommy Dodd.

"We don't want to hear Tubby's silly yarns!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Shut up, Tubby, and roll away! Let's get to business!"

"Let Tubby speak out!" exclaimed Lovell.

"We know pretty well what Morny's been up to; but if Muffin knows for certain, let him speak out. Never mind how he found out. Go it, Tubby!"

"I—I was just going to!" gasped Tubby Muffin. "I don't know what Morny's so waxy about. Here, keep him off!"

Two or three fellows grasped Mornington as he made another angry movement towards the fat Classical.

"You keep quiet, old top!" said Conroy.

"Let Tubby go ahead!"

"Let go, hang you!"

"Rats!"

Mornington breathed hard with anger; but there was no help for it. Tubby's yarn was to be spun, and Morny could not stop him. The fat Classical grinned at Mornington as three or four juniors held him back.

"You needn't mind, Morny!" he grinned.

"You fat rascal!"

"Oh, go ahead, if we've got to listen to it!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver impatiently.

"Get it over, for goodness' sake!"

"I say, I followed Morny—I mean, I didn't follow him, of course—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, I happened to walk in the same direction, you know, and spotted him in the High Street at Coombe. I didn't know what to make of it," said Tubby ingenuously.

"He passed the Bird-in-Hand without even looking at it!"

"You fat idiot!" growled Mornington.

"Well, is that all?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"No fear! Where do you think he went?" said Tubby.

"I don't know, and don't care twopence! If you've got anything to get off your chest, get it off, and give us a rest!" answered Jimmy gruffly.

"I've a jolly good mind not to tell you at all!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin indignantly.

"Don't, then! Roll away!"

"Well, I don't mind telling you, old chap," said Tubby, who was evidently not to be deprived of the pleasure of making a sensational announcement, "it was no end surprising, you know. You could have knocked me down with a feather!"

"I'll knock you down with my knuckles if you don't come to the point!" growled Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Oh, I say, Lovell—"

"Get to the point!" roared Lovell.

"Well, I'm getting to it as fast as I can, only you keep on interrupting me," said Tubby, in an injured tone.

"Morny turned out of the High Street into Water Lane—"

"No pubs there!" remarked Tracy, and there was a laugh.

"He didn't go into a pub," said Tubby.

"He went into a house, and he—"

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"I've had enough of this!" said Mornington savagely. "Let me go! I won't touch the fat cad! I'm goin'!"

"Let him go if he likes," said Jimmy Silver.

Mornington swung savagely out of the Common-room. Kit Erroll, however, remained. Erroll was the only fellow present who believed that Tubby's tale would disclose nothing to Mornington's discredit.

"Get on with the washing, Muffin, if you must wag your chin!" grunted Jimmy Silver. "Cut it short!"

"He went into a house," said Tubby.

"What house?" asked Tracy.

"Mrs. Wickers' house."

"Mrs. Wickers!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

Tubby Muffin chuckled.

"I was just as surprised as you are, you bet!" he said. "I thought he was gone out on the razzle! I'd have sworn to it! I was awfully disappointed—I mean, I was jolly pleased—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What on earth did he want in Mrs. Wickers' house?" exclaimed Lovell blankly.

There was general astonishment among the Rookwood juniors.

Most of them knew Mrs. Wickers, a "war widow," of Coombe. Since her husband had fallen in the last days of the War, the poor little woman had eked out her pension with needlework, and Mrs. Chisholm, the Head's wife, had shown her great kindness. The juniors had sometimes seen little Mrs. Wickers coming to the Head's house, and they had always "capped" her with deep respect. What Mornington should have visited Mrs. Wickers for was a deep mystery.

Tubby's yarn was listened to now with much more interest. Evidently it was not to be a tale of wild "razzle."

"Mrs. Wickers hasn't started poker parties, I suppose?" remarked Tracy of the Shell.

"Shut up, Tracy!"

"Go on, Tubby!"

"Mrs. Wickers let him in," continued Tubby, evidently elated at the impression he was creating. "He only went into the hall, and the door was open, so I sneaked up—I mean, I thought I'd like to have a closer look at the marigolds near the door, so I went to look at them, and while I was looking at the marigolds I saw Morny give her two pound notes—"

"Wha-at?"

"Great Scott!"

"And I heard him say that would make up what she needed, with the one yesterday—"

"Oh!"

"And Mrs. Wickers said he was a good young gentleman—"

"Ah!"

"And she wouldn't take it, only if the man turned her out there was nowhere for her children to go."

"Phew!"

"She said it was noble of a rich young gentleman to think of the poor," grinned Tubby. "She don't know Morny's isn't rich now! Blessed if I know where he got the money from! Borrowed it off Erroll, I dare say. Anyhow, he had it, and he gave it to her, and never let on a word that it was all he had. Then I cut off in case the beast should see me—I mean, I'd finished looking at the marigolds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Queer, ain't it?" said Tubby Muffin. "Fancy Morny handing out his cash for a widow to pay the rent, when we all thought—"

"Well, my only hat!" said Tommy Dodd blankly.

Jimmy Silver coloured.

"We've been rather hard on Morny, I think," he said. "I—I think there's a lot that wants explaining about his doings lately, but he's certainly been misjudged this time. That fat rotter ought to be kicked for watching him—but I'm glad it's come out."

"I knew he was all right," said Erroll, whose face was very bright now. "It was just his pride that wouldn't allow him to explain."

"Oh, blow his pride!" growled Lovell. "He could have explained."

"Well, I don't know," remarked Jimmy Silver. "If Morny had told the yarn it would have sounded like blowing his own

trumpet. Still, I'm jolly glad we've got the facts—in time."

"In time?" repeated Lovell.

"Well, now we know, I suppose there's no further idea of turning him out," said Jimmy.

"Oh!"

Jimmy Silver took Tubby Muffin by one fat ear.

"You prying worm!" he said.

"Ow!"

"You ought to be kicked for watching and listening. Go to Bulkeley of the Sixth and tell him what you've told us. Otherwise you'll get the kicking you've asked for!"

"Ow! All right! Leggo!"

Kit Erroll started for his study, and several of the juniors followed him there. Valentine Mornington gave them a very unpleasant look as they came in.

"It's all right, Morny!" said Jimmy Silver. "The meeting's called off."

"Blow the meeting!"

"We seem to have misjudged you, and—"

"Oh, rot!"

"But it was all your own fault; you fairly asked for it," said Jimmy. "But as the matter stands, it's cleared up, and you're captaining us to-morrow against St. Jim's."

"I don't know that I want to!" grunted Mornington. "Like your thumpin' cheek to take an interest in my private affairs!"

"Look here—" began Lovell hotly.

"Oh, go an' eat coke!"

"Shush!" said Jimmy Silver. "You're going to have another chance, Morny. For goodness' sake, make the best of it, and nobody here will say another word about electing a new captain. Come on, you chaps!"

And Jimmy Silver & Co. left the study. Kit Erroll looked at his chum with a smile.

"I'm glad it's out," he said.

"I'm not!" growled Mornington. "I'll jolly well kick that prying fat rascal!"

"It's done you good!"

"Oh, rot!"

Erroll smiled again, but said no more. And Mornington, upon reflection, was probably not sorry that the junior meeting had been interrupted by Tubby Muffin with his surprising yarn. On the morrow, when the Rookwood junior team went into the field against St. Jim's, Valentine Mornington went with them as their captain.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Morny's Win!

**T**OM MERRY & CO. of St. Jim's were early on the ground on Wednesday afternoon. The St. Jim's cricketers looked in great form. Bulkeley of the Sixth gave the juniors a look-in before the match started. Mornington eyed the captain of Rookwood rather morosely as he came up, but Bulkeley gave him a nod and a smile.

"I've been hearing about you, Mornington," he said quite kindly. "What I've heard doesn't quite explain everything—but it's enough. I'm content to leave the matter alone now and trust to your good sense to avoid any further trouble. I hope you'll have a good game."

"Thanks, Bulkeley!" said Mornington, and the captain of Rookwood nodded and went on towards Big Side.

The first innings fell to Rookwood, and Mornington opened, with Jimmy Silver at the other end.

The revelation made by Tubby Muffin had restored Morny to popularity. Even Arthur Edward Lovell was willing to give him another chance. But a good many fellows had some doubts about Morny's form for that game. Whatever his motives had been, there was no doubt that Morny had neglected cricket practice for some time past.

But their doubts were speedily set at rest. Mornington was a first-rate cricketer when he was at his best, and it was soon found that he was at his very best now.

Probably the fact that he had followed Erroll's counsel and broken off with his shady connections relieved his mind, and put him into a happy and confident mood. Possibly the surprise he had planned for his comrades after the match made him specially keen to put up a good game. Certainly he was at the top of his form, and even Talbot of St. Jim's failed to make any

impression on his wicket. When Jimmy Silver went out for 10, Valentine Mornington was still going strong.

Lovell joined him at the wickets, and then Tommy Dodd, and then Cook. And Morny was still batting when all three were back at the pavilion.

Jimmy Silver watched his innings with great satisfaction.

That innings looked like being a record in junior cricket at Rookwood; and Morny was sniping away the dissatisfaction of his followers, along with the leather that the St. Jim's bowlers sent down to him. Every splendid hit strengthened his position as junior captain of Rookwood—and one splendid hit followed another. Erroll joined him, and retired with only 6; then came Conroy, and Conroy went, leaving Mornington still impregnable.

"Bai Jove! They've got a good man there, deah boys!" remarked D'Arcy of St. Jim's, as he came breathlessly back after a pursuit of the leather.

"Too jolly good!" said Tom Merry ruefully. "Looks like being not out at the finish."

"Yaas, wathah!"

Mornington was bowled at last by Talbot, with 50 runs to his credit. The Rookwood innings ended for 95; Mornington had taken more than half the score.

A congratulating crowd surrounded him when he came back to the pavilion, looking rather flushed, and very cheerful. Arthur Edward Lovell slapped him on the shoulder.

"Good man!" he said emphatically.

"Not feeling so fed up?" asked Morny.

Lovell laughed.

"Keep it up like that, and we'll never get fed up, old scout!" he answered.

The St. Jim's innings was a good deal briefer. Tom Merry & Co. put up a good game, but luck was not with them. They finished for 80. And when Rookwood began again Morny was first in, with Jimmy Silver, and loud cheers from the Rookwood crowd greeted his first hit—which was for 4. Evidently Mornington was not tired by his first good innings, and was still a rod in pickle for Tom Merry & Co.

Cheers rang out again and again round Little Side for the junior skipper.

"Isn't he ripping?" Erroll exclaimed, in great delight, as Mornington sent the ball past the boundary.

"Top-hole!" said Jimmy Silver heartily. "Simply it! The real goods, and no merry error!"

There was no doubt that Mornington was the "real goods."

Batsman after batsman joined him, and left again, dismissed by the St. Jim's bowlers. But Mornington was not out at the end of the innings, with 40 more runs to his name.

"Ninety for the second innings!" said Arthur Edward Lovell, with great glee. "St. Jim's will have to pull up their socks to beat that!"

"And then they won't do it!" remarked Tommy Dodd.

"No fear!"

Something of the same idea was in the minds of Tom Merry & Co. when they began their second innings. But they put their beef into it, and fortune—always uncertain in the great game of cricket—smiled upon them. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy put in a great innings, with Talbot at the other end; and Tom Merry did finely for his side. Jack Blake proved a tower of strength, and Figgins piled up runs. And the Saints smiled cheerily when the 100 mark was passed.

"Five more to tie, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "and still another wicket to fall! We shall do it!"

"On our heads!" agreed Blake.

Levison and Fatty Wynn were at the wickets for St. Jim's. Fatty Wynn stonewalled through an over, leaving the game for Levison; and when the field crossed, Mornington threw the ball to Jimmy Silver.

"It's up to you!" he said. "Go it!"

Jimmy Silver went it at his best. His first ball gave Levison of St. Jim's 2, and the second gave him 2 more. Rookwood faces lengthened; and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, lounging gracefully at the pavilion, gave an expansive smile.

"There goes the winnin' hit, deah boys!" he remarked, as Levison drove the ball away and ran.

"**Holding the Fort!**" is the Title of Next Week's Top-hole Rookwood Tale!



Arthur Augustus was right; though not exactly in the sense that he intended.

The ball was whizzing, but one of the field was running, too, with his eye on it; running, backing, twisting, his eyes never leaving the round, red ball—and there was a roar:

"Morny! Morny! Good man, Morny!"

"Bai Jove, he's done it!"

Right on the ropes, but Mornington was leaning back, and back, and the round, red ball came home, as if to rest, in his palm, and was held; and there was an explosion from all Rookwood.

"Morny! Morny!"

"Well caught, sir!"

"Oh, well caught!"

"Bravo!"

There was a swarm of Rookwood fellows on the field. Rookwood had won by a single run, and Mornington had made the winning catch. And with a roar and a trample, the Rookwooders surrounded him.

"Shoulder-high!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Morny!"

"Mind my bags!" yawned Mornington.

"Go easy! You're spoilin' my crease!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hurrah!"

And Mornington was borne off the field in triumph.

**THE SIXTH CHAPTER.**

**Morny Steps Down!**

"WHAT the thump—" said Lovell.

"What's on now?"

"It's Morny's fist!"

Jimmy Silver & Co., and a crowd of other fellows, were gathered round the notice-board. It was dark in the quadrangle now. Tom Merry & Co. had long since departed in their brake. On the board there was a notice in Valentine Mornington's well-known "fist," and it ordained a meeting of the Rookwood Junior Cricket Club, for that evening, in the Common-room, on a matter connected with the captaincy, and "urgent."

"Blessed if I see anything to meet about!" said Lovell. "I suppose we'd better give Morny his head after the ripping game he put up to-day."

"Yes, we'll give him his head certainly," said Jimmy Silver, laughing.

"Must be something on," remarked Tommy Dodd. "Blessed if I know what it's all about, though. You know, Erroll?"

Erroll was coming along, and he glanced at the notice as the Modern junior called to him.

"I've an idea," he answered.

"Well, what's it about, then?"

"I think I'd better leave it to Morny to tell you that!" said Erroll; and he went on towards the Common-room.

"Jolly mysterious!" yawned Lovell.

"Still, we'll go!"

"Oh, we'll go, rather!"

There was a considerable amount of curiosity about him. A dozen voices Mornington had called the meeting for; and there were very few fellows, Classical or Modern, who did not decide to go. The Common-room was crowded before the time appointed for the meeting, and there was a buzz of discussion. And there was a general movement of interest as Valentine Mornington entered the crowded room.

Mornington was cool and smiling, apparently unconscious of the curiosity about him. A dozen voices greeted him.

"What's the game, Morny?"

"What's it all about?"

Mornington glanced round.

"I'm just goin' to enlighten you, dear boys," he answered.

"Go ahead!"

Valentine Mornington mounted upon a chair, and looked over the crowded meeting. There was a rather peculiar smile upon his handsome face. Erroll stood by his side, looking a little grave.

"Gentlemen—" began Morny.

"Hear, hear!"

"Gentlemen, you have been called together to hear an important communication."

"Go it!"

"On the ball!"

"Some time ago," continued Mornington, "you did me the honour to elect me junior captain of Rookwood in the place of Jimmy Silver, whom I am happy to see present."

"No need to yawn about that now that I can see," remarked Jimmy Silver, rather uncomfortably.

"I was very honoured by the selection," went on Mornington. "It was really a big compliment to me, to make out that I was a better skipper than Jimmy Silver. At the same time, I can't help thinking that you made a mistake."

"Oh!"

"My hat!"

The Rookwood juniors stared at Mornington. They had not known what he was going to say; but certainly they had not expected him to say that. And they wondered what was coming next.

"In fact," said Mornington, "with all respect to the honourable gentlemen present, I think not only that you made a mistake, but you acted in a way that can only be justly described as asinine."

"Eh?"

"Oh!"

"You had a first-class skipper, and you got tired of him," said Mornington, with all eyes fixed on him. "You turned him out in favour of one not nearly so good—not a patch on him, in fact."

"Great Scott!"

"I—I—I'm dreaming this!" stammered Arthur Edward Lovell.

Jimmy Silver fairly blinked at Mornington.

"You—you ass, Morny!" he ejaculated.

"What the merry thunder are you driving at?"

"I'm coming to the point. It's lately been borne in upon my mind that I'm not the junior skipper that Rookwood wants—or needs! I'm not cut out for the job. Having made up my mind to be candid, I'm goin' the whole hog. The fellows who voted for me played the silly ox!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I'm much obliged to them, personally; but I cannot help regarding them as a set of silly asses."

"Phew!"

"Well, of all the cheeky duffers he's—"

"He's right, all the same!" grinned Tommy Dodd.

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Lovell. "Go it, Morny! This is better than your cricket, old top!"

"Silence for the chair!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

As soon as there was an interval of silence, Valentine Mornington resumed, in the same nonchalant tone.

"Candidly, that's what I think. I'm not a bad captain, but rather like the egg in the story—good in parts. I do not keep up the consistent level of high quality displayed by our honourable friend Jimmy Silver—Uncle James of Rookwood!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cheese it, you ass!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"I'd like to say that I've done my best," resumed Mornington, "but with proper regard for the facts, I can't say it. I haven't done my best—only sometimes, when the spirit moved me. At other times, I've followed false prophets, to put it poetically. To come down to business, I feel that I'm not the man for the job, and have consequently decided to resign."

"Great pip!"

"I'm very much obliged to the fellows who put me into Jimmy Silver's place, without having any great admiration for them intellectually. Finding that the job doesn't fit, I'm steppin' out of it. My last act as junior captain of Rookwood will be to advise you to vote for Jimmy Silver. I'm not standing again as a candidate. You've got a chance now of gettin' back the captain you really want—an as a common or garden member of the club, I'm goin' to vote for him. That's all!"

There was a buzz of voices in the Common-room, mingled with a good deal of laughter. Morny was always Morny; it could always safely be predicted that he would never do anything quite like any other fellow. And certainly he had chosen a rather unique way of handing in his resignation.

"Look here," began Jimmy Silver. "I'm not—"

"You are!" grinned Lovell. "Shut up, Jimmy!"

And Jimmy Silver gave in. Mornington's was the first vote for him, and when the meeting broke up, Jimmy Silver was once more junior captain of Rookwood School. Which, as Morny declared, and as most of the other fellows agreed, was exactly as it should be.

THE END.

(There will be another wonderful story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the Chums of Rookwood, in next week's bumper number.)

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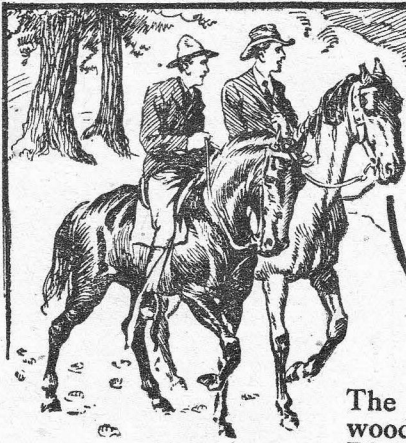
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**THE REMITTANCE-MAN'S PERIL!**

# IN THE GRIP OF THE LAW!

The Schooldays in the Backwoods of Canada of Frank Richards, the world-famous author.



## THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Track in the Snow.

"CHERUB'S not here!"  
"Late for once," said Frank Richards, with a smile.  
It was a sharp, clear morning, and there was a light powdering of snow on the trails, glistening frost on the firs and larches.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless, on their way to school at Cedar Creek, rode up to the fork in the trail where they were accustomed to meet their chum, Vere Beauclerc.

As a rule Beauclerc was there first, ready to meet his chums, but on this particular morning he was not to be seen.

The schoolboys drew rein at the fork and looked along the branch trail in the direction from which the Cherub would come.

But Beauclerc was not in sight.  
From the fork they could see a third of the distance to the lonely shack where Beauclerc dwelt with his father, the remittance-man; but the trail was clear.

"Late, by gum!" said Bob Lawless. "I wonder what's keeping him? He can't be seedy; he was all right yesterday. Better trot along and meet him, Franky."  
Frank Richards nodded.

The cousins turned their horses into the Cedar Camp trail and rode towards the Beauclercs' shack.

They fully expected to meet Beauclerc on the way, but to their surprise no rider came in sight, and they came in view of the shack at last.

The little structure of logs and lumber stood near the creek, and the clearing round it was powdered with snow.

The door of the shack stood open on its leather hinges, and the glow of a fire came from within.

"There's the Cherub!" exclaimed Bob Lawless, pointing with his riding-whip.

"And Mr. Beauclerc!" said Frank in wonder. "What the dickens are they up to?"

At a distance from the shack the remittance-man and his son could be seen, bending low, and apparently examining the snow on the ground.

They looked as if they were searching for a trail.

Bob Lawless put his hands to his mouth and shouted.

"Hallo, Cherub, hallo!"

Vere Beauclerc sprang up at once, and waved his hand to his chums.

His father glanced up for a moment, and then continued his examination of the powdery snow.

"Come on!" said Bob.

Frank Richards and his cousin trotted across the clearing towards the father and son.

"What's the row, Cherub?" asked Bob, as he came up. "Looking for bear tracks?"

Beauclerc shook his head.  
"Man-tracks!" he answered.  
"Somebody been nosing about the shack in the night?" asked Bob.

"That's it!"  
Bob Lawless whistled.

"That's queer," he said.  
"So queer that we're looking into it," said Beauclerc. "I found the tracks when I came out for my horse to start for school. Somebody has been about the place during the night, and left tracks; but the snow's not thick enough to show much."

"What on earth could he want, whoever he was?" asked Frank Richards in astonishment.

"That's what we want to find out. The horses are safe, and there's nothing else here to steal. I can't understand it."

"You'll be late for school, Vere," said Mr. Beauclerc, looking up. "You'd better get off with your friends. There's nothing more to be found out here."

Beauclerc hesitated.  
"Someone was here last night, father," he said. "It can't have been a friend, and it must have been an enemy. You'll be careful to-day, father. You—you haven't forgotten what Poker Pete tried on—"

"I shall be careful, Vere. But I don't think there is any danger. I fancy it was some horse-thief, and he found the shed padlocked, and gave it up," said the remittance-man. "Poker Pete cleared out of this section, you know."

"I thought so, father; but—"  
"He has not been seen in the valley, Vere."

"But I don't believe now that he's gone, father," said Beauclerc earnestly. "You know the Flour-bag Gang were rounded up yesterday, but their leaders escaped, after shooting down the sheriff of Thompson. I believe it was Poker Pete; I am sure it was!"

"Jolly likely, I think!" said Frank Richards.

Mr. Beauclerc's face clouded.  
The mention of the gang of road agents who had haunted the Thompson Valley for several weeks past brought bitter memories to his mind.

"If Poker Pete was the man who shot down the sheriff, Vere, he is not likely to linger here," he said. "Mr. Henderson is lying between life and death, and if the man who wounded him was found he would most likely be lynched. If it was Poker Pete, I fancy he is a good many miles away by this time."

"He is, if he's got any hoss-sense," remarked Bob Lawless. "But I say, Cherub, we're late already, and Miss Meadows will be getting annoyed."

"Go at once, my boy," said Mr. Beauclerc, "you need not fear for me. I shall be indoors, too. There is no work to be done in the fields this weather."

And Vere Beauclerc fetched his horse and

rode away with his chums; but his brow was clouded with thought.

The three schoolboys rode at a good pace, to make up for lost time, and they did not speak till they were nearing Cedar Creek school.

"All serene," said Bob. "We shan't be late, after all, and we shall hear the bell from here. No need to break our necks over it. Cherub old scout, you're looking doleful!"

Beauclerc smiled faintly.  
"I'm a bit worried over what happened last night," he said. "Of course, it may have been only a horse-thief looking for a chance. But I don't feel easy in my mind. I'm certain that the leader of the Flour-Bag Gang, the man who escaped, is Poker Pete; and you know he tried to shoot my father from the timber."

"But he must be miles away; most likely over the border in the States!" said Frank Richards.

"Yes, I suppose so. After all, my father's on his guard now."

The three chums arrived at the school as the bell began to ring for morning lessons.

They put up their horses and joined the crowd of Cedar Creek fellows heading for the lumber schoolhouse.

Frank called to Chunky Todgers before they went in.

"Any news from Thompson, Chunky?"

"Only the sheriff's in a bad way," said Chunky. "Dr. Jones was looking jolly serious about it. They're talking about lynching the road-agent if he's caught."

"But he's not been caught," asked Bob.

"Nope! But—" Chunky Todgers glanced at Beauclerc and stopped abruptly.

"But what?" asked Frank.

"Nothing!" answered Chunky evasively.

Chunky's fat face reddened, and he hurried into the schoolhouse, without saying anything further.

Frank Richards & Co. looked after him in surprise.

Chunky Todgers was generally willing to talk, and he prided himself on knowing the latest news; and just now he seemed embarrassed and desirous of avoiding questions.

"What's the matter with Chunky?" asked Bob Lawless in wonder. "He doesn't want to wag his chin. If there's any news, I don't see why he can't tell us."

"Let's ask Lawrence," said Frank.

Tom Lawrence and his sister Molly were coming in, and the Co. turned to them.

Chunky Todgers' mysterious manner had rather surprised them, and especially the peculiar look he had given Beauclerc.

"What's the news, Lawrence?" asked Frank. "Is there anything going on in Thompson?"

Lawrence coloured, and Molly looked confused.

"Only a lot of silly chinwag," said

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# The "Magnet's" Grand HIGHWAYMAN Stories have made a Great Sensation! 9

Lawrence hesitatingly. "I don't believe a word of it!" "It is all wicked nonsense!" said Molly. "But what is it, then?" exclaimed Frank. "Oh, nothing; only rot!" Lawrence hurried into the schoolhouse, and Molly followed him, evidently to avoid further questioning.

The bell had ceased to ring, and Frank Richards & Co. had to go into the school-room.

They went in in a state of astonishment and wonder.

Something evidently was the talk of Thompson, and the fellows who came from that quarter knew what it was, but had an evident objection to telling the chums what they knew.

It was no wonder that Frank Richards & Co. were mystified.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Strange Mystery.

MISS MEADOWS' eye lingered for a moment on Vere Beauclerc, as he took his place in the class with his chums.

It was only for a moment, but the Canadian schoolmistress' glance was very kind, almost tender.

Frank Richards noticed it, and he knew at once that the schoolmistress was aware of the secret whatever it was.

Whatever it was, it concerned Beauclerc that was clear. Hopkins' words were a proof of that.

And if further proof was needed, it was soon forthcoming.

Vere Beauclerc was the object of unusual attention in class that morning.

Every few minutes a glance would be turned on him.

Both Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd glanced round at the boy once or twice, and the members of their classes did so a good many times.

Beauclerc could not fail to observe that he was the centre of attraction in the school-room, so to speak, and it made him uneasy and a little angry.

He could think of no explanation for it. The attention he received was far from hostile. Most of the glances turned on him were kind and friendly and sympathetic.

But why should he be an object of sympathy? That was a perplexing puzzle.

His sense of uneasiness deepened as the morning wore on.

He was thinking, too, of the mysterious footprints near the shack.

In the circumstances, his attention to lessons was a little random; but Miss Meadows found no fault with him that morning.

The schoolmistress was unfailingly gentle and kind.

The three chums were anxious for lessons to end so that they could discover what it all meant. They were determined to have an explanation from somebody.

Lessons seemed interminably long to them that morning.

At last the hour of dismissal came, and the Cedar Creek crowd poured out into the playground.

Frank Richards collared Chunky Todgers at once, in spite of the desire that fat youth evinced to escape.

"Now, Chunky—" began Frank.

"I—I say, I—I've got to go out," stammered Todgers. "I'm going to see a Hillcrest chap."

"You're not," said Frank. "Tell us what it all means."

"Eh?" said Chunky vaguely. "I say, leggo my shoulder, you know!"

"Not till you've explained," said Frank sharply.

"I—I say, weren't the Flour-Bag Gang dished yesterday?" said Chunky Todgers.

"You know, they made up gold sacks with nothing in them but quartz powder."

"I know that."

"One of them got away with four of the buckskin bags—the leader, so the Thompson folk say. Fancy his face when he opens the buckskin bags and finds only old quartz in them!" grinned Chunky.

"Keep to the point, you duffer! What's going on in Thompson?" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

"The sheriff's pretty bad; bullet in the chest."

"We know that! What else?"

"Oh, same as usual!" said Chunky. "Guten's store was open when I came through this morning."

"Bother Guten's store! Is there any news?"

"News!" said Chunky Todgers reflectively.

"Oh, no; nope! Not that I know of. I say, Franky, do let go my shoulder!"

"Will you tell us, or not?" demanded Vere Beauclerc angrily.

"No, I won't!" said Todgers, driven into the open at last.

Frank released the fat schoolboy in disgust.

It was pretty clear that no information was to be got out of Chunky Todgers.

But, to their amazement and exasperation, every fellow they questioned was as non-committal as Chunky.

The fellows who came from Thompson evidently knew all about it, and pretty clearly had told the others.

But they did not want to tell Frank Richards & Co., and they did not tell them.

It was clear, too, that it was Beauclerc whom they wanted to leave out of the secret, not his chums, and that their motive was friendly.

It was so perplexing that the chums did not know what to think, but a sense of deep uneasiness was growing in their breasts.

Whatever it was that was going on in the frontier town concerned Beauclerc, and the fellows, in refusing to reveal what it was, were actuated by motives of kindness.

That much was clear, but it only made the whole affair more perplexing.

Even from Molly Lawrence nothing could be extracted.

The girl was so obviously distressed when questioned that the Co. did not persist, and they gave it up.

Vere Beauclerc walked away to the corral, his brow knitted, and his chums followed him.

"There's something up," said Beauclerc abruptly. "It looks like something serious. I'm going to ride over to Thompson. I shall have to miss dinner. That can't be helped."

"We'll come with you," said Frank.

"I'll bag a corn cake from Black Sally, and we can munch it as we go along," said Bob Lawless. "Bother dinner!"

And in five minutes the chums led out their horses, and started on the Thompson trail, eating the substantial corn cake as they rode.

As they came in sight of the town, three schoolboys came into view on the trail—Dicky Bird and Fisher and Blumpy, of Hillcrest.

The three exchanged glances at the sight of the Cedar Creek fellows, and Dicky Bird ran out into the middle of the trail, and held up his hand as a signal to halt.

Frank Richards & Co. drew rein.

"No larks now, Bird," said Frank; "we're in a hurry."

"You're going to Thompson?" asked Dicky Bird, his eyes lingering on Vere Beauclerc's handsome, set face.

"Yes."

"I—I say, I guess I wouldn't," said Dicky. "I'll tell you what. Come along to Hillcrest, you fellows, and have a look at my new sleigh. It's a regular beauty, I can tell you."

"Well, my hat!" said Frank.

Dicky Bird's object was so palpable that the chums of Cedar Creek could only stare at him.

Dicky plainly wanted to prevent them from going to Thompson, and certainly from a friendly motive.

"We'll see your blessed sleigh another time, Dicky," said Bob Lawless. "Blessed if I don't think everybody in the valley is going off his roof! What's going on in Thompson?"

"I say, I want you to help me try my sleigh," said Dicky Bird persuasively.

"Yes, do come," said Fisher. "Anyway, you come, Beauclerc. No rows to-day, you know. We'd really like you to come."

"Jolly glad if you would!" said Blumpy heartily. "We'll get you some dinner at Hillcrest, too."

"Thank you!" said Beauclerc. "But I'm going to Thompson."

And he rode on, his chums following. Beauclerc's face was pale now.

There was bad news for him to hear in Thompson. He knew that now.

Even his old rivals of Hillcrest School had

tried to keep him away from the town, and plainly for his own sake.

What did it all mean?

Personally, there was nothing going on in Thompson that could concern him. It must be something in connection with his father.

What danger, then, could be threatening the remittance-man?

For that was the only explanation Beauclerc could think of.

There was a pang in his heart as he rode on at a gallop.

The three schoolboys rode into Main Street at last.

The street was crowded, and there was a buzz of incessant voices.

Outside Guten's store the crowd was the thickest.

As the schoolboys were seen there was a sudden shout:

"That's his son!"

And many excited, angry faces surged round the chums of Cedar Creek as they drew in their horses.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER. Black News!

THE three riders drew close together, the horses tossing up their heads, startled, as the crowd surged round.

The reception was a surprising one.

"That's his son!"

"That's Old Man Beauclerc's boy!"

Vere Beauclerc's face was pale and set, but his eyes glistened.

He needed no further proof that the excitement of Thompson that morning was in connection with his father.

What did it mean? What terrible peril was impending over the remittance-man?

"Here! Stand clear, you galoots!" exclaimed Bob Lawless sharply. "Do you want to be trampled on? Stand clear!"

"You shut your yap-trap, young Lawless!" bawled a big, broad-shouldered rough, whom the chums recognised as Four Kings, the "king-pin" of the Red Dog crowd.

"This hyer ain't your funeral! I guess you know what Old Man Beauclerc has done!"

"My father has done nothing!" said Vere Beauclerc, in a clear voice. "And you, least of all, have no right to call him to account, you ruffian!"

"What?" roared Four Kings.

He made a grasp at the remittance-man's son, as if to drag him from the saddle.

Frank Richards pushed his horse between, and Four Kings was shouldered roughly back, and nearly fell.

Mr. Guten, the fat storekeeper, called out from his doorway:

"Hands off the boy! He's not responsible! Let the boy alone!"

"Look hyer—" yelled Four Kings furiously.

"Keep your hands off the boy, my man!"

It was Mr. Penrose, the newspaper man, who spoke, as he pushed through the rough crowd. "The boy's done nothing! He can't help what his father's done!"

"I guess he's had his share in what the old man brought home off the trail!" shouted Euchre Dick.

"Nonsense! Men of Thompson," exclaimed Mr. Penrose, "you will not see a schoolboy ill-used!"

The crowd surged back.

Most of them were miners from the claims along the creek, or cattlemen from the ranches—a rough crowd, but decent men in the main.

Four Kings and his worthy confreres of the Red Dog were in a very small minority.

"Let the boy alone!" came a dozen voices. "It's not his fault!"

Beauclerc, white to the lips, called to Mr. Penrose as the latter was stepping back towards the store.

"Mr. Penrose, what has happened?"

The newspaper man gave him a glance of pity.

"You shouldn't be here, Beauclerc," he said, in a low voice. "The people are excited—the sheriff's life is in danger. Get out of the town as fast as you can. But—don't go home!"

"Why not go home?"

"Better not. Take him home with you, young Lawless; that's best—or go back to school, and keep there."

"But what's happened, Mr. Penrose?" exclaimed Frank Richards.

"You know the sheriff was shot down

yesterday by the road-agent who got away and—

"Yes, yes! But what—"

"The man's name is known—at least, it's believed so," said Mr. Penrose.

Beaulerc pressed his hand to his heart for a moment.

For one terrible instant it seemed that the chill of death itself was there.

"Not—not—" he panted. "Mr. Penrose, do they think—are they mad enough, fools enough, to think that it was my father?"

Mr. Penrose nodded without speaking. Beaulerc reeled in his saddle, and Frank Richards' arm caught him.

The remittance-man's son was almost overcome with horror.

This, then, was the news.

This was what all Cedar Creek knew, and would not tell him—what the Hillcrest fellows knew, and had tried to prevent him from learning—that his father's name was bandied about in the town as that of a robber and an attempted murderer!

That was the secret!

Beaulerc drew a sobbing breath.

"My father!" he whispered. "Oh, it's all lies—all lies! As if my father—" He broke off, and pulled himself together. "Mr. Penrose! Answer me! Who says that it was my father—"

"Everybody seems to be saying so," answered Mr. Penrose.

"But someone must have started it!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Is all this row simply on a rumour? Isn't there any evidence?"

"Yes."

"And what's the evidence?"

"He was seen—at least, it's said he was seen," answered Mr. Penrose reluctantly.

"There's a man in town who says he saw him last night—last evening, rather—after the hunt for the road-agents. I don't say it's true, my boy—but Keno Kit swears to it—"

"Keno Kit—a drunken ruffian—one of the Red Dog crowd!" exclaimed Beaulerc.

"That's so. But he says he saw Mr. Beaulerc taking off the flour-bag in the timber. You know the road-agents wore flour-bags over their faces for disguise."

"It is false! He never saw it!"

"He says so, and he's believed. I—I'm afraid there's a lot of prejudice in the matter, too," said Mr. Penrose. "Your father—" He paused. "But you needn't fear, my boy. He will have a fair trial."

"A—trial?"

"Yes. I understand that the deputy-sheriff is going to see him, and—and—" Mr. Penrose broke off again.

Beaulerc set his lips.

"Is my father to be arrested?" he asked.

"He is to be questioned, and Mr. Oakes will take him into custody if he thinks fit. You'd better keep off the scene, my boy."

Beaulerc's lip curled disdainfully.

"My place is with my father!" he answered.

There was a shout in the crowded street:

"They're starting!"

The clatter of hoofs sounded down the street.

Mr. Oakes, the deputy-sheriff of Thompson, was riding out to the trail with three of the sheriff's men, and all of them carried rifles.

"They're going to the shack?" asked Bob Lawless breathlessly.

Mr. Penrose nodded.

A crowd followed the deputy-sheriff and his men—a couple of dozen riders, and a larger crowd on foot.

It was pretty certain that the search at the shack for evidence of Mr. Beaulerc's guilt would be thorough.

Vere Beaulerc glanced at his comrades.

"I'm going home," he said. "You fellows had better get back. Tell Miss Meadows I can't come back to school."

"We're coming with you, fathead!" answered Frank Richards.

"You'd better not. If there's trouble, I shall stand by my father, and—and there may be danger—"

"Come on!" was Bob Lawless' answer.

Beaulerc said no more.

The three schoolboys rode after the sheriff's posse, and joined the crowd pouring out on the trail.

A good many glances were cast at Beaulerc, the son of the suspected man, but no one offered to interfere with him.

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In sombre silence the three chums rode, and they were close behind Mr. Oakes and his party when they arrived at the shack by the creek.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### The Search at the Shack!

MR. OAKES dismounted from his horse outside the shack.

The crowd that had followed from Thompson kept back a little, leaving the proceedings in the hands of the deputy-sheriff and his men.

John Oakes was a short, thick-set man, with a square jaw, and a very determined look, not at all the kind of man to allow the "bull-dozers" of Thompson to interfere between him and his duty.

He was a farmer in the Thompson district, and he had been called away from his land to take on the sheriff's duties, now that Mr. Henderson lay helpless on a sick-bed.

He was looking very grim, and perhaps a little morose; but Beaulerc and his chums were glad that he was there.

There was no danger of lawless proceedings where John Oakes was present.

The clatter of many hoofs on the hard trail had doubtless reached the ears of the remittance-man in the shack, for the door opened, and Lascelles Beaulerc looked out as the deputy-sheriff dismounted.

Mr. Beaulerc raised his eyebrows at the sight of the crowd from Thompson.

There was a deep murmur at the sight of him.

"Keep back there!" called out John Oakes, as two or three of the Thompson men pressed forward.

And his order was obeyed.

But Vere Beaulerc rode on, with his chums, to the doorway of the shack.

Vere's place was with his father then.

Mr. Oakes gave him a glance, but took no further notice of the schoolboys. He returned the remittance-man's salutation grimly.

"Anything wanted?" asked Mr. Beaulerc.

"I guess so," answered Oakes laconically. "You're wanted to answer a question, Mr. Beaulerc. Have you had anything to do with the Flour-Bag Gang?"

Mr. Beaulerc started.

"I—I don't understand," he faltered.

"I guess I'll put it plain. You're not charged yet, and I'm speaking to you as a neighbour, so far. Yesterday three men in flour-bag masks stopped the post-wagon on the prairie trail. Two were captured, one got away after shooting down the sheriff."

"I'm aware of that. But—"

"Keno Kit, of Thompson—you know him?"

"I've seen him at the Red Dog," said the remittance-man, his face flushing. "What of him?"

"He states that last evening, in the timber near here, he saw you taking a flour-bag mask off under the trees, on a steaming horse, as if you'd come from a hard ride."

"It is false!"

Mr. Oakes nodded. "Like as not," he said. "Keno Kit's word is about as good as that of a Digger Injun. But there it stands, and the Thompson folk are excited about it. I've come to look into the matter. I won't mince words with you, Mr. Beaulerc. Remittance-men are not in the best savour in this section, and I reckon it wants looking into."

"I'm ready to answer all your questions, Mr. Oakes. Does this mean that I am to be arrested?" asked the remittance-man quietly.

"Not at present. Keep where you are while we search the place," said Oakes.

"No objection to that?"

"None at all."

"Very good."

One of the sheriff's men was told off to keep watch on the remittance-man, and Oakes, with the rest, proceeded to search the shack.

Some of the Thompson men were rather keen to help in the search, but the deputy-sheriff sternly ordered them back.

The search went on very thoroughly. Vere Beaulerc had dismounted, and he approached his father, who gave him a reassuring smile.

"Why are you not at the school, Vere?" he asked.

"I heard this in Thompson, father, so I came. Father, why has Keno Kit told this

wicked lie about you?" asked Vere, in a low voice.

Mr. Beaulerc's lip curled.

"He was a pard of Poker Pete, and Poker Pete is at the back of it, I suppose. This is his vengeance. But there is no danger, my boy. I am innocent, and there is law and order in Canada, even in the Thompson Valley. If the rascals have counted upon raising a cry of Judge Lynch, they will be disappointed."

"That must have been the intention," said Vere Beaulerc. "Keno Kit's evidence is not good enough for a court, of law."

"But it will fail, my boy. You need have no fear for me."

Oakes and his men came out of the shack.

The little building had been searched thoroughly, and it did not take very long.

No evidence had been found so far to connect the remittance-man with the Flour-Bag Gang, and, as he had had no warning, there was a good chance of finding evidence there, if it existed.

The shed where the horses were stabled was next searched.

It was drawn blank.

The remittance-man's horse did not resemble the steed upon which the leader of the Flour-Bag Gang had been mounted, but that steed, doubtless, had been disguised with paint.

But no trace of paint was found upon the horse, and no paint was discovered about the building.

Frank Richards & Co. hoped that the affair was at an end, but Oakes and his men were not done yet.

"Is there a ladder here?" Oakes called out to Mr. Beaulerc.

"Yes, you'll find one behind the shed."

Oakes went round the shed, and re-mounted to the roof.

Frank Richards & Co., and the Thompson crowd, watched him breathlessly.

"What on earth does he expect to find there?" muttered Frank.

Bob's lips tightened a little.

"You remember the road-agent got off with the buckskin bags that he thought had gold-dust in them," he said. "I guess that's what Mr. Oakes has got in his mind, Franky."

"But there was only quartz powder in the bags," said Frank. "The Flour-Bag rotter wouldn't keep them when he knew what was in them."

"He might have hidden them away before opening them, perhaps. He had no reason to suppose they contained anything but gold-dust."

"Yes, I suppose so."

Bob knitted his brows.

"Depend on it that's what's in Oakes' mind," he said. "And there's the flour-bag, too. If Mr. Beaulerc was the man, he would have that about the place somewhere."

"The fools!" muttered Frank. "They ought to know he's not the man."

Bob Lawless nodded without speaking.

Frank glanced at his Canadian cousin, started a little, and Bob avoided his eyes.

Frank Richards realised, with a chill, that suspicion had found root in Bob's mind, for the moment at least.

But Bob shook himself, as if to shake off the wretched thought.

"It's impossible," he muttered.

"Quite impossible," said Frank warmly.

"Dash it all, Bob! He's Vere's father. He's done a lot of reckless things, I know, but this—"

"You're right, Franky. I was a beast to let the thought come into my mind for a second," muttered Bob.

The chums moved away from their horses, to join Mr. Beaulerc and his son, and they remained together while the deputy-sheriff climbed on the roof of the shack.

The timber roof was thatched with turf and branches, and it would have been easy enough to make a hiding-place for a small packet there, if it had been desired.

Mr. Oakes was making a very careful search of the roof, all eyes below being fixed upon him intently.

Suddenly the man on the roof was seen to start, and there was a buzz in the



crowd below as he took out his knife and began to hack at the thatch.

It was clear that he had found something.

Frank Richards and Bob exchanged startled glances, and Beauclerc's face paled.

The unhappy boy felt a contraction at his heart.

What was it the deputy-sheriff had found?

He caught his father's sleeve and looked into his face. But there was only surprise in Mr. Beauclerc's face as he watched Oakes at work.

Certainly there was no trace of guilt or of fear.

Mr. Oakes raised his head and looked down. There was a hush as he called out to his men below:

"Seize that man!"

And the grasp of the sheriff's men closed upon the arms of Lascelles Beauclerc!

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**  
**The Arrest!**

DEAD silence reigned as Mr. Oakes came down the ladder from the roof of the shack.

He carried a package in his hand, and as he came closer it was seen that it was a folded flour-bag of rough texture.

Lascelles Beauclerc looked at it, and, in spite of himself, his bronzed face paled.

Quietly the deputy-sheriff opened out the package, and the flour-bag was held up to view.

There were three holes cut in one side of it, evidently for the mouth and eyes when it was used as a mask.

And that was not all.

Four small buckskin bags had been wrapped up in the flour-bag.

Frank Richards had seen them before. They were four of the little bags stolen from the post-wagon, which the road agents had believed to contain gold-dust.

The buckskin bags were fastened, and it was not possible to tell whether they had been opened.

The deputy-sheriff's look showed what his opinion was—that the gold-bags had been hurriedly hidden, unopened, by the robber, who had just escaped from a desperate chase, and who, in fear perhaps of further pursuit, had not yet ventured to take them from their hiding-place.

A deep, savage murrur came from the Thompson men as they looked at the deputy-sheriff's discovery.

Oakes fixed his eyes upon the troubled face of the remittance-man.

"You see that, Lascelles Beauclerc?" he said quietly.

"I see it!"

"You saw me take it from where it was hidden—in the roof of your shack? It had been shoved in under the loose thatch."

"He's the man!"

"He's the road-agent—the man who shot the sheriff!"

There was a surge forward of the Thompson crowd.

Lascelles Beauclerc did not flinch.

He stood facing the angry crowd quietly, steadily.

Vere Beauclerc pushed closer to his father's side.

The discovery had chilled the boy's very heart, but his faith in his father did not waver.

He was ready to stand by the remittance-man to the death, if it came to that.

But John Oakes waved back the crowd angrily.

"Stand back!" he rapped out.

"Lynch him!" came in a roar from five or six throats.

Oakes picked up his rifle.

"Who says lynch him?" he said calmly.

"Let him stand forward. He will have to walk over my rifle first!" The deputy-sheriff's eyes glinted. "Stand back!"

And the crowd surged back again.

Oakes turned to Lascelles Beauclerc.

"Have you anything to say?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes," answered the remittance-man, in a low but clear voice. "I never placed those things in my roof. I've never seen them before."

"Anything else?" asked Oakes, with a shrug of his massive shoulders. It was clear enough that he did not believe a word of that statement.

"Yes. This morning there were tracks in the snow round the shack, which showed that someone had been prowling here last night while I slept. I thought it was perhaps a horse-thief. I know better now. Whoever it was that left those tracks hid those bags in my roof. It was easy enough for him to get the ladder."

"Any proof of the tracks in the snow?"

The deputy-sheriff shrugged his shoulders again.

"My son found them first."

"Your son's evidence don't weigh much in this affair, I reckon," he answered.

"It may have to be proved that he was not hand-in-glove with you."

Mr. Beauclerc. "I reported it to the sheriff at the time."

"Poker Pete has not been seen in the section for weeks."

"I know it. I believed he was gone; but I think now that he was only lying low," said the remittance-man bitterly.

"That's all you have to say?"

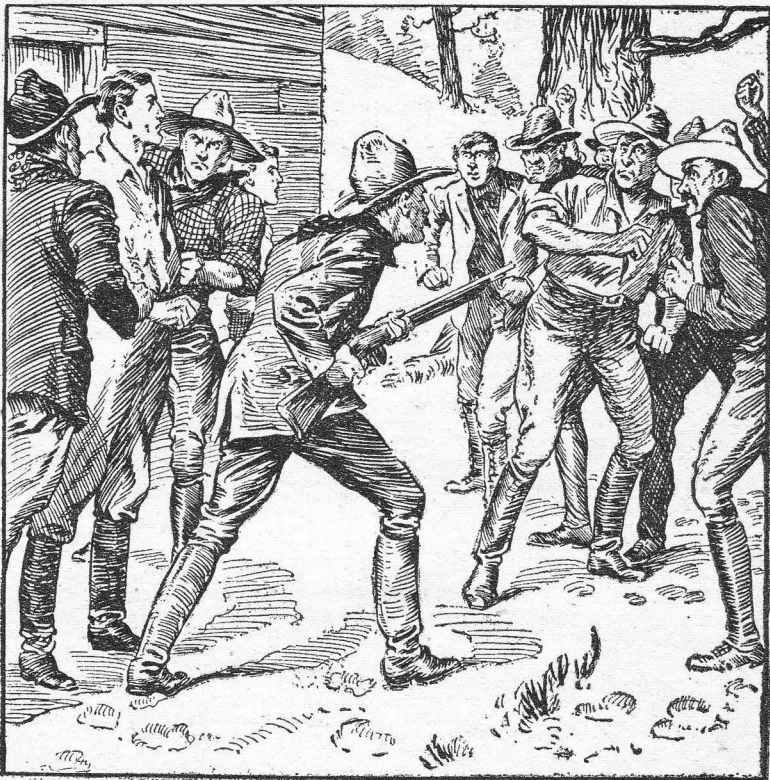
"That is all."

"You'll have a fair trial," said the deputy-sheriff.

"Mr. Henderson's lying in Thompson with a bullet-wound in his chest, and he may not recover. If he doesn't, it's a rope for the man who pulled a trigger on him. I don't say you're the man. But it looks like it, and it's my duty to take you into custody to stand your trial."

The remittance-man bowed his head.

"I know that," he said. "I am ready."



**THE REMITTANCE-MAN'S PERIL!** A loud yell came from the crowd. "Lynch him!" Mr. Beauclerc stood facing the surging crowd quietly and steadily, and the deputy-sheriff waved them back with his rifle. "Stand back!" he rapped out. "Who says lynch him? Let him stand forward. He will have to walk over my rifle first!" (See Chapter 5.)

"We can prove that much, Mr. Oakes!" exclaimed Frank Richards eagerly. "We came up while they were examining the tracks."

"I guess we're witnesses of that!" said Bob.

The deputy-sheriff gave them a glance.

"That's as it may be," he said. "I guess it don't prove much, either way. I guess I don't see any reason why the road-agent should hide his plunder in your roof, Mr. Beauclerc, if you're not the man."

"It was hidden there to bring this suspicion on me," answered the remittance-man steadily. "I knew nothing of it. I have heard of the trick that was played on the road-agents—the bags contain only powdered quartz. It cost the rascal nothing to leave them here after finding that out. I believe I can tell you the man's name, too."

"And the name?"

"Poker Pete—the man who attempted my life because I guessed him to be the leader of the Flour-Bag Gang, and warned him to clear out of this section," said

"Secure him!" said John Oakes curtly. Mr. Beauclerc's eyes glinted as his wrists were drawn together and a rope passed round them.

For a moment he appeared to think of resistance; but he thought better of it, and submitted quietly.

Resistance was hopeless, and the deputy-sheriff, too, was only executing his bounden duty.

"Oh, father!" muttered Vere Beauclerc, with a haggard face.

The remittance-man smiled at him.

"Courage, my boy! I am innocent, and I shall have a fair trial."

"Bring out his horse!" said John Oakes. Lascelles Beauclerc was placed upon his horse, and the sheriff's men gathered round him.

Some of the rougher spirits of the Thompson crowd surged forward again.

Four Kings flourished a coiled trail-rope.

"Lynch him!" he shouted. "This hyer is a case for Judge Lynch! Gentlemen and galoots, hyer's a rope—"

(Continued on page 22.)

**Mr. Beauclerc Faces the Consequences of Another's Crime!**

**WHEN THE GREAT WAR EAGLE SWOOPED DOWN UPON THE COUNTRY!**  
*In the West the raw countrymen gathered under a strange banner—a banner of liberty they called it, and they watched and waited for the great oncoming tide of men from the East, moving forward, nearer and nearer—!*

# THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN!

BY MORTON PIKE



The amazing adventures of **DICK TREVOR**,  
 adventurer, at the time of the great Mon-  
 mouth Rebellion!

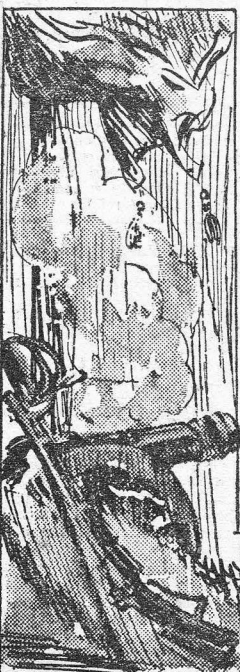
**THE MEMBERS OF THE LEAGUE!**  
**CAPTAIN HARRY LAVENDER**, the leader of the great secret society.  
**DICK TREVOR**, a young adventurer, who has just joined the conspirators.  
**CAPTAIN DAVENTRY**, Lavender's right-hand man.  
**GILBERT**, a little man, with a big heart.  
**PETER POUCH**, an old soldier who has been in many battles.  
**NED POUCH**, a friend of Dick's, who has a wonderful knack of getting into trouble.  
**TRIVERS**, a soldier of fortune, who has thrown in his lot with Monmouth.

In the year 1685 the Duke of Monmouth made a bid for the throne of England, and landed with his small following at Lyme Regis in the month of June.

A few days before the landing a band of conspirators had met for the last time in London to make the finishing touches to their preparations. But that meeting had been abruptly interrupted by a raid. King James II. had been informed of its existence by Sir Anthony Trevor, Dick's uncle; but, though he had despatched the guard at once, the conspirators had escaped.

The seven men who had plotted and schemed for Monmouth's Cause had journeyed down to Lyme to meet the duke. Then they waited, with faces turned towards the east, where they knew the great drilled legions of the King were advancing like an oncoming tide.

At last, at the village of Bridport, the rebels meet with the famous Red Dorset Regiment, and the battle that ensues is fierce and long.



The rebels advance well into the village with Lavender Daventry, and Dick Trevor at their head. "One charge of my Lord Grey's cavalry will drive them out!" cries Lavender, above the noise of the guns. But that charge is never made. Lord Grey finks it at the last moment, and, instead of charging into the enemy's ranks retreats back to Lyme, leaving the footmen of the duke to hold the Red Dorsets.

(Now read on.)

**Dick Trevor shows himself a master with the small-sword, and is later sent upon a mission of extreme peril.**

**A**ND then began a fierce struggle, not for victory, but to withdraw with as little loss and as much honour as possible.

Wade and Harry Lavender stormed and shouted. Lavender cut down two burly seamen with his own sword, and by degrees they restored something like order into the crowd. But it was an inch by inch retreat, over walls and through gardens, in at one door and out at the other, and, had it not been that many of the militia were lukewarm in their hearts, hardly a man of the rebels would have escaped.

Dick had ridden in search of Harry Lavender when the cavalry bolted, and found him roaring like a bull.

"Oh, boy!" shouted the captain, waving his rapier. "Are they coming? Did you bid them haste?"

"As for haste," cried Dick bitterly, "never saw I men fly with such eagerness. I warrant they are in Lyme within an hour, and my lord wins the race!"

Harry Lavender gazed silently at Dick for as long as it takes the powder in a musket's pan to fire the charge, and wheeled his horse to the left.

"Hear you this, Master Wade?" said he. "My lord has fled with his men—the pitiful scoundrel! You had best retire your company while we hold the enemy in check. These stout fellows will keep this bank till morning if needs be—eh, lads!"

A cheery shout answered him, and about thirty rebels brandished their pieces, crying: "King Monmouth!" lustily.

The rest of the footmen beat a retreat in the darkness, and for an hour the slender rearguard held the Red Dorsets at the street end.

When Harry Lavender finally drew his men off, the little party made haste along the road to overtake the others; and, though they halted half a dozen times, and listened for sounds of pursuit, it was evident that they had imbued the militia with a mighty respect, and were to be allowed to depart in peace.

A couple of miles from Bridport they met Ned Pouch riding towards them, and he brought word from Wade that the latter

awaited them near the little fishing village of Charmouth.

"Pluck up heart, lads!" cried the ex-captain of foot-guards, seeing several of his band limping through the dust. "We have made a brave fight of it, and 'twas not our fault that Bridport remains in the wrong hands. Here, my man, give me that heavy musket, and get you into my saddle."

And the good-natured fellow dismounted. "Long live the captain!" said the little company, stepping out with light hearts.

And before long they were challenged by a horseman, who proved to be one of a troop that had attended Monmouth himself as far as Charmouth.

Harry Lavender's wrath was smouldering, and, bidding Dick keep with him, he made his way to the duke, whom he found listening impatiently to the story of the repulse.

The captain did not mince matters, but roundly accused my Lord Grey of contemptible cowardice, and made Dick recount what he had witnessed.

"Hush, gentlemen!" said Monmouth gravely. "I cannot think it of my lord, and will not judge him till I have heard his story. Moreover, as you are doubtless aware, he has suffered much in my cause—too much for me to forget."

"Nor would I have your Grace deal lightly with one who holds friendship's claims," said Captain Lavender; "yet I make bold to say that your Grace's uncle will send better men to fight us, and if Grey of Werke is to lead against them as he has led to-night, then Heaven help us all!"

The Duke of Monmouth made no reply. And the cavalcade straggled back to Lyme, weary, and not a little heavy at heart, in spite of the prisoners they carried with them.

"Mark well," said Harry Lavender to Trevor, "'tis the beginning of disaster, and troubles never come singly."

Next day Fletcher of Sajtoun, a soldier of experience, but hasty of temper, shot Dare, the Taunton goldsmith, from whose influence the duke was hoping great things; and Fletcher, having to seek refuge on the "Helderenberg," Monmouth lost two important adherents at one blow.

A hurried call from the duke had gathered the League of Seven from their various





posts to his quarters in the village. There was much to decide, and unfortunate business to be looked into.

It was several hours later when Harry Lavender, Dick, and Daventry came out together into the sunshine. Ned Pouch approached with a serious look on his face. "You seek me, Ned? What is it?" said Dick.

"'Tis the little captain of Militia, Master Richard."

"Odd's life, Lavender!" exclaimed Dick. "I had forgotten him altogether! Will you stand my friend—that is, if he is still in the same mind?"

"He is very much so, Master Richard," interposed Ned, who was girt with a great belt, from which hung a heavy sword.

"Where have you lodged him, Ned?"

"In the church, sir, with the other prisoners."

"Then to the church let us go," said Harry Lavender. "We must be wary over the affair, after to-day's experience, lest it reach the duke's ears. Come with us, Daventry, and, if it be possible, we will adjust the matter without bloodshed. You do not want to fight him, Dick?"

"Not I, indeed; nor do I see what cause of quarrel he has against me, when 'twas all the fortune of war."

The trooper Hedges was on guard at the church door, and he grinned welcome when he saw Cornet Trevor.

It was cool inside the church, and the sunshine slanted through the windows on to the black oak pews.

Of the twenty men of the Red Dorsets who had formed the captured post only eight remained prisoners, the rest having declared for Monmouth. And that fact alone was sufficient to rouse Captain Oliver Partridge to boiling-point.

The little man was striding up and down beneath the gallery, his peruke awry, and his fists clenched.

"Ah, you have come at last, master rebel!" he cried, swinging round on his heels, and stalking up to Harry Lavender. "Draw, sir, and look to yourself! Thank Heaven, my temper has not cooled!"

"Gently, my good sir," said Harry Lavender, smiling, "you have no quarrel with me."

The little man stepped back a pace, and glared at the captain.

"Then 'tis with this son of Anak," he shouted, confronting Daventry, who was a great six-foot man of swarthy complexion. "I ask your pardon, but the night was dark."

"So dark that you make yet another mis take," laughed Daventry, bowing. "I had not the honour of being there at all."

"I, sir, am he who has had the misfortune to offend you," said Dick, stepping forward, looking very slight and slim beside the other two.

"You!" gasped the little gentleman, growing even redder than before. "Impossible! I do not fight with boys!"

Dick smiled good-humouredly.

"Nor do I greatly wish to fight at all," he said, "seeing you have no reason on your side."

"You had best keep a civil tongue in your head, young gentleman, else must I slit it for you!" roared the little officer, bursting with fury.

"As for that, sir," retorted Dick, flushing, "'tis easy enough to talk, but the sword never slept in your sheath that could do what you threaten."

The little man, all fire and brimstone, sprang forward with his fist raised; but Dick caught him quietly by the wrist, and spun him round like a top, so that he had to clutch upon a pew end to save himself from falling.

To do him justice, in spite of a certain bluster, Captain Oliver Partridge had plenty of courage, and as soon as he had recovered his balance his sword whipped forth, and he ran at Dick full tilt.

"Hold!" cried Harry Lavender, drawing, and turning up the captain's blade. "This is no place for these matters. If you must fight, there is a walled garden close handy, where the turf is of the shortest, and we shall be undisturbed."

"Lead on!" said little Captain Partridge. And they all went forth into the street.

Harry Lavender led the way to a house of some pretensions, which had a wide hall, from whence a fine oak stair led to the

upper part by those easy stages that our ancestors delighted in.

The front door stood open, and at the other end a glimpse of greenery showed the trim garden, in all its summer beauty, with a smooth grass plot, and beds of sweet-smelling flowers loading the air with perfume.

A high wall surrounded the garden, and Ned Pouch, clambering upon it, set the fashion to a score of soldiers, who formed a silent but very appreciative audience.

"Now, sir, here we are!" said Harry Lavender. "And I would wish greatly that this meeting should end in explanation, and a warm handshake, rather than the spilling of brave blood."

"My honour is at stake, sir," said the little gentleman haughtily.

"As you will," replied Lavender, bowing; "but I warn you that, young as he is, Cornet Trevor will beat you."

"You do not know me, sir. I have a renown for fence in the county; yet will I content myself with pinking him a little!"

And the little man proceeded to take off his coat, which he hung carefully upon a tree.

The faintest expression of doubt crossed his face for an instant when he saw Dick in his shirtsleeves, but the next moment their blades were rasping with the vicious hiss of steel against steel.

There was an amused smile on Dick's lips, and the two captains nodded as they exchanged glances.

"Ah!" ejaculated Oliver Partridge, leaping forward like a flash of lightning.

His rapier darted up harmlessly, and the two guards clashed together.

The little man was back in his place in an instant, his mouth slightly compressed.

"Ah!" he cried again.

But once more the keen blade shot upwards towards the heavens, and Dick still smiled.

"What think you?" whispered Lavender to his friend.

"I think that the Dorset man is a formidable antagonist, but Master Trevor is playing with him."

"And Master Oliver Turkeycock is beginning to see it," said Harry Lavender.

The officer of the Red Regiment circled

round Dick, and the rapier darted back and forth like the tongue of a serpent; but, charmed he never so wisely, Captain Partridge had met his match.

The men on the wall raised themselves, and hung over into the garden, enjoying the sword-play of their superiors! And still the good-humoured smile sat lightly on Dick Trevor's lip.

At length he spoke. "One moment, Captain Partridge," said he, lowering his point. "You have had good opportunity of 'pinking me a little,' as you put it; 'tis now surely my turn. And I will tell you what I am about to do. I shall touch you lightly on the right shoulder, again within the elbow, and yet a third time on your forearm, after which I will ease you of your weapon. So now, look to it, and have at you!"

Partridge's face purpled with rage and vexation, but the little man had no lack of courage.

"Ah!" said Dick, very pleasantly, making a rapid pass.

The delighted troopers saw a tiny red spot spreading on the white lawn of the captain's shirt.

"Ah!"

And a foot of cold steel passed out behind the elbow-joint, piercing the muscles, and leaving another stain on the shirt-sleeve.

"Forgive me," said Dick, with the slightest widening of his smile. "Ah, that is the third stroke! And now—"

The captain's rapier flew into the air, made a gleaming curve in the sunshine, and fell on the flag of Purbeck stone before the house door, at the feet of a tall man, who had been watching the combat unnoticed.

A dead silence followed, and the troopers suddenly dropped out of sight.

The Duke of Monmouth picked up the weapon, and his eye ranged over the little party.

"So, gentlemen, this is the way you think to advance my cause!" he said sternly. "Is it to be a case of Fletcher and Dare over again?"

Captain Partridge came across the grass, his arm bleeding profusely.

"I am alone to blame, your Grace," said

(Continued on page 16.)

THE DUEL IN THE GARDEN!



"Now, Captain Partridge!" said Dick Trevor. The officer of the Red Regiment circled round Dick, and the rapier darted backwards and forwards like a tongue of fire. But he could not get near his opponent. He had met his match. (See this page.)

GRAND CARNIVAL NUMBER.



# BILLY BUNTER'S

# WEEKLY

Edited By W.G. Bunter (Greyfriars)

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

Supplement No. 137.

Week Ending August 18th, 1923.

## IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By BILLY BUNTER.

My Dear Readers,—Carnival Day, like Christmas, comes but once a year. I wish it came once a day! I'm very fond of pageants and processions and fancy-dress balls, because on such occasions there's always plenty of grub nocking about.

Mrs. Mimble, who rools the roost at the tuckshop, tells me that her takings on Carnival Day eggseeded all records. She sold hundreds of her sellybrated strobberly ices; and she ran out of mineral waters by mid-day, and had to tellyphone to Courtfield for a fresh supply. The munney simply poured into her coughers, and she did a roaring trade.

I was able to get as much tuck as I wanted, and I'll tell you why. I was disguised, at the Carnival, as King Henry the Eighth—the merry monark who had nine lives—and Mrs. Mimble mistook me for my cousin Wally, the master of the First. So she let me have as much tuck as I wanted—on tick. She didn't discover her mistake until afterwards, and then there was weeping and nashing of teeth!

St. Jim's had a Carnival Day as well, and so did Rookwood. So I thought it would be an eggcellent plan to publish a Special Carnival Number of my Weekly. It isn't quite such a big number as usual, but the quality is there all right. "Multum in parvo," you know—much in little!

Of course, I was the idle of the crowd at the fancy-dress ball. I danced divinely, and the young ladies who were prezzant simply through themselves at my feet and implored me to take them as partners for the next dance.

I felt rather seedy the morning after the ball—the rezult of eating a seedy cake overnight, I suppose. But I'm quite fit again now, and able to tackle my duties with a beeming smile and a merry hart.

Your sinseer pal,

Your Editor.

THE POPULAR.—No. 239.

## WHAT I THINK OF DANCING!



Some of the St. Jim's fellows fairly dote on dancing. Others don't! Their outspoken opinions are given below.

### TOM MERRY.

I've nothing against dancing, provided it isn't carried to excess. I've no patience with those people who go crazy over it and devote the whole of their leisure to dancing. Personally, one dance a week would suit me down to the ground; but I couldn't dance all night and every night. I should be a total wreck in the morning!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY (to our representative)

"You can tell your weadahs that I considah dancin' is the finest sport undah the sun! I simply wevel in it. I learned to dance when I was about five years old; an', of course, I've impwoved out of all knowledge since then. Without wishin' to blow my own twumpet, I claim to be a vevy gwaceful danah. But I don't like dancin' with fellahs. I have too much wespert for my pet corn! Give me a winnin', charmin', bewitchin' membah of the fair sex, an' I will cheerfully dance with her for hours. A person who objects to dancin' is a cwank an' a killjoy. That's stwaight fwom the shouldah!"

### BAGGY TRIMBLE.

I'm fed-up with dancing! You see, it's so beestly aggravating to be the only really good dancer at St. Jim's, and to have to waltz and fox-trot with fellows who don't know a two-step from a barn dance! I've tried to start a dancing class, so that I could take pepwils at a bob a lesson; but nobody seems to want to learn. It's an awful pity, because dancing is such a fine sport, when people know how to go about it. I consider that all clumsy dancers, such as Gussy and Tom Merry and Jack Blake, should be bannished from the bawl-rooms!

### THE HEAD.

A representative of "William Bunter's Weekly" has asked me what I think of dancing. Whilst not being a red-hot enthusiast of dancing, I consider it is an enjoyable and a fascinating pastime; and at times, when I watch the gay young couples gliding to and fro in the ball-room, to the strains of pleasant music, I wish I were thirty years younger.

### MR. RATCLIFF.

If I had my own way I should prohibit dancing. I consider it a foolish, foppish, and unmanly form of recreation. Dancing is supposed to be a healthy pastime; but personally, I should not seek health in a stuffy ball-room. A game of golf or a country ramble is much more beneficial, in my opinion.

### PERCY MELLISH.

The only dancing I do is when the Head's birch comes down on my anatomy! Neither this, nor any other form of dancing, appeals to me a scrap. I can find a better use for my time than by shuffling round a ball-room.

*"I say you fellows—  
I'm in this year's  
HOLIDAY  
ANNUAL!"*

W.G.B.

[Supplement 1.

Special "Bookworm" Number of the "Weekly" Next Week!



## MY DANCING PARTNERS!

By DICK PENFOLD.

I danced with Bunter at the ball  
(I wish I'd never danced at all!)  
His antics almost made me blub,  
He rolled around just like a tub!  
"You never saw a clumsier 'stunter'  
Than that huge barrel, Billy Bunter!"

And then I danced with Horace Coker,  
Who is a most amazing joker.  
He trod upon my toes ten times,  
My anguish can't be told in rhymes.  
If there's a more atrocious dancer  
Than Coker, find him if you can, sir!

I danced with Russell for a spell,  
And Russell dances really well.  
He's very graceful on his pins,  
And never barks his partner's shins.  
I only had one dance with Russell:  
He said, "So-long, Pen! I must hustle!"

I step-danced with Alonzo Todd,  
Whose antics were extremely odd.  
"Go slowly," he began to bleat,  
"Or else you'll sweep me off my feet!"  
He then pitched forward on his nose—  
The floor was slippery, I suppose.

And then I danced with Lord Mauleverer,  
He's jolly smart, but I'm the cleverer.  
I swung his lordship round and round,  
He felt exhausted, I'll be bound!  
His legs began to droop and drag—  
"Oh dear!" he groaned. "It's too much  
for me!"

My final dance was with a queen,  
The charming Marjorie Hazeldene.  
The violins played soft and low  
That was the grandest dance of all—  
A glorious climax to the ball!  
As we went waltzing to and fro.

## CARNIVAL CHATTER!

By Bob Cherry.

The Greyfriars Carnival proved a glorious success from start to finish. It began with an historical pageant in the Close, and it was rounded off by a masked ball. We "tripped it on the light fantastic toe" till a very late hour.

The pageant was wonderful. The Famous Five had prominent parts in it, of course. Harry Wharton was Julius Caesar, and the rest of us were his "friends, Romans, and countrymen." Caesar's "chariot" consisted of a bathchair, which had been specially borrowed and decorated for the occasion. Hurree Singh, as a dusky Roman, was quite a novelty!

As the famous Roman ruler, Harry Wharton made a great hit. But he didn't take the prize. Pat Gwynne, as King Henry the Fifth, carried off the honours. His coat of mail was magnificent, and he had just the right type of face for the part—clear-cut and handsome. The judges had no hesitation in awarding Gwynne the prize.

There was a humorous side to the pageant. Tom Brown went as an Ancient Briton, mounted on a modern bicycle! Fisher T. Fish went as a Red Indian, and he couldn't get the red paint off his face for days afterwards! Horace Coker rather fancied himself as a knight of old. He was unable to borrow a fiery charger, but he managed to obtain a donkey, and it led him a rare dance. Neddy flatly refused to budge at first, but when Coker did get him to go, he went off at such a breakneck gallop that

# The Rookwood Carnival!



By TUBBY MUFFIN.

Grate minds think alike!  
Jimmy Silver decided to go to the Rookwood Carnival as Robbin Hood; and five minnits later I decided to go as Robbin Hood myself! It's all rot to say that I listened at Silver's study key-hole and heard him make his decision, and then blindly copied him. I'm not a beestly eavesdropper.

Anyway, we both hit on the same thing, and we were both keen on winning the special prize which the Head was going to award in connection with the Carnival.

Jimmy Silver implored me to change my mind and go as the Fat Boy of Peckham, or as Falstaff. You see, he was terribly afraid that I should cut him out and bag the prize. He went down on his hands and neeze to me, but I remained firm.

The trouble was that I couldn't get hold of a Robbin Hood costume. I went over to the big shop at Latham, where they keep all the historricle costumes. But that beest Silver had fourstalled me.

"I'm very sorry, sir," said the man at the shop, "but we only had one Robbin Hood costume, and Master Silver has hired that."

Nothing daunted, I hired a suit of male, being under the impression that Robbin Hood sometimes wore armer for special occasions.

the unfortunate Horace was unseated! That's hardly the way that a donkey should treat one of its blood relations!

The rancy dress ball, in the evening, went with a swing. The young ladies from Cliff House came over, and we danced and revelled till a very late hour. Marjorie Hazeldene looked very charming as Nell Gwynne; and Phyllis Howell, as Good Queen Bess, fairly won our hearts. We had a right royal evening, and some of us could have gone on dancing all night!

These carnivals are jolly nice, but they only come round once a year, and now we've got to wait twelve weary months before we get another. Why can't we have a carnival every month? Next time the Head drops into my study for a cup of tea and a chat, I must put it to him nicely!

I looked a hansom figger in armer, and the man assured me that I should take the prize.

I tried to get hold of a bow and some arrows, but they were not to be had. So I hired a wooden sword instead. I confess I don't know much about Robbin Hood's habbits, but I'm pretty certain he always carried a sword, as well as his bow and arrow and brace of revolvers.

When I got back to Rookwood the Carnival had just started. A procession of kings and queens, and nights and skwires, was passing through the quad; and the Head was looking on from his window.

I tacked myself on to the end of the procession and marched proudly along with my wooden sword clattering at my side. I could see Jimmy Silver ahead of me. He was dressed in green, and he carried a bow and a quiver full of arrows. Goodness knows where he had got them from!

The Head took careful stock of the members of the procession. He was trying to pick out the best—a fairly easy task, for I was far and away the most striking and imposing figger in the gay pageant.

When the procession had passed round the quad three times the Head gave his verdict.

"I shall award the prize to Robbin Hood!" he eggsclaimed.

With a whoop of delight, I went rushing up to the Head's window to reeseve my just dew.

The Head stared at me in serprize.

"What do you want, Muffin?" he asked.

"You called for Robbin Hood, sir, and hear I am!"

"What?" gasped the Head. "I had no idea that you were 'supposed to represent the outlaw of Sherwood Forrest. I thought you were a night in armer, or Richard Cur de Lion! You do not look the leest bit like Robbin Hood. It is Silver who has won the prize. Come forward, Silver!"

Silver came forward, and I retreated with feelings too deep for words.

Fancy that chap Silver getting the prize! Beestly faveritism, I call it!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 239.

# "THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN!"

(Continued from page 13.)

the stout-hearted fellow. "Twas I insisted on the duel, against the wishes of your officers, and right well have I suffered for my pains. Never have I met one so fine of fence as this young gentleman, with whom I must clasp hands ere my arm grows too still!"



SIR ANTHONY TREVOR.

Dick took his hand gently, all the smile gone from his face now and in its place great solicitude for the wounded man.

"Sir," said Monmouth, his eyes sparkling, "my surgeon shall attend you. I am sorry I cannot rank so valiant a gentleman upon my side. No? Well every man has the right to choose." And the duke bowed gracefully to Captain Partridge. "Will you

rest within until they have dressed your hurts, sir? And, gentlemen," he continued, walking out into the centre of the lawn, "I would have speech with you." They attended him, and were relieved to see no trace of anger remaining on his handsome face.

"I have just received a message from the outpost. The Duke of Albemarle is advancing

from Exeter, with the Devon train-bands, and Colonel Luttrell's yellow Somerset men to meet him. "Twere well if we fell upon one or other ere they join forces."

"We must commence our march to Taunton to-morrow, your Grace," said Harry Lavender.

"Yes, to-morrow," agreed the duke. "And," he went on, turning to Dick, who had resumed his coat and sheathed his rapier, "there is work for Master Trevor here, for I have heard of last night's business, and how well he bore himself in matters that might have troubled an older head—nay, never blush at praise deserved. You are from Somerset, if I mind me aright?"

"Yes, your Grace; and I know Colonel Luttrell well."

"Excellent; nothing could be better!" cried the duke. "What say you to riding in search of him, and learning the temper of his men, and, perchance, somewhat of his movements? If rumour lies not, he should be in the neighbourhood of Chard by now."

"I will away this instant!" cried Dick, his eyes dancing with delight.

"Twere best you should ride alone upon this venture."

"As your Grace thinks fit; and I have some acquaintance with the country which will not come amiss."

"Better still, Cornet Trevor," said Monmouth, bowing. "We shall move by way of Axminster to-morrow, and from thence to Taunton."

Dick strode away through the house, and Monmouth turned, with a smile, to the two officers.

"That youngster pleases me vastly," said he.

"He is worth ten men!" said Harry Lavender.

### Captured!

NED POUCH was bitterly disappointed on learning that he was not to accompany Dick.

"Mark me, Master Richard," said he, as he drew in Beauty's girths, "you will be sorry for it."

### IN MERCILESS HANDS!



Dick Trevor opened his eyes, then closed them again with a groan of pain. "Where am I?" he moaned faintly. There was a chuckle from Farmer Cox. "Where you'll lie safe enough until it is time to hang you for a rebel!" he replied. (See page 18.)

"Why, i' faith, Ned, what has come over you?" said Dick, stooping to fasten one of his spur-leathers.

"I know not; but I would I were going with you, for I have a heaviness upon me."

And Dick, looking up quickly, surprised a look of trouble in Ned's face and a tell-tale moisture in his grey eye.

"Have no fear, my good friend; I shall return safe and sound. And I go among those who are my friends—until such time as they discover me to be in the duke's service."

But Ned was not to be comforted, and watched his young master until horse and man were but a speck on the hillside, and at last disappeared altogether.

A mile out of Lyme, Dick met three countrymen on horseback, coming forth from a lane end.

"Good-even, friends!" cried he, with a wave of the hand, and continued on his way.

The men had been riding towards the town, as scores of folks were doing all day long; but when Dick had passed one of them reined in, and looked after him with a very strange expression on his face.

It was a look of doubt, of perplexity, of hate; and presently he smote his fist on his pommel, and said: "This way, lads!" and the voice was hoarse and husky with passion.

He said something to his companions, and they rode in the direction Dick had taken. At the top of the next hill they saw him before them, and they pulled in to a walk.

When Dick stopped, and, standing in his stirrups, looked over the country on either side the road, they stopped, too; and a little this side of Axminster they saw him talking with another horseman, who had reined up at full gallop.

After a few minutes Dick went on again, and the horseman rode towards them on the spur.

They hailed him as he approached, and he drew rein a little to give them the news.

"The yaller Somerset boys be 'bout ten mile beyond the town, they be!" shouted the messenger, a bluff, red-faced farmer. "Hurrah for King Monmouth!"

He passed on, riding hard for Lyme, and the three men broke into a gallop.

Meanwhile, Dick had left Axminster behind him, and was now in an undulating country of hill and dale, deep lanes, and high hedges.

Dusk was coming, and the soft wind seemed to blow from every quarter at once, as it whispered among the oak-trees in the valleys.

Several times Dick was certain that there were horsemen not far away, and he rode at a foot pace, keeping on the moss by the lane side, for he judged himself to be nearing the vicinity of the enemy.

"Strange," he thought. "There it is again! I could almost swear they were behind me, if the lane had not come away between a mile without a gap."

He dismounted, and put his ear to the ground, but heard nothing; and, being at a point where the way forked, stood, in doubt which way to take.

He was so absorbed in calculation that the lean, sinewy man who was creeping up with a knotted oak sapling in his hand had reached within striking distance before a twig on the turf betrayed his presence.

Dick sprang round, and clapped a hand on his rapier; but it was too late.

The man leaped forward, and a crashing blow fell upon the forehead sent Dick reeling back, seeing a myriad lights before his eyes, and realising that his senses were leaving him.

Two others on horseback, leading a third animal by the bridle, answered to a loud whistle, and their loud chuckle of mirth startled a blackbird from the hawthorn.

"I told ye so!" cried the man with the bludgeon, in a voice of triumph, pointing to the unconscious lad. "'Tis he right enough, so now. Tie him across his mare, and as soon as 'tis dark we will have him back to the farm, and to-morrow he shall hang in Bridport for a rebel thief—stealing honest men's horses, the scurvy rogue! But hang he shall, sure as my name be Farmer Cox!"



MONMOUTH'S ARMY MARCHES TO BATTLE!



Down the long, winding road swung the ill-disciplined force of the man who had come to fight for the throne of England. The footmen were armed with scythe-blades fixed on long poles, and as they marched they cheered and sang. Far over the countryside floated the cry: "Long live King Monmouth!" (See next week's long instalment.)

Why Ned Pouch was missing from the Muster, and What Happened in the Black Barn.

ABOUT two hours after Dick rode out of Lyme Regis to reconnoitre the countryside, they called the roll in my Lord Grey's cavalry.

When it came to the turn of "Edward Pouch," there was no reply.

The corporal repeated the name, but still no answer, and the ex-lord of the Blue Dog happening to pass at the moment, he hailed him.

"Ho, Peter, man, hast seen aught of your boy?" said the corporal, pausing with his tablets in his hand.

"Nay; not since morning, John. Where is Cornet Trevor?"

"On special service of the duke's sending."

"Then I'll wager you'll find Ned with him," laughed Peter. "They are seldom very far apart."

The corporal marked Ned down as absent, and shook his head gravely, for he was an old soldier, and liked not the lack of discipline in the duke's force.

Ned Pouch had a positive genius for getting to the bottom of things, and his instincts were rather those of a North-American Indian than the simple son of an old soldier whom circumstances had turned into a rebel, fighting against his lawful king.

He never forgot a face or a name. His sight was so keen that he could recognise men where others saw nothing but a speck on the highway, and what Ned did not know about horses and stablecraft was, to use our modern and very expressive phrase, "not worth knowing."

Behind a very simple exterior—just a growing lad, with a grave face, grey eyes, and brown hair—he concealed a wealth of great possibilities, and he would have shone in any capacity that Dame Fortune had chosen for him. If his lines lay in humble places 'twas not his fault, and he found plenty of opportunity to shine, as it was.

Ned Pouch stroked the muzzle of his grey horse, and bit the thumb of his leather glove.

"Duke or no duke," said he, under his breath, "where Master Richard goes I go, too. And there's something about to happen, as sure as yonder black gelding has got the spavin."

He stood for a moment perfectly still, thinking hard, and then, stooping, he tightened the grey's girth, and sprang into the saddle.

The picquet outside the town let him pass

unquestioned, and Ned drew a sigh of relief as he pressed his horse into a canter, and took the long hill that leads down to Axminster.

Cornet Trevor had long been out of sight, but Ned was in time to see the three mounted men pausing on a hilltop, and then continuing their way, to repeat the process on the next crest.

"What does that mean?" said Ned to himself. "Are they watching somebody? Well, there's somebody watching them, anyhow. Countrymen—one on a weedy sorrel, one astride of a brown carthorse, the third on a roan colt rather fundered on the fore-legs. I'll make it my business to keep them in view until such time as I chance on Master Richard."

A short while ago a messenger, riding as though the deluge were behind him, had passed the three men and had given them hasty news; and the same man, seeing in Ned Pouch a soldier, belted, and armed with a long sword, reined in as he reached him and shouted his tidings.

"Hurrah for King Monmouth!" cried Ned, when he learned of the coming of the militia of Devon and Somerset; but he laid his hand on the messenger's rein.

"Who passed you on the road yonder, friend?" he said, assuming a tone of military authority.

"Three countryfolk. Farmer Cox was one, I mind me."

"And before that?"

"None—nay, I be wrong," said the man, hastily correcting himself. "There was a young gentleman riding a bay mare, about a mile this side of Axminster. He asked me."

"Never mind that," said Ned sharply. "Met you none but those four?"

"Not a living soul," replied the man, as Ned relinquished his hold.

"I thank you, friend, so now carry your tidings to the duke," said Ned.

And two clouds of dust were spurned from the dry road as both put the spurs well home, and started away in opposite directions.

"Farmer Cox—eh?" thought Ned to himself. "'Twill do no harm if I learn what Farmer Cox does on 'he heels of Master Richard. I have not much liking for Farmer Cox; nor has he great love for us, I fancy, after that business of the horses."

It was quite dark. Three men rode up a tree-shaded hill, leading another horse among them.

The led horse was apparently giving them

some trouble, for it took two of them to hold it, and from time to time the third man dealt it sounding blows with a cudgel.

Over the edge of the hill loomed the outline of a high roof, and the wind brought an odour as of a farmyard, that mingled with the delicious scent of hawthorn from the hedges.

Up the hill went the little party; a moment later came the harsh clash of a closing gate, and all was still again.

"Everything depends on the dogs now," murmured a voice in the darkness, and Ned Pouch rode to the bottom of the hill at a footpace, reined in, and sat listening.

He had followed those three men mile after mile; he had been too late to prevent the mischief he dreaded, and from the shelter of a thick copse he had seen them pass with Dick unconscious, bound tightly across Beauty's saddle.

Intending to raise an alarm when they should reach Axminster, he had the mortification to see them turn off into a winding lane, that carried them wide of the town, and then there was nothing left but to silently track them, riding on the grass that bordered the lane side, and sometimes getting so close that scraps of their conversation fell upon his ear from time to time.

Twice they stopped to adjust the still insensible burden; but at length Ned began to recognise the landmarks, and knew that they were close to the meadow whence they had taken the horses the previous night.

Then he deemed it wise to pause, until the clang of the gate told him that they had entered the farm. And then it was that he delivered himself of the words, "Everything depends on the dogs now."

At the bottom of the hill was a crazy pound, and his first action was to tie the grey to one of the bars.

"Now to find out where they lodge him," he muttered. "'Twill not be daybreak for a good four hours, and there will be time enough to summon help ere they set out for Bridport, if the task prove to be beyond my strength unaided."

Ned strode cautiously forward, passed the gate where he had stood guard over the farmer, and came in sight of the farm.

A huge barn towered against the sky close by the roadside, and there was a light burning in the long, low building which he judged to be the house.

"If they have taken him there," thought the lad, "there is nothing left for me but to ride post-haste for Lyme." But, as he stood listening with all his ears, the light was blotted out for a moment, as someone

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came forth with a horn lantern, and his spirits rose again.

He watched the yellow gleam swinging across the yard until it disappeared round the barn end; and the welcome clatter of hoofs told him that the horses were not far off.

Making little more noise than a mouse, he crept through the gate, and, bending double, gained the shelter of a strawrick, where he lay on his face, worming himself along till he could see the front of the barn.

They had just cut Dick free, and while one man held the lantern the other two carried the helpless burden through the small wicket in the middle of the big door.

It seemed an age before anything else happened, and then the man with the lantern—Ned recognised him to be Farmer Cox—came out and strode over to the house again, returning with a stone bottle.

Ned's impatience could restrain itself no longer.

The moment the farmer had entered the barn for the second time, Ned crossed the intervening space, and gained the angle, stepped noiselessly along the great wooden front, and, holding his breath, peeped in through the wicket.

"Where am I?" said a faint voice in the vast interior.

"Where you'll lie safe enough until it's time to hang you for a thief, and gibbet you for a rebel afterwards," replied Farmer Cox brutally. "Zounds! But I can scarce keep my hands from your throat, rogue! Mine own yet aches from last night's work."

"There are those not far away that shall make it ache more if harm befalls me," said the faint voice, at which Cox broke into a coarse laugh.

"There are none nearer than Lyme, my young master, and their work will be all to save their own necks when the King's troops come," cried Cox. "But take another drink of this cordial, for I would fain have you lively when you dance upon nothing to-morrow."

Ned Pouch lifted his jackboot over the barrier, drew the other leg after it, and glided like a shadow into the hay that filled one side of the barn.

"He revives, lads," said the farmer, rising to his feet. "Take the horses to the stable, Humphrey, while Silas keeps watch, and I will bring you some supper, and a right good draught of cider, which you have earned to-night, you lazy dogs. I trow you would have joined the rebels out of sheer idleness an I had not promised you better sport."

"Fine sport truly, Silas," said the man Humphrey, when his master had gone—"knocking young gentlemen on the head and carting them down the lanes like flour-sacks from the miller's."

"Men," said the wounded cornet, struggling on to his elbows, "if you will help me to horse, there are ten gold pieces in my pocket which you can divide between you."

"Lord bless you, sir, we've done that already without asking your honour's leave!" laughed Silas. "When you get to horse next time 'twill be your last journey."

Dick groaned with pain, and lay back again; and Ned crawled farther behind the hay, having sudden ideas that came to him through the medium of a powerful draught blowing from somewhere.

The man Humphrey seemed to be a better-conditioned fellow than his companion.

"If you have a kerchief, sir," said he, "let me dip it in this stuff, and I warrant 'twill take the ache out of your brow."

Dick tore the wrist of his shirt off, and handed it to the man, and Ned frowned darkly to see how weak he had become.

Farmer Cox returned, bearing a huge earthen measure of cider, and a plate of victuals.

He soundly rated Humphrey that the horses were still unstabled, and setting down his food, stood gloating over his capture.

Dick lay pillowed on the sweet-smelling hay, one arm extended, and his head turned wearily on one side.

"'Tis a young neck for the rope," quoth Farmer Cox, with a malicious grin on his wizened, crafty face.

"'Twill stretch the better for that, master," said Silas, with his mouth full.

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Dick's lip curled with a contemptuous smile.

"Smile away, my pretty rebel!" snapped the farmer. "Monmouth will smile, I doubt not, when he hears the news that has come down from London to-day."

"Is it true, then, that King James has fled?" said Dick, opening his eyes.

"Fled? No; but offers £5,000 for his fine nephew, dead or alive!" cried the farmer. "Twill not be a week before the duke is carried to the Tower in chains."

"That might be true enough, if all the folk in the West had souls like your own, Master Cox," said Dick. And Ned, who was peering down at the group, saw a flash from under his long lashes.

"Please goodness Master Richard makes no fool of himself now, or all is undone," thought the lad.

Ned had made a very important discovery, and quivered with excitement.

One of the weather-beaten timbers of the barn wall hung by a single nail, and if pulled to one side afforded outlet sufficient for a sim man to pass.

"If the knave Silas stays on guard, we shall be free in an hour," said Ned. And he made a little peephole in the hay through which he could watch the strange group.

Silas was drinking more than his fair share of the cider, and Ned prophesied slumber.

Farmer Cox contented himself with an ugly grimace, and Humphrey came into the barn.

"The bay mare be a fine beast, Master Cox," said he; "she be worth any three of those the rebels stole, yet she is a vixen, and would not stand with the others in the long stable."

"Where have you bestowed her, then?"

"In the white cow-house, master, where she can kick all night, and hurt naught but herself; nor would she let me unsaddle her, but upreared and fought like a man; so I just let her bide."

"Then get your supper, and watch this rogue; turn and turn about. I'll to bed, and, with daylight, we will have him down to Bridport."

The farmer shambled as far as the door, and then came back.

"I shall sleep the sounder that I know him safe," said he. "Slip yonder cord about his ankles lest he try to escape."

Silas, anxious to curry favour with his master, took down a rope halter from the barn wall, and knotted Dick's riding-boots firmly together.

"The hangman will not noose him tighter," he said, with a brutal grin that made Ned's fists clench; and the farmer, satisfied, left the barn, and they heard the house-door close with a click of the latch.

"Thou hast drunken half my cider," growled Humphrey, "so shalt thou take first ward for thy greed."

And Humphrey being the larger man of the twain, Silas obeyed with a bad grace.

For five minutes Humphrey was snoring loudly, and Silas sat blinking at the yellow lantern.

Before long his eyes closed, opened with a glassy stare in them, closed again, and, his chin sinking gradually on to his chest, he joined his companion in a nasal chorus that sounded unnaturally loud in the solemn stillness of the great barn.

Dick Trevor sat up and looked about him. All trace of weariness and weakness had left him, and, with knees drawn to his chin, his fingers were busy with the knots in the rope-halter.

"Hist, Master Richard," whispered Ned, sliding down the hay, "take my knife!"

In spite of Dick's iron nerve, he gave a start, and Silas moved in his sleep.

Ned gathered himself for a spring; but Silas's eyes remained closed, and he toppled over on to his side and breathed heavily.

From the pocket of his long vest slid Dick's gold pieces, and, stretching out his hand, with a glance at Dick Trevor, Ned gathered them carefully up, and passed them to his master.

"Keep them, Ned," whispered the cornet; "you have well won them. Yet how on earth come you here?"

"We will talk of that on the road, Master Richard," said Ned. "You heard how Beauty is ready saddled, and I have my horse at the hillfoot. Can you stand, sir?"

"Ay, that can I!" replied Dick, rising. "My head sings, but a gallop in the fresh air will set me right again."

"Then follow me," said Ned. "We will leave the lantern, lest they wake, and, finding all in darkness, suspect something."

The two friends crawled cautiously away into the gloom of the barn, and when Dick had slid through the opening, Ned caught him by the sleeve.

"Yonder is the white cow-house," he whispered. "You will be in the saddle before Farmer Cox can say 'Jack Robinson,' and I will meet you at the yard gate; I am going back for my knife!"

"Buy another in Lyme, Ned, and risk nothing."

"There is no risk in what I do," replied Ned. And before Dick could open his lips, the lad had disappeared.

Dick made his way across the yard, his heart pumping wildly, and his eyes upon the farmhouse.

The bay mare was frantic with delight, and whinnied such a welcome that he feared the farmer must take alarm; but he mounted in safety, and rode boldly out of the barn, not sorry to find that Humphrey had left the pistols in his holsters.

As he passed the great black barn, a strange noise fell on his ear, and a streak of red light streamed from the wicket of the big door.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed. "The hay is a-fire!"

"Yes, Master Richard," said a merry voice at his elbow. "Farmer Cox will lose more than he gains by this night's work, and we shall have a fine blaze all the way to Lyme!"

"But the two men?"

"They have just awakened, but are too stupefied by sleep to come after us!" laughed Ned.

When Cornet Trevor came forth from his quarters next morning, the shadow of a tall man fell across his path, and, instantly recognising him, Dick's hand went to his sword-hilt.

"Nay, nay, master," said Humphrey, with a broad grin. "Times be altered now; Farmer Cox be a raging mad man since the barn took alight; and he broke Silas's jaw, vowing he upset lantern, though I think different." And Humphrey gave an expressive wink.

(There will be another long instalment of our powerful romantic serial in next week's issue. Tell all your pals that "The League of Seven!" is the finest story on the market.)

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# KING CARNIVAL!

A Tip-Top Tale of Tom Merry & Co.,  
the world-famous chums of St. Jim's.

By  
**MARTIN CLIFFORD**

(Author of the Stories of Tom Merry & Co. appearing in  
the "Gem.")



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Adventures of a Modern Knight

**W**ONDERFUL, my dear Railton—truly wonderful!"

The Head stood at his study window, and watched the glorious procession of pageantry, mounted and afoot, go tramping by. Mr. Railton, standing at the Head's side, nodded.

"The boys have indeed excelled themselves, sir," he said. "Never do I remember a more impressive and imposing carnival. We shall find it difficult to award the prize. There are so many fine costumes."

The old quadrangle of St. Jim's had never presented a more animated appearance.

It was Carnival Day—and the carnival spirit reigned everywhere.

For weeks past, seniors and juniors and fags had been planning and preparing for this great day.

There were decorated cars, decorated wagons, fiery steeds, chariots, and all manner of quaint vehicles. There were kings and queens, and knights and squires, and courtiers gay. It was the grandest historical pageant ever organised at St. Jim's. The procession had to pass three times round the quadrangle. And the Head and Mr. Railton, acting as judges, were to award a handsome prize to the best performer, or group of performers.

At the head of the long procession was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, mounted on a noble charger. Gussy represented Sir Galahad. His costume was magnificent, and his monocle gleamed in his eye. But he did not use the language that the original Sir Galahad would have used. He did not say "Odds bodikins," or "By my haddock." Instead, he addressed his fiery steed in the following terms:

"Steady, old gal! No need to hurwy, you know. You're not wunnin' in the Derby. Twot slowly, an' then I shall look more dignified. If you keep bweakin' into a cantah, the othahs will be left fah behind!"

So saying, Arthur Augustus, who was none too comfortable in his armour, strove frantically to control his restive steed.

Behind D'Arcy came his three chums—Blake, Herries, and Digby—all mounted, and all wearing the armoured costume of knights of old.

The four horses which the juniors rode had been specially lent for the occasion, from Lord Eastwood's stud.

Next in the procession came the Three Musketeers, in their velvet cloaks and plumed hats, arid with their swords clattering at their sides.

Tom Merry was the central figure in this trio of gallant adventurers. On his right was Manners; on his left Monty Lowther. And they chatted gaily as they swaggered along.

Fatty Wynn, as Falstaff, looked the part to the life. Baggy Trimble, as Henry the Eighth, was also a great success. Baggy's hollow crown, however, persisted in slipping down over his face, giving him a most comical appearance. Baggy hasn't a small head, by any means; yet the crown was several sizes too big for him. It had previously been worn by a Shakespearean actor who was reputed to have the biggest head in London.

Kildare of the Sixth, as King Charles the First, made a big sensation. His regal attire suited him to perfection. Kildare was on horseback, and he was flanked by a couple of laughing Cavaliers.

Perhaps the most comical figure in the procession was George Alfred Grundy.

The great George Alfred had borrowed a side-car, and converted it into a chariot. Grundy rode in this improvised chariot. He wore flowing robes, and sandals, and he had a garland of flowers on his head. But Grundy had not deemed it necessary to "make up" his face, with the result that he looked a strange mixture of feminine and masculine.

Wilkins and Gunn, clad in goatskins, and with their faces painted, made a couple of comical ancient Britons. It was their duty to push Boadicea's chariot through the quad.

"I say, you chaps," said Grundy, turning his head and addressing his perspiring suaves, "I'm certain I shall collar the prize! Go very slowly past the Head's window, so that the judges can get a good view of me."

Wilkins grunted, and Gunn gasped. "It's hot work, pushing this blessed contraption along!" panted the former. "Let's change places, Grundy. I'll hop into the giddy chariot, and you can come behind and push."

"Ass!" said Grundy scornfully. "Fancy Boadicea pushing her own chariot! And fancy a common or garden Ancient Briton riding in state!"

"We could change clothes," suggested Wilkins hopefully. "You'll find these goatskins beautifully cool."

But the proud Boadicea had no desire to convert herself into an Ancient Briton. She addressed Wilkins in a very aggressive and unladylike manner.

"If you make any more fatheaded suggestions of that sort, George Wilkins, I'll dot you on the nose!"

Wilkins promptly subsided. After a brief pause, he and Gunn bent their backs to their task, and pushed the pompous Boadicea past the Head's window.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Dr. Holmes.

"Whom is Grundy supposed to represent?" "I have not the slightest notion, sir," said Mr. Railton, who found it difficult to refrain from laughing outright. "I believe

he is supposed to be a female—possibly a queen. But there is nothing queenly about him. His face is most aggressively masculine. And just note the size of his feet! His appearance is utterly grotesque!"

The Head smiled. "If we were called upon to award a booby prize in connection with the pageant, we should not have to look far for the winner!" he said.

And Mr. Railton's pent-up merriment found expression in a hearty laugh.

Grundy heard that laugh, and he was tremendously "bucked."

"I'm absolutely certain now, that I shall collar the prize!" he said. "I've made quite an impression on old Railton."

Grundy had, indeed. But it was a very different impression from that which he thought it to be.

The gay procession continued on its way. It was so lengthy that it nearly encircled the quad. The leader, Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, was not far behind the rearguard, which consisted of a number of British soldiers of the seventeenth century.

The warriors in question were Harry Noble, Bernard Glyn, Clifton Dane, and Talbot. They were pulling an old-fashioned cannon along, and were obviously enjoying themselves.

"I'm glad the Head's given us permission to fire a blank shell at the end of the procession," said Bernard Glyn. "It will be great fun!"

"Yes, rather!" "This is the third time round, isn't it?" said Talbot.

"Yes; they're beginning to slow up," said Clifton Dane. "Load the merry cannon, Bernard!"

The juniors were rather doubtful whether a modern shell, fired from an old-fashioned cannon, would be a success. Anyway, it would be a harmless experiment, for the shell was a guaranteed "dud."

The procession had halted now. Arthur Augustus reined in his steed with great difficulty, and all the others lined up behind him.

"Now for the fireworks!" muttered Harry Noble.

It was Bernard Glyn who loaded the cannon, and it was Glyn who fired it.

The result was successful—rather too successful, in fact.

Boom!

There was a deafening roar, which could have been heard as far afield as the village. Bernard Glyn staggered from the shock. And several of the horses reared and bucked a little. With one exception, however, they were soon brought under control by their riders.

The exception was the horse on which Arthur Augustus was mounted. It had been quite close to the cannon at the time it

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**"Miss Myra's Admirers!"—an Unusual Tale of St. Jim's Next Week!**

was fired, and the explosion caused the animal to take fright. It reared wildly, nearly unseating its rider. Then it plunged forward, and went tearing away towards the school gates.

Arthur Augustus had lost his grip of the reins, and they trailed in the dust.

The swell of St. Jim's clung to the neck of the frenzied animal, and did all he could to calm it, but in vain.

"My hat!" gasped Jack Blake, turning pale. "Gussy's horse has taken fright, and bolted!"

"Come on!" muttered Herries. "Let's see if we can do something."

And Gussy's chums went galloping down to the gates. But they had no hope of overtaking the terrified animal ahead of them. It plunged into the roadway, and went tearing down the lane.

Arthur Augustus hung on grimly. His position was perilous in the extreme; but it was not of his own danger that he was thinking.

There were pedestrians in the lane, and if the horse ran amok amongst them, somebody would get hurt.

Gussy gazed ahead. A girl in a white summer costume was approaching. She could see the runaway horse bearing down upon her, but she did not draw into the hedge, as other people were doing.

"She'll be won down, but Jove!" muttered Gussy. Then he raised his voice in shrill warning.

"Stand clear!" The girl merely edged aside a little, and stood waiting. Her face was calm; there was a resolute expression in her eyes.

As the frantic steed came thundering past her, she spun round swiftly, and made a daring leap at the straggling reins. Her hands closed over them at the first attempt, and she hung on tenaciously.

"Oh, you plucky kid!" murmured Arthur Augustus involuntarily.

For a distance of twenty yards or more, the girl was dragged along. But the horse was being gradually brought to a standstill, and at last it halted, foaming and all tremble.

That the girl was used to horses was evident. She patted the animal's neck, and soothed and calmed it. The trembling ceased, and the horse became quite docile.

"It's quite all right now," said the girl, smiling up at Arthur Augustus.

That elegant youth stared speechlessly at his fair rescuer. She was a girl of about fifteen—a strikingly good-looking girl. Hers was not merely a doll-like prettiness, but real beauty. And Arthur Augustus recognised real beauty when he saw it.

The girl's costume, spotlessly white a few moments before, was now dusty and torn. But she didn't seem to mind. The miracle was that she was unharmed.

"I think I had better lead your horse back to the school, Sir Galahad," she said, "in case he should take fright again. I'm not suggesting for a moment that you are a bad horseman, but it's as well to be on the safe side, isn't it?"

Arthur Augustus seemed tongue-tied. It was not until the girl had turned the horse, and was leading it back, that he found his voice.

"You are weally a most remarkable young lady!" he exclaimed. "You actually stopped a runaway horse, an' saved my life, bai Jove!"

"It is nothing!" said the girl. "It was a very simple matter to grasp the draggins rein."

"But if you had missed—" Arthur Augustus had visions of the brave girl being trampled underfoot by the terrified steed.

"Well, I didn't miss, did I? I made up my mind not to."

"It was the most plucky action I have evah seen!" said Arthur Augustus, with enthusiasm. "I cannot find words with which to express my deep gwatitude—"

"Please don't try, I would rather you did not go into heroics over what was really a very trifling thing."

There was a mighty cheer as Gussy's rescuer led the now submissive horse into the St. Jim's quadrangle. Blake, Herries, Digby, and a score of others had witnessed the rescue from the school gateway.

Arthur Augustus dismounted, and held out his hand to the girl.

"I shall nevah be able to wepay you for THE POPULAR.—No. 239.

what you have done this aftahnoon," he said quietly. "By the way, I have not the honah of knowin' your name."

"Myra Langley," was the reply. "I am Mr. Railton's niece."

"Bai Jove! An' you have come ovah to St. Jim's to see the carnival, deah lady?"

"Yes; and to attend the fancy dress ball this evening. But you have not told me your own name, Sir Galahad—"

Gussy gave his name, and squeezed the hand of his fair rescuer.

"You must excuse me now," said the girl. "I can see uncle beckoning to me from the Head's window. Perhaps we shall meet this evening."

"Yaas, wathah!"

And Arthur Augustus stood as if transfixed, gazing at the retreating form of Myra Langley.

"The most charming young lady it has evah been my pleasuah to meet!" was his verdict.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER. Rival Admirers!

ST. JIM'S was thrilled by the plucky action of Mr. Railton's niece. It was freely admitted that to stop a runaway horse, in full flight, required plenty of pluck. It was the sort of thing Tom Merry might have done, or Talbot, or Jack Blake. But such gallantry, coming from a girl, was all the more admirable.

Everybody was talking of Myra Langley, and of her heroic action. And everybody declared that Mr. Railton ought to be proud of his niece—as, indeed, he was.

"I wish Miss Langley had got here earlier," said Jack Blake, who was chatting with Herries and Digby on the School House steps. "She would have taken part in the carnival then. And she'd have bagged the prize, as sure as eggs. She's a really beautiful girl; there's no getting away from that."

"By the way, who did take the prize?" asked Herries. "I haven't heard."

"Result's just been announced," said Blake. "Marie Rivers has carried off the honours. I must say she looked simply stunning as Queen Elizabeth. I've never seen such a gorgeous dress. And Miss Marie's got her share of good looks, too. But it's a different style of beauty from Miss Langley's."

"Comparisons are odious," said Digby. "Besides, we don't want to set up in business as judges of beauty. That can be left to the painters and poets. Hallo! You're wanted, Blake."

Mr. Railton was coming across the quadrangle with Myra. Marie Rivers had lent the girl a smart costume, to replace the one which had been spoilt in the rescue of Arthur Augustus. Although Marie was older than Myra, the two girls were of the same height and build; and the borrowed costume suited Myra to perfection.

The Housemaster was beckoning to Jack Blake, and the junior, in his knightly attire, hurried across. He could not very well lift his helmet in salutation, so he bowed as gracefully as his suit of mail would permit. Myra Langley smiled, and curtsayed in return.

Mr. Railton murmured a few words of introduction.

"With your consent, Blake, I propose to place my niece under your wing this evening," he said. "Myra wishes to attend the fancy dress ball, as Joan of Arc. I have secured a suit of armour for her. But as she knows scarcely anyone here, and I shall be kept busy as Master of the Ceremonies, I thought perhaps you would be good enough to act as her escort."

Jack Blake flushed with pleasure.

"I shall be delighted, sir!" he said, with enthusiasm. "If Miss Myra has no objection, that is."

Myra expressed herself as honoured to have the company of a gallant knight. And it was arranged that Blake should call for her shortly before eight o'clock, and conduct her to Big Hall, which had been converted into a ball-room for the occasion.

Jack Blake was smiling happily as he walked away. Nothing pleased him better than to act as squire of dames to a really charming young lady. When he rejoined his chums, and told them of his good fortune, they envied him, and called him a lucky dog.

But Herries and Digby were not the only ones who envied him.

When Arthur Augustus D'Arcy came to hear of it, he was not only envious, but rather annoyed.

"I was lookin' forward to takin' Miss Mywa undah my wing this evenin'," he said. "Hard lines, old scout," said Blake cheerfully. "But Railton's selected me for the job."

"Wailton must be off his wockah!" said Arthur Augustus. "Why didn't he select a fellah of tact an' judgment?"

"That's exactly what he has done."

"Wats! I was the first person to meet Miss Mywa, an' it's only wight an' pwopah that I should look aftah her at the fancy dress ball. I shall go an' ask Wailton to relieve you of the duty of escort, an' let me take it on."

"Look here—" began Blake wrathfully.

"How can Miss Mywa possibly enjoy herself with a duffah like you?" said Arthur Augustus. "You've had no experience in lookin' aftah ladies. You can't make conversation, an' you can't dance gwacefully. I always have said that a Blake in a ball-room is equivalent to a bull in a china-shop!"

After this scornful speech, Jack Blake clenched his mailed fists, and there was every prospect of two gallant knights being locked in deadly combat, when King Charles the First came on the scene. And King Charles, alias Kildare of the Sixth, would not have allowed scrapping, even on Carnival Day, when the fellows were permitted to do pretty much as they liked.

"The fact is, Blake," said Arthur Augustus, "you're a man's man, an' I'm a lady's man. Miss Mywa will have a wippin' time in my company, an' for her sake I think I ought to ask Wailton to let me take her undah my wing."

So saying, Arthur Augustus stared freezingly at Blake through his monocle, and then strode away, with his sword clanking at his side, in quest of Mr. Railton.

The Housemaster was alone when Gussy found him. Myra had gone to have tea with Marie Rivers.

"What is it, D'Arcy?" asked Mr. Railton kindly.

"I have a request to make, sir. I undahstand you have asked Blake to act as Miss Mywa's escort this evenin'?"

"That is so, my boy."

"Without wishin' to boast, Mr. Wailton, I considah that Miss Mywa would pwefer to have me as her guide, philosophah, an' fwient."

"Ahem!"

"I've got wathah a winnin' way with ladies," said Arthur Augustus modestly. "I know how to entabtain them in the pwopah mannah. Moreovah, I am a gwaceful dancah, an' I know all the latest waitzes an' fox-twots. I don't wish to say anythin' detwimental to Blake, but he's hardly qualified to take care of a charmin' young lady like your niece, sir. I shall be very gwateful, therefore, if you will allow me to take Blake's place."

Mr. Railton smiled.

"I understand your point of view, D'Arcy," he said. "But I hardly like to cancel the arrangement I have made with Blake. However, there is no reason why you should not assist him to look after Myra."

But that didn't suit Arthur Augustus at all. He wanted Miss Myra to himself. It was selfish, perhaps, but pardonably so. Gussy believed in the old adage, "Two's company, three's none."

"I would much wathah look aftah Miss Mywa myself, sir," he said.

"Well, well," said Mr. Railton. "You and Blake must fight it out between yourselves. I do not feel disposed to arbitrate in the matter."

"Vewy well, sir."

Arthur Augustus went back into the quad, and repeated to Blake what Mr. Railton had said.

"We've got to settle it between ourselves," he said. "An' it's already settled, deah boy. I have decided to act as Miss Mywa's escort. I don't know what she is goin' as. Sweet Nell of Old Dwuwy, p'waps, or Mawey Queen of Scots. She'd look vewy charmin' as either. Anyway, I'm goin' to be her partnah."

"You're jolly well not!" said Blake warmly.

A fierce and wordy argument followed. Arthur Augustus would not budge from his attitude; neither would Blake. Each was



equally determined to take Mr. Railton's charming niece under his wing.

Matters were at a deadlock. Jack Blake, anxious to find a solution to the difficulty, sought out Cardew of the Fourth, and asked his advice.

Cardew was in his study, taking tea with his chum Clive. They were in their Etons, having not yet decided what to wear at the fancy dress ball.

"I want your help, Cardew," said Blake. "At your service, Sir Knight!" drawled Ralph Reckness.

"Well, the position is this. That chump Gussy wants to act as escort to Railton's niece, at the ball. So do I. Railton has told us to fight it out between ourselves. And I want to know how I can shake Gussy off."

"A pretty problem, dear man," said Cardew, with a chuckle. "But I think the enterprising firm of Cardew and Clive is equal to the occasion. What is Miss Myra going as?"

"Joan of Arc."

"In that case, nobody will recognise her. It's a masked ball, and nobody un.masks till midnight. As Joan of Arc, Miss Myra will wear a closed visor, an' she won't reveal her attractive face until the witchin' hour of night."

"That's so," agreed Blake. "But what on earth—"

"Listen, an' I will expound the wheeze that has come into my noddle. Clive, here, makes up splendidly as a lady—don't you, Sidney? So what I suggest is this. Clive will go to the ball as an Egyptian lady, with his face veiled. He will go up an' speak to Gussy, imitatin' Miss Myra's voice as closely as possible; and Gussy will believe him to be Miss Myra, an' will dance with him, an' entertain him, an' take him under his wing generally."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Blake breathlessly. "In the meantime, you will be lookin' after the genuine Miss Myra, an' havin' the time of your life," Cardew went on. "Gussy doesn't know that Miss Myra's going as Joan of Arc, does he?"

"No."

"That's good! He must on no account be told. Then he will assume that the Egyptian lady is Miss Myra, an' entertain her accordingly. I take it you are willin' to play your part in this harmless little conspiracy, Sidney?"

"Not half!" said Clive, with a grin. "Then we may consider everythin' cut an' dried," said Cardew. "Hope you have a pleasant evenin', Blake. I'd like to be in your shoes myself. Miss Myra's a stunnin' girl—adorable, begad!"

Cardew's amazing scheme was gradually sinking into Blake's mind. It was just the sort of ingenious scheme which might have been expected from Cardew.

"You're a deep cove, Cardew, and no mistake!" said Blake admiringly. "If only this wheeze works—"

"It will work like a charm!" said Ralph Reckness. "You've nothin' to worry about, dear man. All you've got to do is to meet Miss Myra at the appointed time, an' take her along to the ball-room. Be sure an' tell her to keep her visor closed until midnight. Then Gussy will never recognise her. So long as you observe that little precaution, Sidney, here, will do the rest. He will look very fetchin' as an Egyptian lady, an' Gussy, believing him to be Miss Myra, will fall head over ears in love with him, an' offer him his hand an' heart, with his bank balance thrown in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A peal of laughter rang through Cardew's study.

Unless anything unforeseen happened, Jack Blake would enjoy a great triumph at the expense of this rival. And the discomfiture of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy would be complete.

Clive was a born actor. He was also a clever dancer. What was more, he could imitate a girl's voice to perfection. And Clive meant to enjoy himself that evening, in the role of an Egyptian lady, with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy as his escort and entertainer!

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**  
**Revelry by Night.**

SIR GALAHAD—alias Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—stepped proudly into the ball-room.

The ball had just been declared open by Mr. Railton. And the scenes of



**THE RUNAWAY KNIGHT!** "Stand clear!" cried Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, clinging frantically to the neck of the runaway horse. The girl in the lane merely edged aside a little and stood waiting. As the steed came thundering past her, she spun swiftly round, and made a daring leap at the straggling reins. (See Chapter 1.)

gaiety and excitement which followed almost beggared description.

Fairy lanterns had been lighted up and down the ball-room; and the lamps shone brightly o'er "fair women and brave men."

The atmosphere was electric with excitement.

Kings and queens, and knights and courtiers, and soldiers and jesters, were whirling merrily to and fro. They threw themselves heart and soul into the proceedings, and they rejoiced in the glorious knowledge that the ball would not come to an end until one o'clock in the morning.

At midnight, everyone would unmask. But at present it was difficult to recognise many of the dancers.

Arthur Augustus paused, and looked about him. He was a trifle late, having hunted everywhere for Miss Myra. But he had not seen her.

"She must have turned up early," reflected the swell of St. Jim's. "She's heah somewhere, I expect. I only hope that boundah Blake hasn't claimed her."

Arthur Augustus moved in and out among the dancers, keeping a sharp look-out for Miss Myra.

Presently he caught sight of his rival, Jack Blake.

Blake had a partner—a girl partner apparently, since she was dressed as Joan of Arc. But her visor was closed, and there was no means of identifying her.

Gussy's heart beat quickly.

"I wondah if that's Miss Mywa?" he murmured. And he made his way towards the happy pair.

Suddenly a hand touched him on the arm. Arthur Augustus turned swiftly, to find himself confronted by a charming Egyptian lady—a princess, she seemed to be. She wore a beautiful Eastern dress, and a "yasmak," which completely concealed her face, save for a pair of sparkling, merry eyes. Those eyes were of deep blue—limpid pools, as a poet might have expressed it—and Arthur Augustus recollected that Miss Myra's eyes had that colouring. His heart beat faster than ever. Surely this was the beautiful Miss Myra?

"Good-evening!" said the Egyptian lady pleasantly. "I hope you are none the worse for the shock you had this afternoon, when your horse bolted with you?"

"Not at all!" said Arthur Augustus. "I say, Miss Mywa, what a beautiful dress you are wearin'! But, I think it an awful shame that your face should be covered with that yasmak."

"Yes, it is rather a pity," said the

Eastern lady. "But I must observe the rules of the game, and not remove it until midnight. In the meantime, perhaps you would like a partner for the next dance? If so, I am at your service."

Arthur Augustus could scarcely believe his good fortune. He found it difficult to repress a whoop of delight.

"My dear Miss Mywa," he said, offering the Egyptian lady his arm, "I am charmed! Nothin' would please me bettah than to dance with you the whole evenin'. I hate to be selfish, an' to cut the othah fellahs out; but, aftah all, I met you first, an' therefore I considah I have first claim."

The Eastern beauty nodded. Her eyes were sparkling more merrily than ever.

Arthur Augustus conducted his partner to a seat, and chatted to her until the next dance. He felt fearfully shy and nervous at first. It all seemed so wonderful, that he should have the beautiful Miss Myra solely to himself. But the lady of the East put him entirely at his ease, and encouraged him to talk. She did very little talking herself, but she was an admirable listener. And a good listener is always preferable to a gabbler.

"Take your partners for the next dance, please!"

Mr. Railton, immaculate in his evening-dress, was conducting the ceremonies. His voice rang pleasantly through the ball-room.

"Come along, Miss Mywa!" said Arthur Augustus. And he escorted his fair companion to the centre of the floor. They were the nucleus of a happy, hilarious throng.

The orchestra, specially engaged for the evening, played the introduction. And then the next dance began.

Arthur Augustus, who rather prided himself on his ability as a dancer, found that his partner could give him points at that graceful art. She danced divinely. She seemed to have an inexhaustible store of energy, and she was far fresher than Arthur Augustus when the dance came to an end.

Breathless and triumphant, Gussy led his partner back to the cosy seat.

Ralph Reckness Cardew, who had come to the ball as Beau Brummel, the dandy of a bygone generation, swaggered across to where they were seated. He bowed politely to the Egyptian lady.

"May I ask you to be my partner for the next dance, dear lady?" he said.

"Well—er—I hardly know what to say. THE POPULAR.—No. 239.

Sir Galahad has claimed me for the evening, you see, so it's rather awkward."

Cardew assumed an expression of deep disappointment.

"Draw it mild, Gussy!" he said. "You can't monopolise the lady for the whole of the evenin', you know. These things aren't done."

"Weally, Cardew," said Arthur Augustus, with some heat, "I fail to see why you should interfeah. I have awwanged to take Miss Mywa undah my wing for the whole of the evenin', an' I see no weason why I should wetwact from that awwangement."

"But it isn't the thing—"

"Oh, wun away an' pick flowahs!" said Arthur Augustus irritably. "Surely you can find anothah partnah for the next dance? What about Joan of Arc, ovah there?"

Cardew shook his head sadly.

"Joan of Arc is booked up for the evenin', I'm afraid," he said. "Blake refuses to part company with her."

"Who is she, by the way?" asked Arthur Augustus.

Cardew did not seem to hear that question. He had become conveniently deaf. He caught sight of Doris Levison—who was Peter Pan, and a very alluring Peter Pan, too—and he glided across the floor to greet her. Arthur Augustus heaved a sigh of relief when Cardew had gone.

"I don't feel like handin' you ovah to anybody else, Miss Myra," he said to his partner. "I hope Cardew will have the good mannahts not to come buttin' in any more. Hallo! They're lining up for the next dance. Do you feel equal to dancin' again so soon?"

"Oh, quite!" murmured the fair charmer at Gussy's side.

So they sallied forth once more into the happy throng; and once again the Egyptian lady gave a brilliant exposition of dancing.

The time passed on rapid wings. It was eleven o'clock before anyone realised the fact. Everyone was serenely happy amid the revel and dance and song. King Carnival reigned supreme.

Arthur Augustus turned to his partner with a bright smile.

"I think old Shakespeah hit the nail on the head when he said, 'One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name!' Don't you agree, deah lady?"

"I agree with the quotation entirely, but I fancy you've got the source wrong. Didn't Scott write that?"

"P'w'paps he did. Anyway, it is the twuest thing evah witten. I say! Would you like to partake of some light weweshment, Miss Mywa? They're servin' cakes an' ices an' gingah wine in the box-room, which has been converted into a tuckshop for the occasion."

"The thought of a strawberry ice," murmured the Egyptian lady, "makes my mouth water!"

"This way, then!"

Together they went to the box-room, where Dame Taggles presided, dispensing drinks and ices, and cakes and chocolates, to the merry throng.

Arthur Augustus hoped that his partner would remove the yasmak in order to eat the strawberry ice in comfort. But she simply raised it above her mouth, and only lips and chin were revealed. It was quite a nice chin. Possibly the Eastern lady had powdered it beforehand! The lips, too, had a bright carmine tint. They were rather wider than Arthur Augustus had expected, but his suspicions were not aroused.

The strawberry ice was so appetising that the Egyptian lady had another. Then she tackled a third, which was "going some," as an American would say. But Arthur Augustus was delighted to see his companion enjoying herself. He would readily have ordered fifty ices for her, if she could have consumed them.

"Thank you so much!" murmured the lady of the East. "I feel like a giant—ahem! a giant—refreshed!"

"That's quite all wight, Miss Mywa. Would you care to come an' take a stwoll in the quad, just to get a bweath of fwesh air?"

"I'd love to!"

So they quitted the building arm in arm, and sauntered to and fro under a starry sky.

The beauty of the evening, and the wonderful knowledge that Miss Myra was at his side, thrilled Arthur Augustus through and THE POPULAR.—No. 239.

through. He experienced a sense of delicious rapture. Like the bard of old, he seemed to "behold, upon the night's starred face, huge, cloudy symbols of a high romance." He felt impelled to say things which he would not have dreamed of saying, in a saner moment.

"Fair lady," said Arthur Augustus dramatically, "I fling my heart at your feet!"

The Egyptian lady suddenly sprang clear, as if she had taken the words literally.

"My hand an' heart, an' my fortune, I offah to you without wewervation!" continued Arthur Augustus. "Are they acceptable to you, deah lady?"

"Yes!" came the tremulous reply.

And Arthur Augustus was fairly swept off his feet with the rapture of the moment.

But, alas! love's young dream was shortly to be shattered.

When he had escorted his companion back to the ball-room, Gussy discovered, with a thrill, that it was midnight.

The waltzers ceased to whirl and wheel. Masks were removed; vizors were uplifted; and Arthur Augustus, wrenching off his own mask, turned quickly to look at his companion.

The Egyptian lady removed her yasmak with a flourish. And Arthur Augustus found himself gazing, horror-stricken, into his partner's face—the face of Clive of the Fourth!

"B-b-bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus sat as if turned to stone. As he said afterwards, you could have knocked him down with a feathah!

"What a topping evening we've had, Gussy!" prattled Clive cheerfully. "I've enjoyed myself no end!"

"You—you—" stuttered Arthur Augustus dazedly. "Am I dweamin'? Was it you, Clive, who was with me the whole evenin'?"

"It was—it were!" said Clive gaily.

"But—but I don't undahstand—"

"I have much pleasure," said Clive, "in handing you back your hand, your heart, and your fortune!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peal upon peal of laughter rang through the ball-room.

The jape on Arthur Augustus had now become common knowledge, and the St. Jim's fellows were almost in hysterics.

Gussy stared round wildly at the sea of grinning faces. And then his gaze rested on Miss Myra—the genuine Miss Myra. She had lifted her visor, and her fresh young face was revealed. She was smiling happily, and her arm was tucked into that of Jack Blake.

Arthur Augustus uttered a strangled cry.

"Spoofed, bai Jove! That boundah Blake—that villain Clive—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's that scoundrel Cardew that you've got to thank, Gussy," said Ralph Reckness, strolling up. "It was I who engineered the merry scheme!"

Arthur Augustus leapt to his feet.

"You—you—" he spluttered. "Put up your hands, you—you foppish dandy of a Beau Bwummel! I will administrah a feahful thwashin'!"

Tom Merry and Co. rushed at the excited Gussy, and dragged him back, and held him until he had simmered down.

Miss Myra, who had been in blissful ignorance of the jape, felt very sorry for Arthur Augustus. She could see that he was genuinely distressed. But she made it up to him next day by accompanying him on a country ramble.

On this occasion, Arthur Augustus was careful not to be too sentimental. He did not throw his heart at Miss Myra's feet; neither did he offer her that organ, together with his hand and fortune. But he enjoyed himself up to the hilt. And when they returned from their delightful ramble, Arthur Augustus was so happy that he could have forgiven Ralph Reckness Cardew.

And he actually did!

THE END.

(Full particulars of next week's St. Jim's story will be found on page 2.)

## IN THE GRIP OF THE LAW!

(Continued from page 11.)

Crash!

Deputy-Sheriff Oakes made a stride towards the shouting ruffian, and struck him fair and square on his stubby jaw.

Four Kings rolled over as if he had been struck by a bullet.

Without another glance at him, Oakes threw himself upon his horse, and rode away with the sheriff's posse, the prisoner in their midst.

Frank Richards & Co. rode after them. Four Kings staggered to his feet, dragging at the revolver in his belt, his brutal face red with rage.

His friends gathered round him, however, and held him back.

The ruffian would have fared ill if he had made an attack upon the deputy-sheriff.

Without even turning his head, as if forgetful of the "bull-dozer's" existence, John Oakes rode on with his men towards Thompson.

"Mr. Oakes!" Vere Beauclerc rode close by the deputy-sheriff. "May I go with my father?"

Oakes glanced at him.

"Your father's going into the calaboozie!" he answered curtly.

"I know—I know! Can I go—"

"No!"

Beauclerc looked at his father.

Surrounded by the sheriff's men, Lascelles Beauclerc could not speak to his son, but he gave him a smile of encouragement.

The unhappy boy dropped behind the cavalcade with his chums.

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless could utter no word of comfort, though their hearts ached for their chum.

In grim, sad silence they rode after the sheriff's posse into the streets of Thompson, where the door of the log calaboozie closed upon the remittance-man and shut him from the haggard eyes of his son.

THE END.

(You simply must not miss reading next week's rattling good tale of Frank Richards & Co., the Chums of Cedar Creek, entitled: "Up Against Judge Lynch!")

## Result of Middlesex Picture-Puzzle Competition.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the picture. The First Prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

Wm. MAY,  
Vauxhall,  
Llanelli,  
S. Wales.

The Second Prize of £2 10s. has been divided between the two following competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

Leslie Wallis, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol; F. C. Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset.

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

The names and addresses of these prize-winners can be obtained on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

Middlesex play fewer matches than most counties. Their list does not contain some of the weaker sides. P. F. Warner, well known all over the globe as Plum, resigned the captaincy in 1920, and F. T. Mann is leader at the present time. Middlesex secured the County Championship in 1920 and 1921, but were unsuccessful in their endeavours to retain it last year.

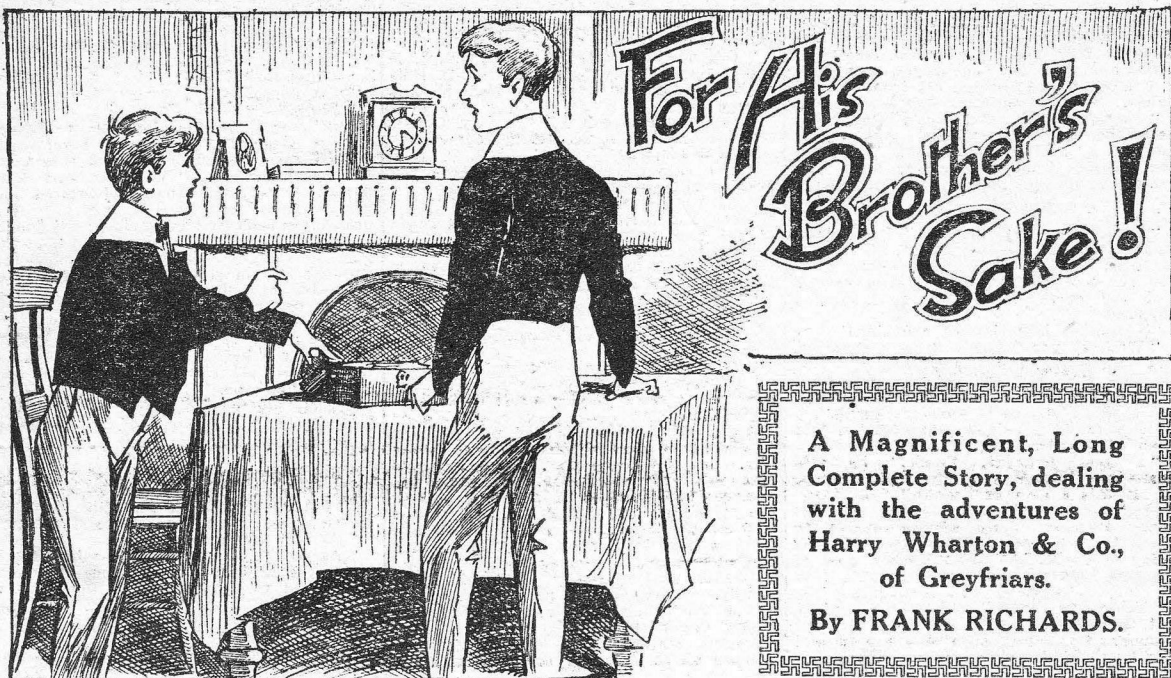
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Who Are the Three Rescuers of Miss Myra? See Next Week's Story!



### THE BOY WHO TRIED TO SAVE HIS BROTHER!

A fascinating story of a boy who staked his honour to save a young and foolish brother. Frank Nugent is the boy who so pluckily and unselfishly stepped between Dicky and disaster! You will be gripped from start to finish by this top-hole story, the finest tale Frank Richards has ever penned!



A Magnificent, Long Complete Story, dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

#### THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Debt of Honour.

**"DICKY!"** Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove at Greyfriars, uttered the exclamation sharply. Wharton had just entered his study—No. 1 in the Remove passage. He had not expected to find anyone there, as he had left his study-mate, Frank Nugent, downstairs. But as he came in a boy who was standing at Nugent's desk in the corner swung round, and faced him, with a startled flush on his face.

It was Nugent minor—Dicky Nugent of the Second Form.

Wharton looked at him sharply. Nugent's desk was open, and the contents disturbed, and it certainly looked as if Dicky Nugent had been going through his major's belongings. And the guilty flush deepened in the fag's face as Wharton scrutinised him.

"What are you doing here, Dicky?" The fag seemed at a loss for words for a moment. He had evidently not expected to be discovered by the Captain of the Remove. He closed the desk, his face crimson.

"I—I'm waiting for Frank!" "And going through his desk while you wait!" rapped out Wharton. Nugent minor looked sullen.

"Why shouldn't I go to my brother's desk if I want to?" he exclaimed. "I suppose you don't think I'm stealing anything?"

"Of course I don't Dicky! Don't be an ass! But you shouldn't do such things, all the same."

"Oh, rot!" That reply to the Captain of the Remove from any other fag of the Second Form would have earned a cuff. But Frank Nugent's minor was a privileged person. Wharton frowned, and pointed to the door. "Travel!" he said briefly.

Nugent minor did not move. "I want to see my major," he said doggedly.

"He's downstairs." "I want to see him here. I'll wait till he comes in."

Wharton regarded the fag curiously. The flush had died out of his face now, leaving it unusually pale. There was a line in the smooth, boyish brow, a troubled look in the handsome blue eyes. Nugent minor was

an extremely good-looking lad, and Wharton knew that he had been petted and spoiled at home, and he had given his major a great deal of trouble when he first came to Greyfriars. Since then, however, most of the nonsense had been "knocked out" of Dicky by rough contact with the fags of the Second. He was no longer the spoiled darling he had been, but the cheekiest fag in the Second Form. But just now he looked very like his old self. His expression was sullen and dogged, and there were signs of trouble in his face that Wharton could not quite understand.

"Anything the matter, Dicky?" Harry asked good-naturedly. "If there is—"

"Yes, there is!" muttered Nugent minor. "What is it?"

"Nothing to do with you," said the fag sullenly. "I want to speak to Frank." Wharton coloured a little. He was greatly inclined to take the sullen fag by the scruff of the neck and pitch him out of the study. But he remembered in time that he was the brother of his best pal. Wharton kept his temper. There came an interruption at that moment.

"Coming, Harry?" It was Frank Nugent's voice from the stairs.

"Yes, I'm coming!" Wharton picked up his bat, for which he had come to the study, and walked out without another word or look to the fag. He was frowning as he joined his chum.

"Jolly long time getting that bat!" said Nugent. "Hallo! What are you scowling about?"

Wharton laughed awkwardly. "I wasn't aware that I was scowling," he said, his brow clearing.

"Frowning, then, if you like that better," grinned Nugent. "What's the row?"

"Your minor's in the study, and he wants to speak to you."

"Let him want, then! We're going down to the cricket."

"Better go, Franky. He looks as if he's in some trouble or other."

Frank Nugent gave a comical groan.

"Thank your lucky stars you haven't a minor!" he said. "I'd swop mine for your white rabbits, any day. Why can't he come down?"

"Better go, anyway."

"Oh, all right! I'll follow you!"

Wharton nodded, and joined Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who were waiting for him in the

doorway of the School House. Frank Nugent ascended the stairs to the Remove passage and went into his study.

"Well, Dicky! Wharton says you want to speak to me," he said. "What is it?" Then Nugent looked more closely at his minor's face, and started a little. The fag seemed on the verge of tears. "Dash it all, kid, what's the matter? Loder been bullying you again?"

Dicky shook his head. "Is it Bolsover major? If so—"

"It's not that!" "Then what is it?" asked Nugent. "You look as if you'd been hunting for trouble, and finding it."

"Shut the door," said Nugent minor nervously.

"What for?" "I—I want to speak to you."

"Can't you speak with the door open?" demanded Nugent, in wonder. He threw the door shut, and it slammed. "Now, what is it?"

"I—I—I—" stammered Dicky. "I—I'm in trouble, Frank."

"Yes, you look like it," groaned Nugent. "You generally are in trouble. Nobody been ragging you?"

"No, no!" "Is it your Form-master?"

"No!" "Then what the deuce is it? Over-run your account at the tuckshop?"

"Worse than that!"

"Well, get it out," said Nugent major resignedly. "They planted you on me to look after, and I suppose it's up to me to do it. If you're stony-broke, I've got a bob you can have."

"A bob's no good!"

"Isn't it?" said Nugent warmly. "It's the last one I've got, anyway."

"I—I'm in trouble. I want you to help me out, Frank."

"Well, ain't I here, ready to help you?" demanded Nugent. "What do you want? If it's money, you can have my last bob. I can do no more than that."

"It's money," said Dicky.

"You careless young ass! I suppose you've been buying something you can't pay for, is that it? Well, it might be worse. I can borrow some money of the chaps, I suppose, and make it up out of my next allowance. You'll bring me to

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"The Missing Funds!" is Next Week's Greyfriars Story!

bankruptcy if you keep on like this. How much is it?"

"Five pounds," Nugent jumped.

"Do you mean five shillings?" "I mean five pounds."

"Oh, don't be funny!" snapped Nugent. "You know jolly well I've not got five pounds. Why don't you say five hundred?"

Dicky Nugent did not reply. He sank into a chair, and covered his face with his hands. Nugent's expression softened again.

"For goodness' sake, don't blub!" he exclaimed, in alarm. "Chuck that, Dicky! Look here, what do you mean? What can you possibly want five pounds for? You can't possibly owe anybody so much money as that—it's rot!"

"I do!"

"You owe five pounds?" exclaimed Nugent, in angry astonishment. "Then it can't be the tuckshop. They wouldn't let you run more than five bob. You haven't had the cheek to buy a new bike, I suppose?"

"I haven't been buying anything."

"Well, if you haven't bought anything, you can't owe the money for it," said Nugent. "So just tell me what you want five quid for, young shaver. Not that there's the slightest chance of your getting it."

Dicky raised a pale and tear-stained face from his hands.

"I must have it, Frank!" he said hoarsely. "I tell you, I've got to have it. It—it's a debt of honour."

Frank Nugent looked steadily at his young brother. He seemed unable to speak for a moment. The statement that a fag in the Second Form owed a debt of "honour" to the tune of five pounds took his breath away, as well it might.

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Nugent at last, his anger breaking out. "A debt of honour! Don't talk such silly rot to me! The long and the short of it is, then, that you've been gambling."

"I got among some fellows," faltered Nugent miserably. "It—it was last half-holiday. It was all right; they were decent chaps. But—but I lost, and—and I've got to square up, Frank. I can't refuse to pay, can I? I lost the money, and they accepted my IOU. I can't be such a cad as to refuse to pay. It would be swindling. You don't want me to be a swindler?"

"You young fool!"

"It might happen to anybody," said the fag defensively. "Look here, it isn't so very much, after all. I can raise the money in time. Uncle George gives me five quid every birthday. I can get some money from home. The mater will send me some if I ask her, but—but, of course, I can't tell her what it's for. If you lend me the money I can square up—in time."

"I haven't the money—and you know it. And, if I had, I wouldn't hand you a single tanner to pay a gang of swindlers!"

Dicky flushed angrily.

"They're not swindlers. They're all decent chaps enough. They pay when they lose. I've played with them before, if you must know all about it. I—I won a quid once. I've had their money, and spent it. How can I refuse to pay when I lose? It wouldn't be decent. It wouldn't be honest. You don't want to make a swindler of me, do you?"

Nugent breathed hard.

"Who were the fellows?" he asked.

"I'm not going to tell you!" said Dicky sullenly. "You'd only want to make a row with them."

"Exactly!" said Nugent, between his teeth. "I want to find the rotters who've been making you play, Dick, and give them a hiding all round. Are they Greyfriars fellows?"

"Find out!"

"I will find out!" said Nugent, clenching his hands. "As for you, you young rascal, you won't get a penny out of me for anything of the kind! I suppose it's no good telling you that it's disgraceful to gamble—you know that as well as I do."

"Loder does it," said Dicky sullenly.

"Everybody knows—excepting the masters—that Loder and Walker play cards for money."

"Yes, and they're a pair of cads! Don't talk to me! You know it's wrong, and you know it's dirty blackguardism!" said Nugent fiercely. "I wonder you've got the cheek to come here and tell me you've done it."

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"Any other fellow would give you the licking of your life."

"I've only told you because I want you to help me," said Dicky, his lip quivering.

"I've got to pay somehow. It's a debt of honour."

"Debt of rats!" snorted Nugent. "Now, look here—"

"You can lend me the money, Frank, if you like. I know you've got it. It isn't as if I wouldn't square. You shall have it all—"

"I tell you I haven't it!"

"You have! I've seen it in your desk!" Nugent started.

"You cheeky young sweep! Have you been meddling with my desk?"

"You've got six pounds there—"

"That's not my money! It's the funds of the cricket club!" said Nugent. "I'm secretary and treasurer—you know that."

"It's all the same; I can let you have it back before it's wanted."

"So you want me to embezzle the funds of the cricket club, for you to hand the money to a gang of sharpers!" shouted Nugent.

"They're not sharpers—Ponsonby and—"

"Ponsonby! Then it's the Highcliffe fellows you've been playing with!" exclaimed Nugent.

Dicky bit his lip. He had not intended to allow that piece of information to escape him. But it was out now. Frank Nugent's face was pale with rage. He knew the manners and customs of Ponsonby & Co., the "blades" of Highcliffe School. That they should dare to draw the foolish and reckless fag into their rascality excited Nugent's temper to boiling-point.

"Never mind who they are!" said Dicky hastily. "I've got to pay, anyway, and if you won't help me I've got to get the money somewhere else."

Nugent strode across the study and grasped his shrinking minor by the shoulder and shook him savagely.

"Look here!" he said, his voice trembling with rage. "Look here, Dicky! I forbid you to pay those rotters a single penny! Do you hear? If I find out that you've paid them anything, I'll thrash you—thrash you till you can't crawl! Do you understand that?"

Dicky Nugent's face set sullenly, but he did not reply. Nugent looked as if he would carry out his threat there and then if the fag added another word.

"As for your precious friends, I'll teach them to get you into gambling!" went on Nugent, gritting his teeth. "I'll see Ponsonby—"

"You won't! You shan't—you shan't make me look an ass like that! Let my affairs alone, and mind your own business!"

Nugent made no answer. He gave the fag another angry shake, and then released him and strode to the door, his face white and set.

Dicky sprang after him.

"Frank, where are you going?"

"I'm going to Highcliffe!" said Nugent, without turning his head.

"You can't! You shan't!" Dicky caught his brother's arm. "Frank! Stop, I tell you! You shan't meddle in my business! I tell you—"

Nugent turned upon him savagely. With a ringing cuff, he sent the fag staggering back into the study. Then he hurried downstairs, with gleaming eyes.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Something like a Licking.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the matter with Franky?"

Harry Wharton & Co. were on the cricket-ground. Some of the Remove fellows were at practice, but the Co. were waiting for Frank. They stared at him in amazement as he came up. His face was white, his lips set, his eyes glittering. Never had the chums of the Remove seen Nugent look like that before.

"What on earth's happened?" exclaimed Johnny Bull, in alarm.

"Dicky—," began Wharton.

"I want you fellows to come with me if you will," said Nugent hoarsely. "I'm going over to Highcliffe to see Ponsonby."

"Highcliffe?"

"Ponsonby!"

"But what has happened, my esteemed chum?" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and what about the cricket?"

"Hang the cricket!"

"Ahem! But—"

"I've got an account to settle with Ponsonby," said Nugent, his grasp tightening almost convulsively upon a riding-crop he held in his hand. The juniors glanced at it.

"Where did you get that?" asked Bob.

"It's Coker's. I've borrowed it."

"What for?"

"For Ponsonby."

"Phew!"

The chums of the Remove exchanged curious glances. They had never seen Nugent so disturbed before, and they knew that something very unusual must have happened to throw the good-natured and genial junior into such a fury. It was probable enough that Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe deserved a horsewhipping—probably he deserved a good many. But the idea of going over to Highcliffe to horsewhip one of the fellows was, as Bob Cherry remarked, a little "thick." There was no love lost between Ponsonby & Co. and the chums of the Remove at Greyfriars, and Harry Wharton & Co. had sometimes raided their old rivals, even in their own quarters; but—

"Well, are you coming?" said Nugent impatiently. "If you're not, I'll go alone. I thought you might come and see fair play."

"Not likely to get much fair play amongst those fellows, Frank," said Johnny Bull. "If you want to tackle Ponsonby, it would be better to get at him outside Highcliffe."

"Can't wait for that."

"As you know, last time we raided them, Mobbs, their Form-master, came over and complained to the Head, and there was a dickens of a row. They don't play the game."

"I don't care!"

"Well, I do, a little bit," said Johnny Bull, rather tartly. "Suppose you tell us what the trouble is about, for a start?"

Frank Nugent did not reply. He turned and strode away towards the distant school-gates. The Co. started after him at once.

"Hold on a minute, Frank!" exclaimed Wharton. "Keep your wool on! Surely you can tell us what we're to raid them for?"

"It's not a raid, and it isn't 'them'—it's Ponsonby! And I'm going to horse-whip him," said Nugent; "and I'm not going to tell you anything. If you can't take my word for it that I've a good reason, you needn't come."

He spoke without slackening his pace. But his chums were hurrying along with him now. They did not intend to let him go alone.

They were frowning a little now. Nugent's reply was not exactly polite, and the point of view he took was decidedly unreasonable. A raid on Highcliffe might lead to severe punishment, and the juniors naturally wanted to know what they were to raid Ponsonby for. But Frank Nugent had a natural disinclination to explain the disgraceful scrape into which his minor had fallen. The Famous Five had always been down on such things, and they had long been extremely rough on Vernon-Smith of the Remove for doing precisely what Nugent minor had done. Nugent did not wish to get Dicky's rascally conduct spoken of at large, and he objected to even his chums knowing about it. But the Co., who did not understand all that, of course, were surprised and somewhat exasperated.

"Look here," exclaimed Wharton, as they passed out of the school gate, "I think you ought to tell us what the trouble is, Franky."

"There's no need."

"Has Ponsonby done anything to you?"

"Yes."

"What has he done?"

"Acted like a rotten cad."

"But in what way?"

"I'm not going to tell you!" said Nugent bluntly. "If you don't want to back me up, you needn't come with me, that's all. I'll go alone."

"You jolly well won't go alone! But I don't see any reason to keep secrets from your own pals," said Wharton crossly.

Nugent made no reply to that. He strode away down the lane at a rapid pace with a fixed brow. The juniors walked with him in silence. They were annoyed and disturbed, and they anticipated trouble; but they could not let their chum walk into



a hornets' nest by himself. Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe had no idea of fair play. They would certainly pile on Nugent if he went alone—indeed, if the five went together they were pretty certain to find trouble. In grim and irritated silence the juniors made their way to Highcliffe, Nugent speaking no word, and the other fellows not feeling inclined to ask him any more questions.

Outside the gates of Highcliffe School, the thin and ungraceful figure of Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth, could be seen. He was chatting with a junior, and in the junior they recognised Ponsonby, the fellow of whom they had come in search. They were glad to see him. Ponsonby was easier to deal with in the open than sought for in his own quarters within the school.

Mr. Mobbs' manner towards Ponsonby was civil in the extreme. Cecil Ponsonby treated him with barely-disguised patronage. The dignity of a Form-master was an unknown quantity to Mr. Mobbs. He was a born tuft-hunter, and Ponsonby and most of his friends were rich and well-connected, and Mr. Mobbs looked for future advantages by making himself agreeable to them. Old Dr. Voysey, the Head of Highcliffe, was careless and remiss in his management, leaving most things in the hands of the under-masters; and that, to a large extent, accounted for the "dry rot" from which the school was suffering. Ponsonby & Co. were accustomed to playing bridge and smoking in their studies, and haunting the billiard-rooms in the vicinity; and if their conduct came to the knowledge of Mr. Mobbs, the Form-master discreetly closed his eyes to it.

Nugent's eyes glittered at the sight of Ponsonby, and he took a tighter grip upon the riding-whip.

"There he is!" he muttered.  
 "But Mobby is with him," said Bob Cherry uneasily. "Dash it all, Franky, you can't go for a chap under the nose of his Form-master!"

"Can't I?" said Nugent grimly. "I'll show you whether I can or not."

"Look here, Frank—"  
 Nugent quickened his pace. Ponsonby glanced at him as he came up and Mr. Mobbs looked at him with an eye of disapproval. Mr. Mobbs did not like the Greyfriars fellows—partly because Ponsonby & Co. did not like them, and partly on their own account. Ponsonby calmly screwed an eyeglass into his eye, and surveyed Nugent with a supercilious smile.

He did not appear to guess that Nugent was coming for him. After a supercilious glance, he ostentatiously turned his back on the Greyfriars junior, and went on talking to Mr. Mobbs.

"Certainly Mobby," he said. "I'll ask my pater to have you down next vac. You can tell him what nice boys we are at school—what?"

Mr. Mobbs smiled and rubbed his hands. "I should be delighted and honoured by an invitation from your respected father, Ponsonby. I—why—what—"

Nugent had come up.  
 His left hand was laid heavily on Ponsonby's shoulder, and the supercilious Highcliffe junior was swung violently round. Ponsonby found himself staring into an angry face and two blazing eyes.

"You cad! Let go!" he shouted.  
 "I've just been speaking to my minor," muttered Nugent. "You understand?"

"Let go my shoulder!"  
 "And I've come to thrash you!"  
 "You—you—" Ponsonby clenched his fist and struck out and Nugent received the blow full in the face. "Now let go!"  
 The blow was a heavy one, but Nugent did not seem to feel it. His grasp on Ponsonby's shoulder did not slacken. He whirled up the whip, and struck Ponsonby across the face with it.

Slash!  
 Ponsonby uttered a yell of pain. Across his face lay the red mark where the whip had fallen.

"That's for a start!" said Nugent grimly. "Now I'm going to thrash you!"  
 "You—you— Oh!"

Ponsonby was swung round in Nugent's grip, and the horsewhip rose and fell across his shoulders. Nugent had shifted his grip on to Ponsonby's collar, and his grip seemed like iron. Ponsonby struggled and kicked and yelled, but the Greyfriars junior held

him fast, and the blows rained across his back.

Slash, slash, slash!  
 Harry Wharton & Co., who had been left behind by Nugent in his haste, came up breathless. Mr. Mobbs was gazing at the scene in horror and consternation, scarcely able to believe his eyes. That the junior should dare to lay hands like that on Cecil Ponsonby, whom Mr. Mobbs had been toadying to for a whole term, to secure that invitation from Ponsonby senior, was incredible—amazing—unparalleled. It really seemed like sacrilege to Mr. Mobbs. He stood rooted to the ground till Ponsonby's wild yells roused him. Then he clutched his walking-stick and rushed to the rescue.

Mr. Mobbs' stick would have done Nugent some damage, but Bob Cherry put his foot in the way, and the Form-master stumbled over it and measured his length on the ground.

And still Nugent was lashing away with the whip. He had no eyes for Mr. Mobbs; he did not even seem to see him. All his energies were devoted to thrashing Ponsonby; and certainly Ponsonby was getting the thrashing of his life. His struggles were of no avail; he hit and kicked, but hitting and kicking had no effect on Nugent. His grasp on the young rascal's collar did not relax for a moment, and the whip rose and fell with terrific speed and force.

"Ow, ow, ow! Help!" shrieked Ponsonby.

Mr. Mobbs sat up dazedly, gasping.  
 "Help! Police!" he yelled.

Out of the school gates came crowding a dozen Highcliffe fellows—Ponsonby's friends, Gadsby and Vavasour and Monson, in the lead. Wharton grasped Nugent by the arm.

"That's enough, Franky! Whatever he's done, that's enough! Leave off!"

"It's not enough!"  
 "Let him go, I tell you!"

Wharton grasped the riding-whip from Nugent's hand. Frank turned upon him savagely for a moment. But the Highcliffians

were rushing upon them. Ponsonby sank to the ground, gasping and yelling with pain, all the spirit taken out of him by that terrific thrashing.

"Line up!" shouted Bob Cherry.  
 The Famous Five lined up instantly, and met the rush of the Highcliffians. There were a dozen of the latter; but they were not made of the same stuff as the Famous Five. Harry Wharton & Co. were famous as fighting-men in the Remove at Greyfriars, which prided itself upon being a fighting Form. They hit out straight from the shoulder. Gadsby was knocked headlong over Mr. Mobbs, who was picking himself up, and Mr. Mobbs sprawled on the ground again, with Gadsby sprawling over him. Vavasour and Monson and Meriton were knocked over them.

Then the Highcliffe rush stopped, the rest backing away, apparently not at all anxious to come to closer quarters.

"Come on!" muttered Johnny Bull. "Time we were off. We shall have fifty bouncers on our necks in a minute!"

And the Famous Five beat a retreat.

The Highcliffians did not pursue them. They were gathered round Ponsonby and Mr. Mobbs. Mr. Mobbs had been flattened by the juniors falling over him, and he was gasping in a state of helpless breathlessness. Ponsonby was moaning. The Famous Five tramped away, unpursued; Nugent, with a grim, set face, and a gleam of almost savage satisfaction in his eyes; the other fellows looking very serious. For, whatever Nugent's provocation might have been, they knew that there was grave trouble to follow that visit to Highcliffe, and that it would not be long in coming.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**

**Mr. Mobbs Demands Justice.**

CKER of the Fifth looked out of the open doorway of the School House and whistled.

"Hallo! Looks like trouble!"  
 Across the Close, from the direction of the gates, came a thin gentleman in a black



**A WHIPPING FOR A RASCAL!** Cecil Ponsonby was swung round in Nugent's grip, and the horsewhip rose and fell across his shoulders. The cad of Highcliffe struggled fiercely, but the Greyfriars junior held him fast and the blows rained across his back. Slash! Slash! Mr. Mobbs stood gazing at the scene in horror and consternation. (See Chapter 2.)

frock-coat and silk hat, with a frowning brow. It was Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe.

It was dusky in the Close, and most of the fellows were indoors. Coker and Potter and Greene of the Fifth were chatting in the doorway when Mr. Mobbs came up. They saluted him, not very respectfully. They knew Mr. Mobbs, and did not like him.

Trotter, the page, took in Mr. Mobbs' name to the Head of Greyfriars, and brought back the information that Dr. Locke would see him at once.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was in the study with the Head when the gentleman from Highcliffe was shown in. Dr. Locke rose courteously. Mr. Mobbs returned his greeting in a far from courteous manner. He had not come there to be courteous.

"I have a complaint to make, Dr. Locke," he said abruptly.

The Head sighed.

"Very well, Mr. Mobbs. Pray take a chair."

Mr. Mobbs informed the invitation "I have to inform you, sir, that several juniors of this school—five, to be exact—came over to Highcliffe this afternoon to make a disturbance."

"I am afraid, Mr. Mobbs, that there are frequent disturbances among the boys," said Dr. Locke urbanely. "The blame may probably be equally apportioned."

"Not in this case, sir. Ponsonby, of my Form, has been brutally attacked and beaten with a whip in my presence."

"Bless my soul!"

"He was attacked, sir, under my eyes!" said Mr. Mobbs. "When I went to his aid I was tripped up—tripped up, sir, and hurled to the ground."

"Dear me, that is serious!"

"Ponsonby is now in a serious state. He was beaten with a horsewhip."

"Did you see that yourself, Mr. Mobbs? It sounds incredible to me!" said the Head tartly. Mr. Mobbs' discourtesy was having an effect upon the Head's urbanity.

"I saw it with my own eyes, sir! It was done in my presence! The juniors of this school, sir, seem not to have the faintest idea of proper respect to authority."

"I do not require your opinion on that point, Mr. Mobbs. Kindly give me the names of the juniors you refer to, and I will inquire into the matter."

"Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Bull, and the Indian boy."

"They are in your Form, Mr. Quelch. Will you kindly call them here?"

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch left the study in search of Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Bull, and the Indian boy. Mr. Mobbs condescended to sit down while he waited for him to return.

The Remove master came back in a few minutes, and the Famous Five followed him into the study. They were looking very serious, but quite composed. They had fully expected to see the Highcliffe master there, so they were not taken by surprise at the sight of Mr. Mobbs.

Mr. Mobbs' eyes glittered at the sight of them; but they did not look at him, after a passing glance; they kept their eyes fixed upon the Head.

"Mr. Mobbs has made a very serious statement to me," said the Head severely. "It appears that you have been to Highcliffe this afternoon."

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"Mr. Mobbs declares that you have attacked Ponsonby, of that school, with a horsewhip."

"I did, sir," said Nugent quickly. "The others have had nothing to do with it, sir. I did it, and I'm willing to take the blame."

"Oh, we were all in it!" said Bob Cherry.

"Which of these boys do you accuse of horsewhipping Ponsonby, Mr. Mobbs?"

"Nugent."

"Then the others—"

"One of the others tripped me up. I think it was Cherry—"

"Did you trip Mr. Mobbs, Cherry?"

"I—I think he fell over my foot, sir," murmured Bob. "He was going for Franky with his walking-stick, and he had to be stopped somehow."

"Ah! You were about to strike Nugent with your walking-stick, Mr. Mobbs?"

"I was about to force him to relinquish his brutal and cowardly attack upon a boy in my Form at Highcliffe, sir!" snapped Mr. Mobbs.

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Nugent's eyes blazed.

"It wasn't cowardly!" he exclaimed. "You know it wasn't! Ponsonby's a bigger fellow than I am, and he could have stood up for himself—"

"Silence, Nugent! I understand, Mr. Mobbs, that only Nugent laid hands on Ponsonby?"

Mr. Mobbs gave a snappish assent.

"Then I cannot see anything cowardly in it. I have seen this boy Ponsonby, and he is older and bigger than Nugent. And if you were about to strike Nugent with your walking-stick—a dangerous thing to do—I think Cherry may be excused for stopping you. You might have done the boy some serious harm."

Mr. Mobbs appeared to be about to choke for a moment.

"Am I to understand that you uphold these boys in their ruffianly conduct, sir?" he gasped. "I warn you that if justice is not done, Dr. Voysey is prepared to carry the matter before the governing board of Greyfriars."

"Justice will be done, Mr. Mobbs," said the Head calmly, though his eyes sparkled behind his glasses. "And if you allow another threat to pass your lips I shall order you to be shown out at once. Nugent, you have attacked Ponsonby with a horse-whip, it appears. That was inexcusable. A fight with fists I could understand, but the use of any weapon—"

"I didn't use it as a weapon, sir. I went over to Highcliffe to thrash Ponsonby, and I thrashed him."

"He confesses that he went there deliberately to make a disturbance!" exclaimed Mr. Mobbs, quick to seize on the admission.

The Head was looking very grave.

"This is very serious, Nugent! The matter appears to concern you alone. I presume you had some motive for the extraordinary action?"

"Yes, sir!" said Nugent between his teeth.

"What had Ponsonby done to you?"

Nugent did not reply.

"Come, Nugent!" said the Head. "I demand to know all about the matter. It appears that this was not an ordinary scuffle, such as has, unfortunately, taken place many times before. You went to Highcliffe deliberately to horsewhip Ponsonby. Why?"

"Because—because—" Nugent stammered.

"Well, because—"

"Because he's a rotten cad, sir, and had done me an injury!" burst out Nugent. "Mr. Mobbs knows as well as I do that he's a rooster! He knows that he gambles and smokes—yes, and drinks, too—knows it quite well!"

Mr. Mobbs' face turned quite livid.

"Silence, Nugent! Whether what you say is correct or not, it is no business of yours, and has nothing to do with the matter in hand!" said the Head sternly. "I have asked you to tell me why you made this attack on Ponsonby, and I demand an answer."

"I—I—"

"He has no answer to give," said Mr. Mobbs viciously. "The attack was utterly brutal and unprovoked!"

"Do you admit that it was unprovoked, Nugent?"

"No, sir."

"Then how had Ponsonby provoked it?"

Nugent was silent.

"Do you know, Wharton?" asked the Head, turning to the captain of the Remove.

"No, sir," said Harry reluctantly. "Only—I know Nugent was awfully excited, and—and he wouldn't have done it without a good reason."

"That is no excuse at all, Nugent, unless you can explain your conduct. I must take Mr. Mobbs' accusation as it stands. Nothing, I am afraid, could excuse you for taking the law into your own hands in the manner you have done. But if there is anything you can tell me in extenuation, I am willing to hear it."

Nugent was silent. He could not reply without betraying his minor to severe punishment. If the Head had known Dicky Nugent's little "flutter" with the cards, and his precious debt of honour, matters would have gone very hard with the scamp of the Second. Frank Nugent's fongue was tied, whatever came of it.

"Very well." The Head's brow grew

sterner and grimmer. "You have nothing to say? Then I can only tell you, Nugent, that I hold you entirely to blame. What you have done is very serious, especially after my commands to you to avoid quarrels with the boys of Highcliffe School. Nugent, you will be flogged in public to-morrow morning after prayers. The whole school will be assembled to witness your punishment. You may go!"

Nugent's lip quivered.

"Very well, sir," he said quietly; and he turned and left the study.

His dismayed chums followed him out.

"Are you satisfied, Mr. Mobbs?" said the Head coldly. "If you choose, you are welcome to be a witness to Nugent's punishment."

"I accept your word, sir, that the punishment will be adequate," said Mr. Mobbs. "Dr. Voysey will regard this as full reparation."

"Then there is nothing more to be said. Good-evening!"

That abrupt dismissal made Mr. Mobbs' eyes glitter; but he left the study without answering. At the end of the passage he passed the Famous Five, and smiled maliciously at the sight of their dismayed faces. That smile very nearly earned Mr. Mobbs a bumping; but, fortunately, the juniors restrained themselves. Mr. Mobbs walked airily out of the house, and disappeared in the dusk of the quad.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Major and Minor!

"FLOGGED, by gum!"

All the Remove buzzed with the news.

Frank Nugent was to be flogged in the morning, before the assembled school. There was only one topic among the Greyfriars juniors that evening, and that was the sentence passed on Nugent.

The sympathy of the Remove fellows was entirely with him. The horsewhipping of Ponsonby was a very light offence in their eyes. Ponsonby, of Highcliffe, was a cad and an outsider; all the fellows agreed on that. They had no doubt that he had fully deserved the punishment that Nugent had inflicted.

But they were puzzled. Nugent was usually so quiet and good-natured, that it was difficult to account for that sudden outbreak. A good many fellows asked Nugent that evening what he had done it for. But they received no satisfaction.

Nugent maintained a moody silence. The Co. were asked in their turn, and when it came out that they knew no more than the rest of the Form, the amazement increased. So far as the Remove fellows could see, there was no reason why Nugent should keep his motive a secret, but evidently he intended to do so.

There was only one fellow at Greyfriars beside Nugent himself who knew the reason, and that was Nugent minor of the Second Form.

After preparation in the Second Form-room, Gatty brought in the news, and imparted it to Dicky Nugent. He expected Dicky to be surprised and distressed, but Dicky was neither. He heard what Gatty had to say without a change of expression. The fags stared at him in surprise. They had expected him to be a little cut up, at all events.

"Don't you understand, Dick?" exclaimed Gatty. "Your major is going to be flogged to-morrow morning."

"All right," said Dicky.

"Before the whole school!" added Myers impressively.

"Yes."

"He horsewhipped Ponsonby, of Highcliffe," went on Gatty. "Took a riding-whip over there, and licked the boulder under old Mobby's nose, by gum!"

"Serve him right," said Sammy Bunter. "Ponsonby is a cad. He kicked me the other day, when I met him in the lane. Jolly glad!"

"And he won't say what he did it for," pursued Gatty, full of his news. "Lots of the fellows have asked him, and he's keeping mum. Do you know, Dicky?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, you don't seem to care much about it, I must say," said Gatty. "If I



had a major, and he was going to be flogged, I should say I was sorry, anyway."  
 "I'm not sorry!" growled Nugent minor.  
 "What!"  
 "Not sorry!"  
 "Oh, Dicky!"  
 "Why couldn't he let Ponsonby alone?" snapped Nugent minor. "What did he want to meddle for? Serve him jolly well right, I say!"

Gatty gave a sniff of disgust.  
 "Well, I must say you're talking rottenly, considering how your major has always stood by you!" he exclaimed.

Nugent minor swung away with a moody and clouded brow, leaving the fags in a buzz of discussion and speculation. Nugent minor clenched his hands as he left the Form-room, and he made his way at once to No. 1 Study. His eyes were gleaming with anger. He kicked open the study door, which was ajar, and entered.

Frank Nugent was alone there. Harry Wharton was in Bob Cherry's study just then, his preparation being finished.

The brothers looked at one another with a far from brotherly expression. The real affection that Frank had for his younger brother was not in evidence now. The disgrace of a public flogging, to say nothing of the punishment itself, had made the Remove fellow feel very bitter. The prospect of being hauled up on Gosling's shoulders in the morning, and flogged before the whole school, made him grind his teeth. And the willful, petulant, reckless fag was the cause of it.

"So you've been over to Highcliffe, after all?" said Dicky Nugent, between his teeth. He was as angry as his major.

"Yes," said Frank.  
 "And you went for Ponsonby, my pal?" Nugent's eyes glittered.

"Yes, I went for your precious pal, and gave him the thrashing of his life," he said. "Ponsonby got worse than I shall get tomorrow morning; that's one comfort."

"You rotter!" burst out the fag. "You—you—Very likely Ponsonby won't speak to me again after this. What right have you to interfere between me and my friends? Why couldn't you mind your own business? And I owe him money, too!"

"You won't pay him that money, Dick?"  
 "I shall pay him!"

"And you won't speak to him again."  
 "I shall speak to him—if he'll speak to me. Very likely he won't, after what you've done—acted like a beastly hooligan," said Dicky, almost sobbing with rage. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself! I'm jolly glad you're going to be flogged for it, so there!"

"You'll drop his acquaintance from this day," said Frank, trying to control his voice. "Do you understand? I've thrashed Ponsonby because he led you into gambling. But I dare say you were as bad as he was. Mind, I mean business! If you speak to him again, if you meet him again or write to him, I'll thrash you as I've thrashed him!"

"I'm going to write to him to-night," snapped Dicky. "I'm going to apologise to him for your brutality."  
 "What?"

"And I'm going to ask him not to let it make any difference to our friendship," said Dick defiantly. "And I'm going to pay him, too, as soon as I can get the money. You're not going to make a swindler of me, Frank!"

Nugent rose to his feet.  
 "I've never licked you yet, Dick," he said. "I dare say I ought to have done so; you've deserved it often enough. It's no good asking you to act decently. The only thing is to lick you, if you won't. I ought to have done it before. Now I mean business! You'll give me your word, here and now, to have nothing more to do with Ponsonby, or any of the Highcliffe chaps, or I'll lick you till you howl!"

"I won't!" said Dick, setting his teeth. Nugent picked up a walking-cane. His face was almost white with anger.

"I give you a last chance, Dick. Will you give me your word to have nothing more to do with Highcliffe?"

"No!" yelled Dick.  
 "Then I'll teach you."

Nugent grasped his minor by the collar, and laid on with the cane. Dick Nugent wriggled and yelled furiously, and kicked out at his major's shins. Nugent avoided the kick, and lashed away with the cane.

There was no doubt that Dicky thoroughly deserved that licking; and it was probable that a few earlier lickings might have kept him out of his present scrape. But Nugent certainly was a little too vigorous. The thought of the flogging he was to receive on the morrow through the misdeeds of this unrepentant young rascal, embittered him.  
 "Now will you promise?" he panted.  
 "No!" yelled the fag.  
 "Lash, lash, lash!"

Harry Wharton threw open the door and ran into the study. He caught Nugent's arm as it was descending again.

"Frank, what are you doing? Chuck it?"  
 "Let me go!" panted Nugent, wrenching his arm away. "The young cad wants a licking, and he's going to have it!"

Wharton grasped the cane and jerked it away.  
 "He's had enough, Frank! Don't be a brute!"

"Let me alone!"  
 "Cut, Dicky!"

Wharton held his infuriated chum, while Dicky Nugent, half sobbing, fled from the study.

For a moment Nugent clenched his hands, as if he would turn upon Wharton. Harry looked him calmly in the face.

"Cheese it, Frank," he said quietly.  
 "Don't be an ass! There's nothing for us to quarrel about!"

Nugent dropped his hands, panting.  
 "You shouldn't have interfered."  
 "You were going too far, Frank. Remember he's only a kid, whatever he's done. It isn't like you to be a brute."

Nugent burst into a bitter laugh.  
 "The young rascal ought to be skinned," he said. "You don't understand—"

"Well, what has he done?"  
 Nugent did not reply.

"I don't understand you lately, Frank," said Wharton uneasily. "This is the second time you've lost your temper to-day—over nothing, so far as I can see. What's the matter with you? You were very rough on Ponsonby. Yes; I know he's an out-and-out cad—but there's a limit, all the same. Now you are thrashing your minor, and you won't say what he's done. It's getting too thick."

"He has wanted a licking for a long time," said Nugent, breathing hard. "If I'd licked him before, he mightn't have done this."

"Done what?"  
 "What he's done?" said Nugent savagely. "Never mind what! But if you must know, he's on the right road to being sacked from the school, and bringing disgrace on all the family. And he won't listen to me."

Wharton wrinkled his brow.  
 "That doesn't seem like Dicky," he said uneasily. "He's a good enough little chap. If he's done anything rotten I'm pretty certain he's been led into it by some other chap who ought to know better. That's the chap you should go for."

"I have!" snapped Nugent; and he left the study, slamming the door loudly behind him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.  
 The Flogging.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. wore worried looks when they came down on the following morning.

Frank Nugent was very quiet and subdued; indeed, he looked less worried than his chums.

The Co. seemed to take his punishment more to heart than Nugent himself.

Harry Wharton had been thinking the matter out carefully. Under the circumstances, the Head could hardly have come to any other decision; but Wharton felt sure that Nugent, if he chose, could explain his action, and escape the humiliation of a flogging. Why Nugent was keeping silent was a mystery. When they went towards Hall that morning, the captain of the Remove tackled him on the subject, making one more effort to make him see reason, as he termed it.

"Look here, Franky," he began. "You needn't tell us about it, if you don't want to; we're not curious. But I know you must have had some good reason for licking Ponsonby. Why can't you tell the Head, and get off the flogging? If you could make a good excuse, the Head would let you off."

Nugent nodded.  
 "Well, you had a reason, I suppose?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.  
 "A jolly good reason," said Nugent.

"Good enough to satisfy the Head?" Nugent smiled faintly.  
 "Yes, I think so—if I told him."  
 "Then why not tell him?"  
 "I can't."  
 "But why not?" demanded Johnny Bull.  
 "It's impossible, that's all."  
 "You're jolly mysterious," growled Bull.  
 "I'm blessed if I like this way you've got of keeping secrets, Nugent! It's not pally."  
 "I can't help it," said Nugent, colouring.  
 "I'd tell you—only I—I don't want to. It's a private matter, and I don't care for anybody to know about it. There's nothing more to say."

It was left at that.  
 And a little later the school was assembled in Big Hall for the flogging.

The whole school was there, from the Sixth down to the smallest fags, ranked in their Forms to witness the punishment of the Removeite.

Frank Nugent was in his place with the Remove, when the Head came in by the upper door.

There was a hush in the big hall. Gosling, the porter, whose duty it was to "hoist" the victims on such occasions, came in with his heavy tread. Gosling did not seem to share the general glumness.

Gosling's amiable opinion was that the more boys were flogged, the better it was for them, and he was cheerfully ready to lend his assistance.

"Nugent, come up here!"  
 The Head's voice was deep and stern.

Nugent, his face very pale, advanced from his place in the Remove.

The eyes of his chums followed him lugubriously. There were two grinning faces among the Removeites. Bunter and Snoop seemed to think there was something amusing in a flogging inflicted upon a member of the Famous Five. Johnny Bull noted their expressions, and mentally made them promises of something to happen when the assembly was dismissed.

"Nugent"—the Head's stern voice was audible throughout Big Hall—"you have disobeyed my commands, and committed what was apparently an unprovoked assault upon a boy belonging to Highcliffe School. You have not been able to offer the slightest excuse in extenuation of your conduct. I am about to flog you, and I trust the punishment will be a warning to you in the future."

Nugent did not speak.

The Head made a sign to Gosling, who advanced to "hoist" the junior. Nugent clenched his fists for a moment, and unclenched them again. Apparently the thought of resistance had passed through his mind, only to be dismissed at once. He submitted quietly.

Gosling took him up.

Through the silence of Big Hall the lashes of the birch sounded clearly and distinctly. It was a severe flogging, but no sound came from Nugent's lips. His face was pale, his teeth hard set, his eyes gleaming. If the punishment had been doubly as severe, he was determined that no cry should be wrung from his lips.

Hardly a sound was heard in the crowded hall.

The last blow was delivered, and Nugent was lowered from Gosling's back. He slipped to his feet, and stood a little unsteadily, his face white as chalk, his eyes burning.

The Head's glance was compassionate. He had done his duty, and it had been a painful duty to him.

"You may go!" he said quietly.  
 Nugent went without a word.

The Head made a sign, and the assembled school dispersed. Nugent's chums gathered round him as he walked unsteadily from the hall.

They did not speak; there was nothing to say. He knew that they felt for him, and that was enough.

Nugent went up to his study. He wanted to get out of sight just then. On the stairs his chums left him; he wanted to be alone. What he had endured was for his brother's sake. It remained to be seen if Dicky was worthy of it.

THE END.

(Next week's Greyfriars story will take some beating. It is entitled: "The Missing Funds!")

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