

HUNDREDS OF POUNDS IN PRIZES! FULL ANNOUNCEMENT INSIDE!

Week Ending  
October 6th,  
1923.

New  
Series.  
No. 246.

Twenty-eight  
Pages.

# The POPULAR 2<sup>D</sup>

The Story Book  
for Boys.

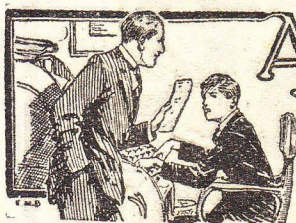
EVERY  
TUESDAY.



**THE ROOKWOOD GIANTS MAKE THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE!**

(An amazing episode from the NEW Long Complete Rookwood Story in this issue.)

Amazing news for "POPULAR" Readers below! GRAND  
NEW COMPETITION and SERIAL!



## 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.

**THE CHANGE OF THE CENTURY!**  
**OVER A THOUSAND POUNDS IN PRIZES!**  
**THE BIGGEST FOOTER COMPETITION EVER!**  
**SIMPLE TO SOLVE!**  
**MOTOR BIKES AND MONEY PRIZES!**  
**ALL FOR YOU—TELL YOUR PALS!**

Never yet read of in books, nor dreamt of in dreams! That's a solemn fact. Nobody could ever have come anywhere near imagining the wonderful offer made to readers of the POPULAR in the Grand New Football Competition which starts in two weeks' time!

Watch my Chat for more about this marvellous competition. It has a vivid appeal to everybody. It is easy, and the inducements to take part and show your skill are almost too numerous to mention. Still, I will have a shot at it. Here is the programme:

**"POPULAR" FOOTBALLERS' NAMES COMPETITION.**

**First Prize £100**  
**Second Prize £50.**

Also to be won are the following: 30 Splendid "James" Motor-cycles (complete with lamp, horn, and licence; value of each £60), 10 Two-valve Wireless Sets, 100 "James" Comet Cycles (complete with lamp, bell, etc.), 20 Gramophones, 50 pairs of Boxing-gloves, 100 Match Footballs, 100 Fishing-rods, 6 Riley Billiard-tables, 20 Model Steam Locomotives (with rails), 40 Football Outfits (boots, stockings, shorts, and shirts), 100 Pairs of Roller-skates.

250 Books and other Consolation Prizes!

**THESE MUST BE WON!**

There you have the splendid facts of the new competition. Something to please everybody and fit in with any fellow's taste, whether he is a cyclist, a footballer, a billiards player, or a hobbyist of any sort!

Look out for further details. They will be given in the POPULAR. This is the OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME! Make a note of it, and tell your pals! Nobody ought to stand out of this!

### YES, WE HAVE THE YARNS!

If anyone asked the question why the "Popular" was so universally appreciated, the answer would be that it gives such splendid variety. Take any number you like and look at the contents. Always heaps of attractions, and all of them bright as a heliograph signal. That's where the "Popular" shines! Last week, this week, any old week it is always like that; while as for next Tuesday's bill, it bids fair to beat all forerunners for excitement.

### "THE BLACK REMOVITES!"

By Frank Richards.

Greyfriars heads the tempting list for next week. Don't run off with the notion that there is any specially sinister meaning attaching to the title. Pigment is not always permanent, and, in any event, it is not the colour which makes the man. But, of course, the dark-hued footballers who turn up at Greyfriars create the sensation of the season. They would! It seemed enormously mysterious. Somehow you do not expect ebony centre-forwards or black backs at the old school. Inky stands alone, and he is a horse of another colour, as it were. Still, a jape's a jape, and is always welcome.

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### "THE SCHOOLBOY FIRE-EATER!"

Chunky Todgers has the lion's share in the Backwoods yarn. Asbestos and salamanders come second. But there is also a stranger—a regular tough customer in the person of a Mexican fellow, fresh from the Southern land of big hats, where they wear embroidery down their trousers and gay waistcoats calculated to make Gussy envious. This newcomer who blows in so freshly from Mexico causes trouble, but Frank Richards & Co. attend to it precious carefully that he does not have things all his own way. This is sheer kindness. Nothing so bad as having matters all your own way.

### "A BROTHER'S LOYALTY!"

By Martin Clifford.

Those two big fellows who have popped into Rookwood naturally provoked some laughter. But in next week's story of Jimmy Silver's school you get another side of the picture. The brothers Berkeley, whatever their height may be, are a perfectly natural pair. Prejudice falls flat as a house of cards when one is given a glimpse of real loyalty and nobility, as here, for one brother shows his willingness to sacrifice

himself for the other. This is what makes a laugh die on the lips, and sends the hand to the salute.

### "BAGGY'S UNLUCKY DAY!"

By Owen Conquest.

This is an amusing yarn of Baggy and an apple-pie. If Baggy sported a coat-of-arms, the design would probably show Mr. Trimble couchant on a large pie. You will laugh over this story. And you will also smile at the quaint eccentricities of Bunter in his coming Supplement, which is devoted to the weather. Plenty to write about there!

### "The League of Seven!"

Our magnificent serial is increasing in interest. We are racing on to a climax which is as crisp as it is catastrophic, but the curtain does not drop just yet. There are more surprises in store.

### "MORGAN O' THE MAIN!"

A Grand Pirate Serial!

You would have to travel a long way down the routes of history, with their myriad windings, to discover a more fascinating character than Morgan.

Who was Morgan? To begin with, I had better make it plain that the amazing buccaneer who raided merchantmen and sent treasure-ships plumb to the bottom, after taking all the booty, lived way back in the remote times of the sixteenth century.

"Morgan o' the Main!" is the title of the magnificent new serial which starts the week after next issue of the "Popular."

It is the most sensational story of pirates ever written, and I know you will extend a hearty welcome to such an out-and-out good feature. As I see things, it is only right and proper to give you an inkling of what is to come. For long past I have had this serial in my mind, since many have been the requests that have reached me for a real, slap-up pirate yarn. Here you have it.

Morgan, with his dare-devil career, will capture your attention. He was the terror of the seas in his time, and at one period the whole world trembled at his name. He comes of the Drake epoch, when the fighting on the Spanish Main thrilled those who watched in London, Paris, and Madrid.

I am confident that our new serial will be the biggest triumph yet.

### OF INTEREST TO YOU!

Just in a couple of lines or so allow me to draw your attention to what our Companion Papers are doing this week. The big draw in the "Gem" is a superb story of St. Jim's, called "Ructions on the River!"; the "Magnet" has an easy-winner in its Greyfriars tale, "Disgraced by His Father!"; and the "Boys' Friend" romps home with its spiffing yarn of Jimmy Silver & Co., called "Trouble on the Ranch!" These are among the star turns in the allied weeklies of the "Popular."

### A REALLY GREAT OFFER!

It is a sheer impossibility to do justice to the great Football Competition, particulars of which are furnished above. What I should like to say is that this offer is unique. In these days football is more important than ever, and everybody follows the game with enormous zest. It was suitable enough that the famous story paper which comes out every Tuesday should run a competition which in attractiveness keeps level with the tremendous advance football has made. I am sure that our great competition, with its amazing prize-list, will be received with unstinted enthusiasm. It is no use saying it will send the "Popular" to the top of the tree, since the "Pop" has always been in that airy and enviable position. But one may reasonably forecast the fact that this splendid feature will add thousands of readers to our big roll of supporters, and make the old paper even better liked. As you will see, the prizes cater for the tastes and hobbies of all. The money awards are huge, while those who follow all kinds of sports will find their special interests taken into account.

**Your Editor.**

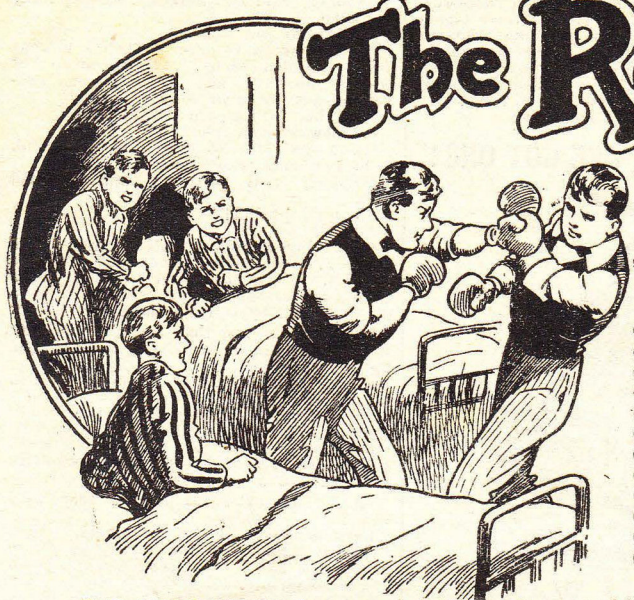
**Just Drop a Line, At Any Time, To Your Old Pal, the Editor!**

**STRANGE NEW BOYS!**

Many strange boys have come to Rookwood, but as far as Jimmy Silver can look back he cannot remember such amazing "arrivals" as the Rookwood Giants. The Berkeley Brothers take the school by storm. They create a profound sensation, and small wonder!

**A SURPRISE FOR JIMMY SILVER & CO.!**

# The Rookwood Giants!



A ripping story of the Chums of the Classical Fourth at Rookwood, and of two newcomers.  
By  
**OWEN CONQUEST.**

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.  
The Giants Arrive!**

**C**OMING to meet the new kids?" Tubby Muffin of the Fourth asked the question. Tubby's ample form fairly filled the doorway of the end study, where Jimmy Silver & Co. were changing into their footer togs.

Jimmy Silver paused in the act of lacing his boots.

"New kids?" he echoed, in surprise.

Tubby Muffin nodded.

"They're coming on the two-forty," he said.

"But we had no idea that any new kids were expected," said Jimmy Silver. "Where did you get the information, Tubby?"

"Old Bulkeley told me. Bulkeley and me are awful pals. He always takes me into his confidence, you know."

"Ha, ha ha!"

The Fistical Four laughed heartily. The idea of big George Bulkeley of the Sixth being the friend and companion of the fat and egregious Tubby Muffin, was vastly amusing.

The fat junior blinked indignantly at his schoolfellows.

"Nothing to cackle at, that I can see," he said. "What I'm telling you is a fact. Old Bulkeley linked his arm in mine, and trotted along the passage with me. He said, 'Tubby, old chap, I've some news for you. A couple of new kids are arriving this afternoon, on the two-forty. They're brothers—name of Barclay, or Berkeley, I'm not sure which. Pr'aps you'd like to toddle down to the station and meet them, dear old man?'"

"I can imagine Bulkeley talking to you like that!" chuckled Lovell. "Matter of fact, I don't believe he told you about the new kids at all. What really happened was this. You were eavesdropping outside Bulkeley's study, and you heard Mr. Dalton telling Bulkeley that these new kids were expected."

Tubby Muffin stared at Lovell in amazement.

"How—how did you know?" he stuttered. "I don't know—I'm only guessing. But it seems that I've guessed correctly!" said Lovell, with a laugh.

The others laughed, too. They well knew Tubby Muffin's propensity for listening at keyholes.

The laughter nettled Tubby Muffin.

"Wish you fellows would stop cackling!" he growled. "You're like a lot of broody old hens!"

"Excuse us, Tubby," gurgled Newcome, "but you make us smile!"

And Newcome "smiled" to such purpose that he might have been heard the length of the Fourth Form passage.

"Now, look here," roared Tubby Muffin

wrathfully. "are you fellows coming with me to meet the new kids, or are you not?"

"Not!" said Jimmy Silver promptly. "We've got something better to do, old porpoise. It's footer practice this afternoon."

"But the new kids will want somebody to take them under their wing—"

"Well, take 'em under yours, Tubby," said Raby. "We want our wings, to fly down to the footer ground with."

"Beasts!" growled Tubby Muffin. "How would you like to arrive at a strange place, with nobody to meet you? Why don't you do the decent thing? The new kids will want feeding—"

"I fancy the boot's on the other foot!" chuckled Lovell. "You're the one who wants feeding, and you'll do your level best to cadge a feed out of the new kids!"

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"Cut off now!" said Jimmy Silver sharply. "We've no more time to waste."

Jimmy's boot was poised in the air, ready to speed the parting guest.

Tubby Muffin took the hint, and promptly rolled away down the passage.

Lovell had hit the right nail on the head when he suggested that Tubby wanted to cadge a feed out of the new boys. That was precisely Tubby's intention. But he wanted two or three other fellows to accompany him to the station, so that they could use their united influence in persuading the new boys to stand treat. If Tubby went alone, he felt doubtful as to whether he would succeed in his object. But with several fellows to back him up, the timid new boys would have to yield to his request.

Tubby looked into Peele's study.

Peele, Gower, and Lattrey, the "nuts" of the Fourth, were there, debating how they should spend the half-holiday. Tubby Muffin's rather piping voice broke in upon their conversation.

"I say, you chaps, there's a couple of new kids arriving on the two-forty. Coming down to meet them?"

"Eh? Why should we?" asked Peele.

"Well, we might be able to get a good feed out of them, you know."

Peele & Co. exchanged glances.

"Something in that," said Gower. "Funds being low, a free feed would come as a boon and a blessing."

"Any idea what the new kids are like, Tubby?" asked Lattrey.

The fat junior shook his head.

"I only know that they're brothers—name of Barclay, or Berkeley."

"Snivellin' little brats, I dare say," said Peele. "They'll start weepin' for their mamma, most likely, as soon as they get off the train. Wouldn't be a bad wheeze to go down an' meet them, an' get them to stand treat."

"Come along!" said Gower, reaching for his cap.

It was past two o'clock, and there was just time to get to the station.

Peele & Co. walked at a brisk pace, and Tubby Muffin waddled beside them.

The train was signalled when the quartette reached the little station of Coombe. Presently it swung into view round a curve, and the four juniors stood waiting expectantly.

The train came slowly to a standstill.

From a first-class carriage, directly opposite the waiting juniors, stepped two fellows.

Peele & Co. gasped and blinked at the sight of them. They were as unlike the traditional new boy as possible. Instead of being "snivelling little brats," as Peele had supposed, they were of gigantic stature. Both were big and burly and broad-shouldered.

But for the fact that they were dressed in Etons, the four juniors on the platform would not have taken them for new boys.

"My only aunt!" gasped Peele.

"Giddy giants, by Jove!" murmured Gower.

"Gog and Magog aren't in it!" said Lattrey.

Peele & Co. felt strangely subdued as the two giants took stock of them. Their original intention of asking the new boys to stand them a feed quickly vanished. They simply dared not make such a suggestion to these huge fellows.

The taller of the two addressed his brother.

"Escort of fags waiting for us, Bob," he said.

"Yes," said Bob, "and I don't quite like the look of them, Bill. The fat kid seems harmless enough, but the other three strike me as being bouchers."

Peele & Co. overheard these remarks, and they flushed crimson. But they dared not protest. The brothers Berkeley—for that was their name—could have wiped the platform with them.

Tubby Muffin had more courage than the others. He advanced towards the hefty new boys.

"J-j-jolly pleased to see you!" he stammered.

"The pleasure's all on your side, my fat friend," said Bill Berkeley. "We can't pretend that we're pleased to see you."

"Oh, really—"

"Why have you come to meet us?" demanded Bob.

"To—to show you up to the school, of course."

"Very good of you. But we know our way about, thanks. It strikes me very forcibly that you had some other motive in

coming to meet us. You hoped to play a jape on us, p'raps, or to squeeze a free feed out of us. Is that so?"

"Nunno!" said Tubby hastily.  
"Sorry, I can't believe you. You say you came to show us up to the school. Well, suppose we reverse the order of things, and show you kids up to the school instead?"

Tubby Muffin blinked at Bob Berkeley in alarm.

"W-w-what do you mean?" he faltered.  
"We'll show you in a minute, when we've arranged for our luggage to be sent up."

The two brothers moved away, and gave instructions to a porter.

Peele & Co. felt very uneasy. They had a premonition that something unpleasant was going to happen to them; and they wanted to bolt. But before they could do so the brothers returned.

"Now, Bob," said the bigger boy, cheerfully, "we'll take a couple apiece."

"All serene, Bill. You'd better manage the fat one, because he'll take some carrying."

The four juniors backed away. Their alarm had grown almost into panic, by this time.

But there was no escape for them.

Big Bill Berkeley bore down upon Tubby Muffin and Peele. He placed a burly arm round the waist of each, and hoisted them clear of the platform.

Bob Berkeley performed a similar manoeuvre with Gower and Lattrey.

Having gathered up the juniors in this amazing manner, the two giants marched through the booking-office, and set off with long strides in the direction of Rookwood.

Peele & Co. wriggled and writhed, but they were pressed tightly to the sides of the fellows who carried them. Face downwards, with their legs thrashing the air, they were borne along, shrilly protesting.

"What d'you think you're doing?" yelled Peele.

"Showing you up to the school, my son!" said Bill Berkeley.

And his brother Bob gave a deep-throated chuckle.

The two giants had set themselves a herculean task—Bill had, at any rate. For he had to carry Tubby Muffin, whose weight was considerable. In fact, Bill was weighed down on one side, owing to Tubby's bulk; and his arm, amazingly strong though it was, soon began to ache under the strain.

On two occasions, Bill Berkeley was obliged to call a halt. His rather heavy face was red with the exertion, but he appeared to be enjoying himself. And the same with Bob.

The arrival of the new boys at Rookwood created a profound sensation; and no wonder!

There were lots of fellows in the quadrangle, and they came rushing up to witness the strange spectacle.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were summoned from Little Side, and they arrived on the scene just in time to see the two giants carrying their human burdens through the quad.

"What the thunder—?" gasped Jimmy Silver, in astonishment.

"Are they really the new chaps, or have Gog and Magog come back to earth?" exclaimed Lovell.

"They're like Goliaths, carrying a couple of Davids under their arms!" muttered Newcome.

The description was an apt one.

For some time, the on-lookers were too amazed to laugh. Like the gentleman in the Floral Dance, they could only stand and stare. And they marvelled at this exhibition of strength, the like of which had never before been seen at Rookwood.

Presently, however, the humour of the situation was borne in upon the spectators; and they broke into peals of laughter.

"Ha, ha ha!"

"This is better than a pantomime!"

"It's a sight for gods and men and little fishes!" gurgled Jimmy Silver.

The brothers Berkeley halted at last, and set their victims upon their feet.

Peele & Co., covered with confusion, and realising that they had been made to look utter fools in public, promptly turned, and fed into the building.

"I say!" shouted Bill Berkeley. "Aren't you going to thank us for showing you up to the school?"

"Ha, ha ha!"

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"Downright ungrateful, I call it!" chuckled Bob.

The two brothers grinned at Jimmy Silver & Co., who grinned back. The Rookwood chums rather liked the look of these giants. And they very quickly got into conversation with them. They discovered, among other things, that the two brothers were the same age—sixteen-and-a-half—though they looked nearer eighteen. The fact was, they had overgrown themselves.

"HI, CHAPS, I'VE GOT ONE!"



## DO YOU WANT A MOTOR-BIKE ?

(see page 2).

"We expected the new kids to be a couple of Tom Thumbs, instead of a pair of giddy Goliaths!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, rather!" said Lovell. "You're well above the stock size at Rookwood, you know. Why, you're taller than Bulkeley of the Sixth!"

"And a jolly sight broader!" said Newcome, with an admiring glance at the towering new boys.

It seemed very strange to Jimmy Silver & Co. that two fellows of that size and age should come to Rookwood as new boys.

As a rule, a new boy was a mere babe of eleven or twelve, and he started his school career in the Second or Third Form. But the brothers Berkeley were not babes; and it looked very much as if they would start at the wrong end, so to speak, by going straight into the Sixth.

The Rookwood chums felt very curious on the subject. But they restrained their curiosity with an effort. Doubtless there was some very good reason why the two brothers had come to Rookwood at such an advanced stage—a reason which Jimmy Silver & Co. would shortly learn.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Trouble With Carthew!

CARTHEW of the Sixth came striding across the quadrangle.

There was a far from amiable look on Carthew's face. And his frown was a faithful imitation of the frown of Jove of old.

The brothers Berkeley, who had been surrounded by a circle of admiring juniors, saw Carthew coming.

"Hallo!" said Bill. "Who might his Highness happen to be?"

"Eh? Oh, that's Carthew of the Sixth," said Raby. "He looks rather rattled about something."

"I believe he saw you fellows carrying those chaps under your arms," said Jimmy Silver.

Jimmy was right.

When the brothers Berkeley had made their sensational arrival at Rookwood, Carthew had surveyed the scene from his study window. He had seen the indignity to which Peele & Co. and Tubby Muffin had been subjected; and he felt that he ought to take action in the matter.

Carthew was a bully and a tyrant, but there were times when he rather liked to pose as a champion of the oppressed. He felt that it was "up to" him to put these gigantic new boys in their places.

The prefect elbowed his way through the juniors, and halted in front of the giants.

"Look here—" he began.

"Can't!" said Bob Berkeley, turning away his head.

"What do you mean?"

"Don't ask us to gaze on such a hideous dial!" pleaded Bob. "We're lovers of beauty, you know, and we can't stand ugliness in any shape or form."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

Carthew went purple.

"You—you insolent lout!" he spluttered.

"Do you know who I am?"

"Nobody that matters, anyway," said Bob.

"I am a prefect!"

"Well?"

"Checking a prefect isn't allowed," said Carthew, "so you'd better mind your p's and q's. It's in my power to make things mighty unpleasant for you. Look here, what do you mean by bullying those four kids?"

"I wasn't aware that we were bullying them," said Bill. "We simply showed them up to the school."

"Well, you'll keep your hands off them in future. You understand?"

"We're not taking any orders from you," growled Bill. "We shall do as we like."

Carthew clenched his hands with rage. He was not accustomed to being spoken to as if he was a mere cipher.

As for Jimmy Silver & Co., they were enjoying the fun.

Carthew glared at the two giants.

"If it wasn't for the fact that you're newcomers, and it's not certain which Form you're going into, I'd take you along to my study and give you both a lamming!" he said.

Bill Berkeley laughed grimly.

"If you laid so much as a finger on either of us, you'd rue it!" he said.

Carthew took that to be a challenge. And he wanted to show the on-lookers that he wasn't afraid of these new fellows, giants though they were.

The prefect took a quick stride towards Bill Berkeley, and struck him across the cheek with his open palm.

"Take that!" he panted.

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked on breathlessly. They wondered what was going to happen next.

What did happen almost scared them.

Bill Berkeley's face went white, save for the livid mark on his cheek. A sudden and violent change came over him. His eyes gleamed like live coals. His huge fists were so tightly clenched that the knuckles stood out sharp and white. The burly giant appeared to have lost all control of himself, and there would undoubtedly have been an ugly scene, had not Bob intervened.

The infuriated Bill was about to hurl himself upon Carthew, when Bob caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, old man!"

Bill tried to shake himself free.

"Hands off, Bob!" he said thickly. "I'm going to smash this cad!"

Bob hung on grimly to his brother's arm.

"Pull yourself together, Bill," he said, in tones of appeal. "Remember what happened at St. Clare's!"

Those words had a sobering effect upon the enraged Bill Berkeley. He unclenched his hands, and drew back a pace.

Bob turned to Carthew.

"Clear off, while you've got the chance!" he said.

Carthew lingered.

"Get out, you fool!" exclaimed Bob.

"When my brother happens to lose his temper, there's no holding him. If it came to a scrap, you'd be half-killed! Go, while you've got the chance!"

Carthew saw that Bob Berkeley was in deadly earnest. And he did the sensible thing. He stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

It was a blow to Carthew's dignity, to have to beat a retreat in the presence of a crowd of juniors. But he had sufficient sense to see that if he tried conclusions with Bill Berkeley, he would come off second best.

When Carthew had gone, Bill recovered his normal composure.

"Thanks for holding me off, Bob," he said. "If you hadn't done, I should have smashed the fellow!"

"I knew it," said Bob. "And I didn't"

"A Brother's Loyalty!"—Next Week's Rookwood Story!

want a repetition of what happened at St. Clare's."

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked interested, and not a little curious.

"I suppose you kids are wondering what did happen?" said Bob. "Well, there's no harm in telling you. You'd have found out the facts sooner or later. May I tell them, Bill?"

"Certainly."

"Well, it's like this," said Bob. "We were both at St. Clare's before we came here. And my brother was expelled, for whopping a junior master."

"My hat!"

"Bill had every provocation," Bob went on. "He never loses his temper unless there's a jolly good reason; but when he does lose it, it's woe-betide the other fellow! This particular junior master was a horrid little snipe. He used to talk to the fellows as if they were dirt—insult 'em up hill and down dale. Bill stuck it for a long time, but one day he lost his wool, and gave this young cub of a master a thundering good hiding!"

"By Jove! I should like to have seen it," said Lovell.

"It was a sight well worth seeing, I can tell you. When Bill gets properly wound up, there's always an exhibition of fireworks! Of course, he was reported to the Head, and got marching orders."

"But what about you, Bob?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"I couldn't stay on at St. Clare's without Bill. We've got such a lot in common, and I should have missed him frightfully. So I arranged with the pater to transfer me to Rookwood."

Jimmy Silver & Co. nodded approvingly. They could not but admire Bob Berkeley's loyalty to his brother.

"Are you fellows coming into the Classical Side?" asked Newcome.

"Yes," said Bill.

"Which Form?"

"Can't say, until we see the Head."

"I expect it will be the Sixth," said Jimmy Silver.

Bill laughed.

"No such luck," he said. "I'm no scholar. That's where Bob scores over me. He's got brains and brawn, and I've got brawn only. I never could make much headway with class-work. I'm weak at history and maths, and hopeless at geography. Why, I'm not even certain that Brussels is the capital of France!"

"Neither are we!" chuckled Raby.

"Ha, ha ha!"

At that moment, the station hack, laden with luggage, rumbled in at the school gateway.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Bob Berkeley. "Here comes our baggage. We'll dump it in the hall for the time being, and then go and interview the Head."

Jimmy Silver & Co. nodded cordially to the two giants, and went back to Little Side to resume their footer practice. They were due to travel to Greyfriars on the Saturday, to do battle with Harry Wharton & Co. And they were eager to do themselves justice. They could generally manage to beat the famous Friars on the Rookwood ground; but at Greyfriars they invariably met with a crushing reverse. They were anxious to break the spell on this occasion, and to register a victory away from home.

"What do you make of the new fellows, Jimmy?" asked Lovell.

"I like them," said Jimmy Silver frankly. "They are hefty giants, and no error, but I don't think they are bullies. Of course, Bill will have to curb that temper of his. If he starts whopping a master at Rookwood, he'll be fired out on his neck."

"By Jove, yes!"

"I don't suppose we shall see much of them, after this," said Newcome. "They're pretty certain to go into the Sixth or the Fifth."

But the Classical chums had the surprise of their lives, when they came in from the footer.

They made the astounding discovery that Bill and Bob Berkeley had been put into the Fourth!

It seemed incredible, but it was a fact.

There was a vacant study in the Fourth Form passage, and the two brothers were engaged in moving their luggage into it.

"You—you don't seriously mean to say that you fellows have been put in the Fourth?" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Bill Berkeley nodded.

"Fact," he said. "The Head put me through my paces, and he was surprised to find how appallingly ignorant I was. I was weighed in the balances, and found wanting. The Head told me I hadn't the intelligence of a youngster in the Second. 'In spite of your age and size,' he said, 'I have no alternative but to consign you to the Fourth Form.'"

"And Bob?" asked Lovell.

"Bob was a brick. He could have got into the Shell with ease, if he'd wanted to—in fact, he could have got into the Fifth. But he wasn't going to desert me. So he pretended to be a hopeless duffer, and we were both pitchforked into the Fourth."

"Oh, good!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Why do you say that?"

"Well, we rather like you, you know. Besides, fellows of your size ought to be jolly useful at footer."

"We used to play at full back for St. Clare's," said Bob. "If you'd like to size up our form, we'll turn out to practice to-morrow."

"Splendid!"

And Jimmy Silver & Co. passed on, leaving the giants of Rookwood to do their unpacking.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**

**A Dormitory Diversion!**

**B**IG BILL BERKELEY and his brother were the cause of a great deal of fun, next day.

They seemed strangely out of place in the Fourth Form-room—a pair of giants among the pigmies, as it were.

Mr. Dalton found Bill very trying. The big fellow's ignorance was truly appalling. He knew next to nothing; nor did he seem at all eager to imbibe knowledge.

The fact was, Bill Berkeley's mind was centred upon one topic—football. Bill loved football, from the great League games down to the smallest school matches. His burning ambition was to play at right-back for England.

Instead of drinking in the words of wisdom which Mr. Dalton uttered from time to time, Bill was wondering whether Aston Villa would be able to beat Burnley, and whether Notts County had a hope against Tottenham Hotspurs.

Mr. Dalton was very patient and long-suffering. But at last he reached the limit of his endurance.

"Berkeley major!" he thundered. "You have been guilty of gross inattention all the morning! Stand out before the class, sir!"

Bill came out of his football reverie with a start. He heaved himself to his feet, and lounged towards the master's desk.

Jimmy Silver & Co. grinned.

The pupil simply towered over the Form-master; and Mr. Dalton's cane seemed to have no terrors for big Bill Berkeley.

"You have shown yourself to be a dullard and a dunce of the densest description, Berkeley major!" said Mr. Dalton sternly.

"I have had to ask you several times to fix your mind on the lesson. I am tired of asking, and I shall now cane you!"

"Go ahead, sir!" said Bill cheerfully.

There was a titter from the class. The situation was decidedly comical—though Mr. Dalton did not view it in that light.

"Silence!" rapped out the Form-master.

"Hold out your hand, Berkeley!"

Bill obeyed.

It really seemed, at first, as if Mr. Dalton would have to mount a form in order to chastise the delinquent. But Bill obligingly placed his hand as low as possible, so that the Form-master would have no difficulty.

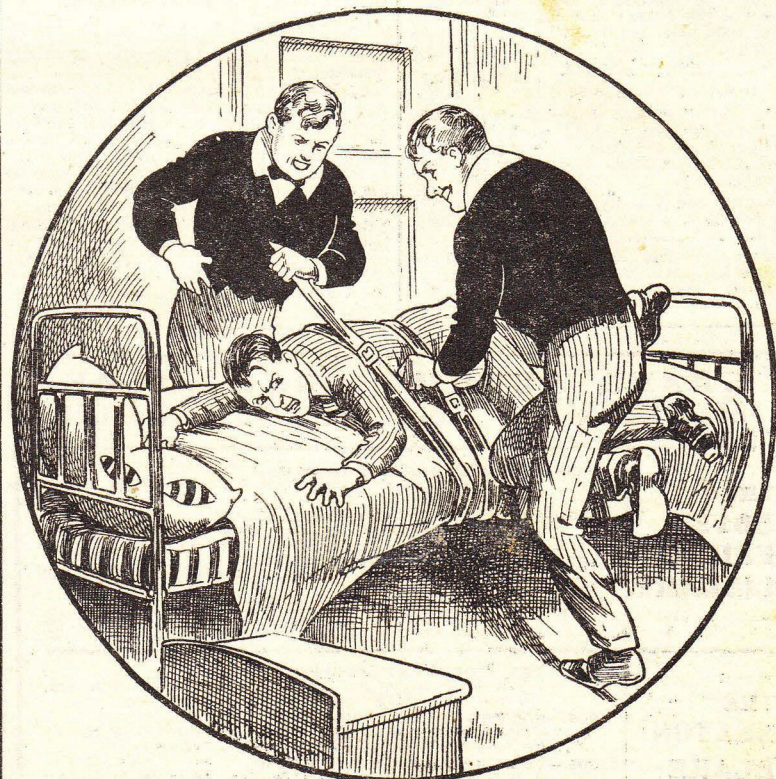
Swish, swish, swish!

Mr. Dalton put plenty of energy into his task. But Bill Berkeley did not turn a hair. His palm was hard and horny, and the cane took little effect.

"Now the other hand!" panted Mr. Dalton.

The dose was repeated. When it was over, Bill glanced innocently at the angry Form-master.

"Have you finished tickling me, sir?" he asked.



**GETTING PAST THE GUARDIAN PREFECT!** The Berkeley Brothers hurled themselves upon Carthew and slung him across one of the beds. Then some stout leather straps were procured, and before the prefect could struggle he was securely strapped to the bed, helpless. "Lie quiet, my lamb!" said Bill Berkeley. "We will not hurt you." (See Chapter 4.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors could not repress their merriment. They simply roared.

Mr. Dalton's face went purple, and he appeared to be in danger of an apoplectic fit.

"Be silent!" he thundered. "If you make any more insolent remarks, Berkeley major, I shall take you before the headmaster!"

Bill went back to his place looking quite pleased with himself. To do him credit, he tried hard to fix his mind on the lesson, after that. But his thoughts persisted in playing truant. When Mr. Dalton asked him where William the Conqueror landed, he replied, "Preston North End." And he gave the astonishing information that King John signed the Magna Charta at Chelsea.

Bob Berkeley, who tried to help his brother by means of subdued whispers, also came under the ban of Mr. Dalton's displeasure.

The two new boys were greatly relieved when the lesson came to an end. But their relief was nothing compared with the relief of the exasperated Form-master. In all his career, Mr. Dalton had never had such a troublesome pair to deal with.

In the afternoon, the two brothers gave Jimmy Silver & Co. a glimpse of their football form.

A practice game was arranged, and the Berkeleys played at full back. Their superior height and weight made them formidable players; but quite apart from this, they were experts in the finer arts of the game.

The two giants never used their weight unfairly. They played a scrupulously clean game, and a very brilliant game at that. They set up a rock-like defence, and the opposing forwards could never break through.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were moved to admiration by the display of the two brothers. "Will you fellows turn out for us against Greyfriars on Saturday?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Yes, rather!" said Bill.

"Delighted!" said Bob.

Jimmy Silver was delighted, too. There had always been a slight weakness in the Rookwood defence, and the inclusion of the two Berkeleys would strengthen the team tremendously.

Conroy and Van Ryn, who usually played at full back, willingly stood down in favour of the two giants.

That evening, in the Fourth Form dormitory, there was quite an exciting diversion.

Bill and Bob brought some boxing-gloves up to the dormitory and announced their intention of having a friendly spar.

"We always have a few rounds before going to bed, just to keep fit," explained Bill. "Do you kids mind if we shift some of the beds? It will give us more elbow-room."

"Go ahead!" said Lovell.

A clear space was formed in the centre of the dormitory, and the two giants donned the gloves and squared up to each other.

The Fourth-formers sat up in their beds to watch the fun.

"Go it, ye cripples!" sang out Teddy Grace. "I'm backing Bill."

"An' I'm backin' Bob," said Mornington. "This is quite an entertainin' affair, by gad!"

"Now they're off!" said Jimmy Silver.

The two brothers were "going it" hammer-and-tongue. Although it was merely a friendly spar, they didn't believe in kid-glove methods. Every blow was a regular "pile-driver."

Bill was having the best of matters. He was taller, and had a longer reach. But Bob was putting up a game and plucky fight.

The onlookers clapped their hands in their excitement. It did not occur to them that the bout might be interrupted at any moment by the entry of Carthew of the Sixth, who had been deputed to see lights out.

Biff! Thud! Biff! Thud!

The tall forms of the boxers swayed to and fro, and many stout blows were given and taken.

Bill Berkeley was on the point of calling a halt, when there was a quick footstep in the doorway, and Carthew appeared on the scene.

"What's the meaning of this?" demanded the prefect. "Drop it at once!"

The bout came to a sudden climax. Carthew scowled at the two brothers.

"I can see that you louts are determined to give as much trouble as possible," he said. "Brawling in the dormitory is strictly forbidden."

The Berkeleys said nothing. They removed their boxing-gloves, and started to undress.

Carthew stood still for a moment, thinking hard. He was wondering how to punish the delinquents. If he reported them to the Head, they would probably be let off, on the ground that they were new boys, and did not know the rules.

Carthew decided that he must punish them himself. He would have dearly liked to cane them; but he remembered the scene in the quadrangle, when Bill Berkeley had lost his temper. Obviously, Bill would never

have allowed Carthew to cane him, prefect or no prefect.

There was only one thing to be done, and Carthew did it.

"You will each take a thousand lines!" he commanded.

"Gee! Can't you make it a million, while you're about it?" said Bill Berkeley.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carthew frowned.

"That's enough check!" he said sternly. "You'll write a thousand lines apiece, and you'll stay in the Form-room on Saturday afternoon and do them!"

"I say! Draw it mild, Carthew!" said Jimmy Silver. "You've no right to squash anybody's half-holiday."

"You shut up!" snarled the prefect. "I've every right to give orders, and I shall expect these orders to be obeyed!"

So saying, Carthew extinguished the light, and withdrew, leaving the juniors to brood over the prospect of playing Greyfriars without the assistance of the brothers Berkeley.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Giants in the Fray!

WHEN Saturday afternoon arrived there was a keen nip in the autumn air, and the conditions were ideal for football.

Jimmy Silver & Co., however, were looking rather unhappy as they changed into their footer togs.

"I suppose we shall have to fall back on Conroy and Van Ryn," growled Jimmy Silver. "No use pleading with Carthew to let the Berkeleys off."

"Afraid not," said Lovell. "Carthew's a beast!"

"The biggest tyrant breathing!" agreed Raby. "I honestly believe we should lick Greyfriars, if only the Berkeleys could come."

"Set your little minds at rest," came a quiet voice from the doorway. "We're coming."

The juniors turned, to behold Bill and Bob grinning at them from the doorway of the study.

Jimmy Silver brightened up at once.

"Has Carthew let you off?" he asked.

The brothers shook their heads.

"Then why do you say you're coming?"

"Because we've made up our minds to come," said Bill. "We're jolly keen on playing against Greyfriars, and ten thousand Carthews wouldn't stop us!"

"No fear!" said Bob.

"But—but you won't be able to leave the school premises," protested Lovell. "Carthew will be watching out for you."

Bill Berkeley laughed.

"You can leave Carthew to us," he said. "We'll deal with him."

The juniors looked grave.

"I say! You can't lay hands on a giddy prefect, you know!" said Raby.

"I'm afraid we must," said Bob Berkeley, with a sigh. "We're not in favour of personal violence, except when absolutely necessary. And it's necessary now."

"But there will be an awful shindy"—said Jimmy Silver.

"My dear kid, we're not soft. We can face the music. Anyway, we're coming along with the eleven. Our footer togs are up in the dorm. We'll pop up and change. Wait for us in the quad."

Before the juniors could raise any further objections, the two brothers had disappeared.

As they went up to the dormitory to change, Carthew of the Sixth made his way to the Form-room, to see if they were carrying out his orders.

Carthew found himself gazing into a deserted room.

"They've defied me!" he muttered. "They evidently intend to go to Greyfriars, against orders. But they shan't—not while I'm here to prevent it!"

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The prefect hurried along to the study which was shared by the two brothers. Again he drew blank.

"I shall find them in the dormitory, most likely," he mused. And he made his way thither.

Bill and Bob were not unprepared for a visit from Carthew. They were expecting it, as a matter of fact. And they smiled rather grimly as the prefect came into the dormitory.

Had he but known it, Mark Carthew was walking into a trap.

"Topping afternoon, Carthew," said Bill Berkeley, affably.

"Simply ideal for footer!" said Bob. Carthew nearly choked.

"Why haven't you obeyed my orders?" he spluttered.

"Because we don't intend to," said Bill. "If you're wise, Carthew, you'll cancel that punishment."

"I shall do nothing of the sort!" hooted Carthew.

"Think again, old top," said Bob. "It'll be the worse for you, if you don't cancel it."

Carthew was fairly fuming.

"You will go down to your Form-room at once!" he commanded.

"And supposing we refuse?" said Bill.

"You dare not refuse! You seem to forget that I am a prefect, and—"

Carthew got no farther.

With dramatic suddenness, the two brothers hurried themselves upon him.

So utterly unexpected was the attack that Carthew was as clay in the hands of the potter. He was slung across one of the beds—it happened to be Bob Berkeley's—and then some stout leather straps were procured, and the prefect was securely strapped to the bed.

Carthew did not submit without a struggle. He lashed out with his arms and legs, but his struggles were futile.

"Lay quiet, my lamb," said Bill Berkeley. "We don't want to hurt you more than necessary."

"Unstrap me!" panted Carthew. "You—you mad fools! You'll be expelled for this!"

The two brothers ignored the prefect's remarks. They completed the strapping operations, and Carthew's lanky form was securely pinioned to the bed.

In vain he appealed to be released. The Berkeleys would only release him on condition that he promised to cancel their punishment. This, Carthew obstinately refused to do.

"Very well," said Bob Berkeley. "Then you'll have to stay where you are till we get back from Greyfriars. Everybody's out of doors this afternoon, and you can yell for help till you're black in the face, but you won't be heard."

"You—you hoodlums!"

Bill and Bob took no more notice of Carthew. Having changed into their footer togs, they quitted the dormitory, closing the door behind them. Then they went down to join Jimmy Silver & Co. in the quadrangle.

A motor char-a-banc was waiting to convey the footballers to Greyfriars.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, as the two brothers came up. "How did you manage to work the oracle?"

"It was simple enough," said Bill.

"You haven't laid hands on Carthew, I hope?" said Lovell anxiously.

"Sorry to shatter your hopes," said Bob, "but we found it necessary to use just a modicum of violence. We've put Carthew to bed for the afternoon."

"W-w-what?"

"If he goes to sleep, the time will pass quite pleasantly," said Bill. "But if he wants to get up, he'll be unlucky. You see, he's strapped down."

"My hat!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. were quite startled. They had sometimes laid hands on a prefect themselves, but only under the direst provocation. And an attack on a high-and-mighty prefect was always regarded very seriously by the authorities.

But the brothers Berkeley seemed to have no qualms. They were eagerly looking forward to the tussle with Greyfriars; and they refused to discuss Carthew any further.

The char-a-banc rumbled through the

school gateway, and swung round into the roadway. Then it sped away on its long journey.

When the footballers dismounted at Greyfriars, Harry Wharton & Co. had a rude shock.

Wharton glanced at the two Berkeleys in astonishment.

"I say, Silver," he said, "are we playing your Fourth Form, or your Sixth?"

Jimmy Silver smiled.

"These two fellows belong to the Fourth," he said. "Sounds absurd, I know, but it's a fact."

"We're somewhat backward in brain development, you see," explained Bill Berkeley, with a grin. "But what we lose on the swings we make up on the roundabouts. You'll find us fairly useful men on the footer field."

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Bob Cherry, of Greyfriars. "Talk about Gulliver among the Lilliputians! You fellows seem to be equipped with a couple of Gullivers."

"Still, size doesn't count for everything, in footer," said Wharton. "Let's get down to the ground."

A big crowd had turned out to see the match. Greyfriars, like Rookwood, was a great footballing school. The Remove had a clever and a dashing side, and were hard to beat on their native heath.

Harry Wharton won the toss, and Greyfriars played with a strong wind behind them. As a result, they were constantly attacking. But they could never drive their attacks home. The brothers Berkeley saw to that.

They played like Trojans.

Time and again, Harry Wharton & Co. swept down the field, passing the ball from man to man with clockwork precision. But always they came up against a big stumbling-block. The burly form of either Bill or Bob Berkeley would loom up, and put paid to their efforts.

The crowd on the touchline stood spellbound. They had never seen such a wonderful exhibition of defensive play.

The Rookwood goalie, Tommy Cook, need not have been there at all, so well was he covered.

Bill and Bob played with a perfect understanding. When one was hard pressed, the other came to his rescue. And the fast and nippy Greyfriars forwards were held in check.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were rarely in the picture. With the wind against them, they could make little headway.

But for the brothers Berkeley, the Rookwooders would have been in arrears at half-time. As it was, the interval came with the score-sheet blank.

"You fellows are putting up a great show!" said Jimmy Silver, his face radiant.

"I can't see Greyfriars bagging any goals this afternoon," said Lovell. "You chaps can put their forwards in your pocket."

Bill and Bob were smiling happily. They

were thoroughly enjoying their first game in the Rookwood colours.

On the resumption, the wind dropped, and the conditions were equal for both sides.

The second half was practically a repetition of the first. The Friars attacked continuously, only to be balked by the brothers Berkeley.

Once in a while, the Rookwood forwards broke away, but they found the Greyfriars defence very safe. Johnny Bull and Tom Brown, the full backs, were not in the same street with the Rookwood giants. All the same, they were hefty tacklers and strong kickers.

The game looked like fizzling out in a goalless draw. Such a result would not please Greyfriars, for they were out to win. Neither would it please Rookwood, for they also were out to win.

"It's about time somebody bagged a goal!" remarked Bill Berkeley to his brother. "Our forwards don't seem to be able to make much headway."

"Better have a shot yourself, Bill," said Bob.

"I mean to!" was the grim reply.

Greyfriars set up a desperate attack. Harry Wharton was going clean through on his own, when Bill Berkeley raced across and took the ball from his toes.

Bill ran forward a few yards; then he took a most mighty kick, which sent the ball soaring to the other end of the field.

The Greyfriars goalie ran out to save, but the ball pitched in front of him, and bounced over his head into the net.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

The Rookwood players surrounded Big Bill Berkeley, and almost hugged him in their delight.

It was seldom, indeed, that a full-back ever scored a goal, except from a penalty-kick. But Bill Berkeley had accomplished the seemingly impossible, and his wonderful goal had given Rookwood the victory.

Greyfriars struggled gamely to the end, but they could not get on terms. And Jimmy Silver's eleven won a remarkable match by a solitary goal to nil.

The Rookwooders were entertained to tea at Greyfriars; and then the charabanc bore them back to their own school.

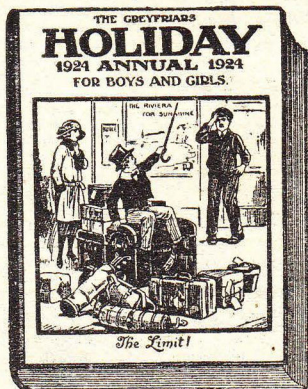
What would happen when they got there? Had Carthew gained his freedom? And, if so, had he reported the conduct of the brothers Berkeley to the Head?

These were questions that remained to be answered. But it seemed pretty certain that, whatever had happened, there were breakers ahead for the Rookwood Giants!

THE END.

(Next week's amazing story of Rookwood is entitled: "A Brother's Loyalty!" Make sure you get it, boys!)

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# THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN.

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**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.  
**TRAVERS**, a soldier of fortune, who has thrown in his lot with Monmouth.

**HOW THE ADVENTURE STARTED!**

It was in the year of 1685 that the Duke of Monmouth made a bid for the throne of England, and landed his few followers at Lyme Regis in the month of June.  
The band of conspirators, the League of Seven, who had plotted for many months for the cause, had left the mystery house in London and journeyed down to Dorset to meet the coming duke. Full of hope, and dreaming big things, they recruited men from the farmers and labourers of the West.  
The news of the rising reached Whitehall very quickly, and Lord Churchill gathered

his drilled legions about him, ready to march upon the advancing rebels.

The two armies met at Bridport, and later at Bridgwater, and then Sedgemoor.

Dick Trevor and his comrades had been in the thick of the fighting, and had been very fortunate to come out unscathed. Sir Anthony Trevor, his uncle, had been plotting to get rid of his nephew for many days with the help of his rascally underling, Colonel Mike Burke. But Dick had escaped from these perils without a scratch, aided by an Anabaptist named Martin Hart.

The battle at Sedgemoor is terrific, ghastly. The rebels are defeated, and the Duke of Monmouth captured. The League, now reduced to six in number—for Travers has been killed in action—escape, and make their way to the coast with the Anabaptist, Martin Hart. Near the town where they expect to charter a vessel to take them to Wales, Hart leaves them, with instructions to meet a certain sea-captain, Mizzen, who will help them.

As they leave the good fellow, they see, in the far distance, a cloud of dust arising on the road. It is Colonel Kirke's "lambs" still in chase.

(Now read on.)

**The Escape—Bad News.**

**A** KNOT of fisherfolk and seafaring men were standing grouped together, talking excitedly among themselves, and they all turned at the clatter of hoofs as Dick Trevor and his comrades rode into Watchet.

"Surely," said one of them—a short, square-faced man, with a voice that seemed to come from his boots—" 'tis the Duke of Monmouth, and wounded!"

He came close to Harry Lavender, and looked hard at him, with great significance. "Ah, since you are so free with names, my good fellow," said Lavender, "what is your own?"

"My name is John Mizzen!" grunted the square-faced man.

"Then, from that name, you should be a seaman," said Lavender, who was by now finding it very hard to speak.

"That be I, zur, and yonder is the tightest craft that puts out of Watchet."

"We shall see that, Master John Mizzen," said Captain Lavender very sternly, "for she must put out in five minutes by my watch! Draw your swords, gentlemen, and if there is any resistance cut these men down!"

"Not a man comes nearer!" growled Gilbert.

John Mizzen's face assumed an air of astonishment and fear, as the bright blades flashed in the sunshine and pistols showed their ugly noses.

Harry Lavender's face was convulsed with pain, and he was almost reeling with weakness, but his voice rang stern and strong in a last effort.

"We are desperate men," he said. "The chase is hot after us, and if you will not put us over to the Welsh coast yonder, we must make what shift we can, and you will lose your boat. Sergeant!"

Peter Pouch wanted no second bidding, but took the matter in his own hands, and propelled John Mizzen to the quayside with a great show of violence.

The skipper accepted the position, and tumbled into the sloop.

"Bear me witness, friends!" he cried, looking up at the seamen, who gathered in an awestricken mob, and were now joined by the women from the neighbouring cottages. "I do this thing against my will, and these gentlemen must answer for it!" "Friend Mizzen," said Harry Lavender, who had clambered down the steps, and leaned heavily on the taffrail, "we shall pay you well for your pains."

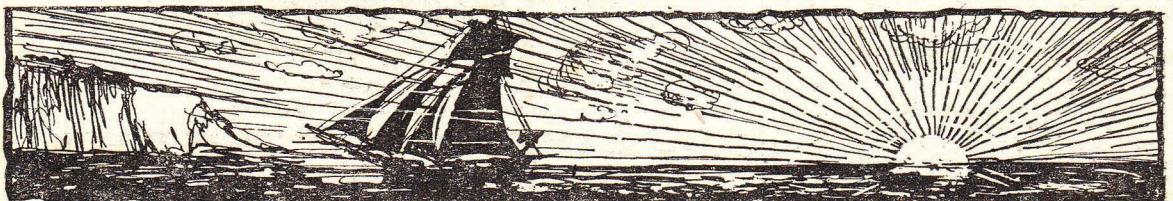
"God bless the Protestant duke!" cried a sympathetic wife, and the cry was taken up by the others.

"Hush, good folk, for your lives, unless you would have your town burned and your homes desolated!" said Lavender, as the boat began to move. "I am not the duke. Heaven grant he may fall among such gentle-hearted people, poor man!"

The boat was gathering speed by now, as the breeze caught the hastily run up sail, and the distance began to widen between the fugitives and the shore, until they were beyond pistol-shot.

Still no redcoats appeared, and they looked at each other, silently questioning.

"I can read the riddle," whispered Ned. "And I, too," replied Dick. "That brave fellow Master Hart has led them on a false scent. I only hope that Beauty will





serve him as well as she served her old master!"

And Dick Trevor turned aside with trembling lips.

"And now, sirs," said John Mizzen, when the sails had filled, and the good craft was drawing away into the open water with a strong breeze astern, "where must I land you? Cardiff, Swansea, Milford? 'Tis all the same to me."

A draw of strong waters had revived Harry Lavender, and with Captain Daventry, Gilbert, and Dick, he held a serious council.

"The first danger is passed," said Harry Lavender. "We have a moment's breathing space, and upon our next move depends everything."

"We must perforce leave England," said Daventry, gazing moodily at the receding coast of Somerset. "I, for my part, shall take service with Louis of France, but until we are all safe I intend to stay with you."

"I am of the same mind, friend," said Gilbert, sadly following Daventry's gaze across the water.

Harry Lavender's eyes were bent upon the deck, and he only raised them as John Mizzen came over to them, cap in hand.

His ear had been taking in the story of Sedgemore from Peter Pouch, and being an Anabaptist like Martin Hart, his sympathies were all for the lost cause.

"Gentlemen all," said John Mizzen, pointing over the starboard side, "yonder vessel is owned by my neighbour, Israel Hazelwood, plying between Watchet and Bristol, and I take it from his running a course that he wishes speech with me. Perchance, he hath news, since he is from Avonmouth."

"You mean, good fellow, that 'twere better we were not seen—eh?"

"Your honour grasps my meaning," replied John Mizzen.

The six fugitives lay down under the gunwale, and in something less than half an hour the two ships hailed each other.

They heard the flap of sails, and the swish of the waves under the counter of the other craft, as her skipper brought her to, and then they listened anxiously.

"Ahoj, John!" hailed Master Hazelwood. "Put back, man—put back; there is great trade coming to our port. The rising is over, and mighty rewards to all who will help capture the rebels. They fly to all the seaports, and we can carry them straightway to Bristol. 'Twill be better than the slaves, friend John."

"A dirty trade, Israel, to my thinking," bellowed John Mizzen through his hands. "Aught of Monmouth himself?"

"Dirty, if you like, John, but money in it," replied Master Hazelwood, somewhat sourly. "Ay, the duke has been taken, and 'twas Sir William Portman who did it. So five thousand pounds is lost to some poor man. They found him at Ringwood, in Dorset, and he goes to London straightway; we had the news as I sailed."

A loud cry went along the deck of the Good Heart. 'Twas well the wind was blowing as it did else the mercenary, Master Hazelwood, had certainly heard it.

"Whither go you now, John?" he hailed, as Mizzen put the helm over to avoid the two boats grinding.

"On my own business, Israel Hazelwood, and a better one than making money out of other folks' misfortunes," replied the master of the Good Heart, his deep voice like the low notes of an organ, as he hauled upon the sheet.

The two boats forged on their respective courses, and the League looked blankly from one to another, dismay and sorrow on every face.

"What now, friends?" said Daventry, in a hushed voice, when the silence had become oppressive.

Harry Lavender put his hand to his bandaged head, and looked sharply at them.

"It seems to me that there is but one thing for us," said Dick, on whom his eye rested.

"And that?"

"To make our way to London, and try if we cannot help the duke, for if ever man wanted friends about him, 'tis he!"

"Give me your hand, boy," said Harry Lavender; "you have read the thoughts in my own mind, though, alas! that mind is not of great use to anyone now."

"You will recover your strength ere long," said Gilbert encouragingly. "And yours has been the moving brain among the League, Harry. We are sadly thinned in numbers, but something may be done, so to London be it, and that soon. James will lose no time, and the axe is doubtless sharpening now!"

John Mizzen approached them, cap in hand.

"Doubtless your workshops will be moved at the news of yonder rogue," said he. "I am here to listen to your commands."

"Good fellow," said Captain Lavender. "Tis true that we have changed our plans, and would now get on to London without delay."

The skipper took his chin in his horny hand, and looked away into the wind's eye.

"I will set you ashore beyond the Avon River," said he. "They will not look for fugitives on the other side of Bristol."

"And how soon?"

"Should this breeze hold I can run into a certain creek I wot of before sunset," said John Mizzen. And he returned to the helm which he had left in charge of one of the sailors.

The breeze held tolerably well, and without incident, other than the presence of a king's ship near the island of Steepwold, which had necessitated Master Mizzen standing over to the opposite coast. Evening found them running in under a flat shore, on whose green banks peeped the roofs of several farmsteads among the foliage.

The sun was setting, and everything was mellow in the evening light.

"This is the place," said the worthy sea captain. "I put you on yonder spit of marsh, and from thence you can make way in safety, though I fear me you must fare afoot, since 'twould rouse suspicion if you tried to buy horses so near to Bristol City, which is but twelve miles away."

Half an hour later they stood on the shore, and raised their hands in token of

adieu to the sturdy man who had refused all payment, saying, "No; I have plenty of this world's goods, in spite of the king and his laws. You saved the life of my kinsman, Martin, and no matter what you may be, for I do not ask your names, I have shown you that an Anabaptist has a heart under his coat; and now I will get me off on the ebb, and may you escape the hand of the tyrant, though you seem bent upon entering the lion's jaws."

**Sergeant Pouch Shows Himself to be a Man of Infinite Resource.**

"TAKE my arm, old fellow," said Captain Daventry to Harry Lavender, as the little party turned their backs to the shore, and struck inland.

The dusk was coming down, shrouding the country with sombre shadows, and the beetles hummed in their drouing flight.

"I am but an incumbrance to you," said Lavender sadly. "My wounded head will betray us, and 'twere better to leave me by the roadside for all the good I shall be."

Sergeant Pouch overheard the words as he and Ned walked behind them.

"Sir," said Peter, "if you can but keep the road for a mile or so, I will furnish the means of carrying you forward, so that you shall be no drag upon our pace."

"I thank thee, Peter," said Lavender, with a sad smile; "and your words give me fresh heart. I know you of old, and for a sharp wit I never met your like, so do as you will. 'Twill be better than most men's best."

After this Peter, who had whispered to Ned, passed no gate without looking over it, and presently, spying a stack of straw in the corner of a field, he bade the others slacken their speed, which, indeed, was not great, and he and his son vaulted over, and disappeared.

When they returned, it was with a stout straw-band, which they twisted as they

**AN ENEMY SIGHTED!**



The old sea captain came running up to the fugitives. "Gentlemen, yonder vessel is owned by a friend of mine, but it would be very dangerous for you to be seen," he said. "You must all get away out of sight!" (See this page.)

went, and half a mile farther on the sergeant called a halt.

"Necessity knows no law, captain," said Peter Pouch. "My ears and nose tell me that in this meadow here horses are grazing. You shall be mounted in ten minutes."

Without waiting for a reply, the two Pouches crept through the hedge, and the wounded man sat down to rest, Dick Trevor, Gilbert, and Daventry keeping careful watch in the lane.

There were sounds of a scurrying gallop from the meadow, and one low whistle.

Dick thought of that night when they herded the horses of Farmer Cox above Bridport, and he clenched his fists as the recollection of the cowardly way Grey of Werke had betrayed the cause. But his thoughts were interrupted by Ned Pouch's head suddenly pushing through the hedge, and saying, with a merry chuckle:

"Master Richard, will you search for a gate in the lane? I've caught a black filly that will carry the captain famously!"

The gate was soon found, ten gold pieces placed on one of the posts to recompense the farmer for his loss in some measure, and the fugitives proceeded on their way.

In this way they proceeded until morning, when, thoroughly exhausted for want of food and sleep, they turned off the road, and penetrating into a thick wood, tethered the filly, and sank into a profound slumber.

When they awoke it was broad daylight, and Ned Pouch was nowhere to be found.

"Leave him alone, the young rogue!" said Peter, tightening his belt by way of breakfast. "He hath some scheme in his head for our betterment, I'll be bound, and 'twill not be long before he returns—please Heaven, 'tis with a bottle of good ale, for I am like a hollow dog!"

An hour went by, and another, and still no Ned, and at last the sergeant went with Dick to the edge of the wood, his grizzled brows a little knotted, and his keen eye very watchful.

They were startled when they reached the thinning of the trees to see a considerable village on the other side of a long meadow.

Smoke curled from the chimneys, pigeons circled above the thatched roofs. The orchards were heavy with fruit, and the two homeless fugitives looked at each other with a common impulse.

"Ha, Master Richard," said Peter, with a grimace that did duty for a smile under the circumstances, "there is beef, and bread, and perchance, strong-water yonder, but I see nothing of the rascal, Ned."

Dick was turning many things over in his mind, and felt strangely sick for want of the good things Peter enumerated.

"Stay!" he said, clutching his companion's arm. "Who comes yonder, on the other side of the hedge? By my sword, but 'tis Ned himself, bearing a basket, and with him a little gentleman in a white wig and black knee-breeches!"

They hastened through the undergrowth, keeping out of sight of the village, and bounced out suddenly upon the pair, who also seemed to court the shadow of the hedgerow rather than the light of day.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the little gentleman, raising his hands.

"'Tis all right, worthy sir!" cried Ned, with a smile of triumph on his brown face. And then to Dick he said, as he tapped the basket: "Good things here, Master Richard. And, best of all, this gentleman is the doctor, who will mend the captain's hurts!"

"Ned, you rascal, your old father is proud of you!" cried the sergeant.

"And he may well be, my good sir!" panted the little gentleman, "for he has wheeled me into doing a thing that may stretch my neck beyond all mending."

"Sir, you earn the heartfelt gratitude of unfortunate men," said Dick, taking off his hat.

"'Tis my calling, young sir, and the unfortunate have ever the first claim upon our assistance," returned the little doctor.

It was a strange banquet in the wood that morning—or, rather, it was high noon, since they had slept far into the day.

They ate as men do who have fasted long, and then Ned brought water from a stream that gurgled near by, while the doctor felt Harry Lavender's pulse, and examined his wounds.

"First, I must take blood from you, sir," THE POPULAR.—No. 246.

said the little man, producing a fleam; and then, when the old-fashioned formula had been duly complied with, he damped the bandages, and exposed the battered head to view.

He looked very grave at sight of the three slashes that traversed the captain's head in almost parallel lines, and, finding things better than he thought them at first sight, he snipped away the hair with his scissors, and washed the wounds with extreme care.

"And now, gentlemen," said he, sitting back upon his heels, after he had bandaged the head, "one thing strikes me." They waited, looking at him anxiously. "How do you expect to pass from the West to London with a spectacle like that?"—and he pointed with his forefinger at Harry Lavender. "The first village constable will arrest you!"

"We must travel only by night," said Gilbert gravely.

"You must do no such thing, sir," said the little doctor. "Don't you know that everything depends on your putting miles and miles between you and the scene of this unfortunate disaster?"

Gilbert shrugged his shoulders.

"Will you add still farther to our obligation, sir, by suggesting a better plan?" "I will, sir," exclaimed the little man. "You and this gentleman are much of a size, I fancy?"

"Well?"

"And, unless my eyes deceive me, you, sir, wear a peruke, which sadly needs the barber's attention, being sadly out of curl. Now do you understand me?"

"Gad, sir, you are a man of genius, or I am a fool!" cried Gilbert, laughing, and taking off the long wig that he wore over his natural hair.

"Perhaps there is something of truth both ways, sir!" chuckled the little doctor; and with deft fingers he adjusted the peruke on Lavender's head, entirely concealing all evidence of the bandage beneath it.

"Capital!" he cried. "But you want something else." And he looked at the black filly that cropped the grass close by.

"I have a saddle and bridle, which are freely yours. And now," he continued, with great earnestness, "if you have gathered from my bearing that I have sympathy with you, gather this also: I am the only man in this parish who would not betray you, and the sooner you are away the better!"

In a little town twenty miles off, Sergeant Pouch bought two more horses—this time in a more legitimate manner than the black filly—and it was decided to continue the journey in two parties, the better to avoid undue suspicion.

#### LOOKING FOR FOOD AND SHELTER



Dick and the sergeant wandered off the main road and through the woods without coming up to the missing Ned Pouch. As they emerged from the trees Peter Pouch started and pointed a finger towards a cluster of roofs in the distance. "That is where we must get food and shelter." (See this page.)

Harry Lavender—whose hurts were mending rapidly, thanks to the care of the excellent little doctor, Gilbert, and Captain Daventry—rode on ahead.

Dick and the two Pouches followed on foot.

The fugitives were not a little thankful that the season was that of summer, for their bed was a haystack's side, with the sky for canopy, and whenever they could buy store of provision without creating suspicion, they did so, rather than run the risk of being questioned in some village tavern.

But at last, after many days and nights upon the road, when their shoes were thin with constant walking, and they had grown very footsore, and were burned black as gipsies by the scorch of the July sun, they approached their journey's end.

"Six against as many thousands," grunted the old soldier, puffing at his pipe, as they rested by a little stream and laved their feet in the cool waters. "I say now, this thing cannot be done."

"Not if it meant force against force, friend Peter," said Dick, "but there are ways and means open to us, if it be not too late."

"Ways and means, Master Richard?" snorted the veteran. "What ways and means are you going to employ against a pitiless king and all the lickspittle nobles who will fawn round him, thinking to curry favour?"

"You think, then, that the king will have no pity?"

"Pity!" exclaimed the sergeant. "None of his family ever had any yet, and this man least of all. No; there are a thousand old scores to wipe out between uncle and nephew, and James will do it all with the stroke of a pen, and the stroke of an axe afterwards."

Peter Pouch knocked the ashes from his pipe, and began to put on his shoes.

"The road once more, Master Richard," said he. "There are yet thirty miles before us, and we must keep our trust with the captains to-night."

They went on, marching silently, and about the middle of the afternoon they came to a village, the inhabitants of which were clustered on the green and discussing some news of moment.

"What tidings, good folk?" said Peter.

"Is the Duke of Monmouth taken?"

"Taken!" cried a burly man in a blacksmith's apron. "Ay, taken this many days, and to die to-morrow!"

The smith, delighted to have so excellent an audience, took Peter by the sleeve, and poured forth the whole story of the rebellion, to which the astute sergeant, with the sweat of Sedgemoor still upon him, listened with apparent surprise.

"Ay," said the smith, "and what think you we wait to see? 'Tis the Lady Henrietta Wentworth, who goes up to bid the duke farewell to-day. They are old friends, and the great coach-and-six is a-horsing now at the stables yonder."

Peter Pouch gazed in the direction indicated by the smith's grimy hand, and saw through the trees some way off the light glinting on the glass panels of a coach.

"My lady cannot save him," he muttered, "but I know not what the captain may have in hand to attempt. 'Twill be early morning before we can reach him on foot, and 'tis worth risking!"

Three dusty, ragged figures slipped through a gate that stood open by the roadside, and crouched low.

The noise of wheels and the tramping of horses came to the ear, as a portly coachman drove my lady's chariot down the lane from the stables, and took it at a walk towards the great house.

On a sudden the six Flanders mares came to a stand as two men sprang at the heads of the leaders.

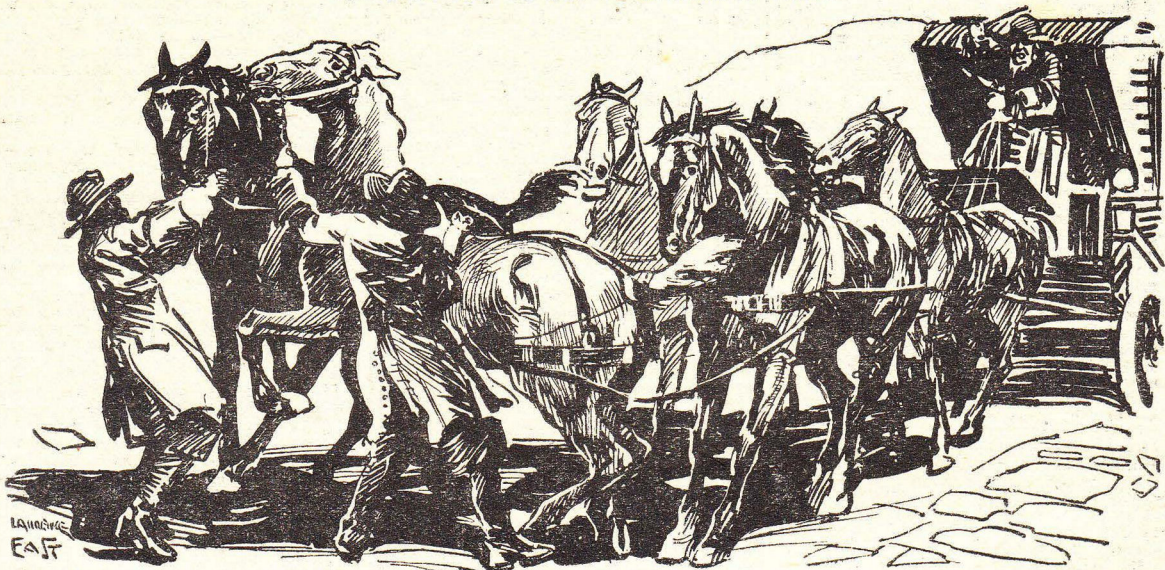
One of them grasped the astonished coachman by the chin, effectually stifling his cry of alarm. The other relieved him of the reins, and gathered them in a bunch.

To snatch the long whip, and hurl the unfortunate driver far into the shrubbery was but a moment's work; and, as the two lads set the leaders free, and rushed to the coach door, Peter brought the lash down on the team with a crack that made them spring into action.

"Inside!" cried Peter. "And shoot anyone down who shall attempt to stay us."

**A Story of Treasures, the Spanish Main, and Buccaneers—Coming Soon!**

THE ONLY WAY TO GET TO LONDON IN TIME!



As the coach came down the lane two figures sprang out of the hedges and flung themselves on the horses. They grasped the reins and drew them to a halt. "Quick!" gasped Peter. "Get inside! I'll settle the driver!" (See page 10.)

Now, my beauties, if there is any heart under your satin skins, I am going to bring it out!"

And once more the long whip cracked like a pistol-shot, and the heavy coach darted like a thing of no weight out of the shrubbery into the London road!

**"Forty-eight Hours to Live!"**

THREE figures slouched along in the darkness without any apparent object or seeming connection one with the other.

Two of the figures were young and slim; the last was of burly build, and, as they passed down the street they maintained a pretty equal distance of about ten strides between them.

Thames Street was a narrow and very unsafe quarter in those days, and the three passengers were not unobserved; but the little groups at the tavern doors and the lane ends made no attempt to molest them, seeing the swords they carried at their sides.

In due course the three figures came out into the open space at the termination of the street—a very historic space, sloping on the one hand to the river, rising on the other to a hill, grass-grown and lovely, and overlooking a stern fortress with a square, white keep in the centre.

The fortress was the Tower of London, the hill was Tower Hill. And many of England's best and worst had made their last earthly journey from the one to the other.

The three mysterious figures paused involuntarily at the sight of the grim turrets, and in the stillness of the July night they could hear the tramp of the guard on the ramparts and the clash of the halberds under the echoing arches.

Somewhere away in the silent city behind that a bell tolled twelve solemn strokes, and the figures remained immovable until the last stroke had boomed out.

They were counting them. And in the grim fortress, half palace, half prison, another figure counted them, too, and muttered, with a sad smile, "Forty-eight hours to live! Great Heaven! is it possible that I have done with life, and that in so short a time a headless trunk will be all that remains of James Scott, Duke of Monmouth?"

"Forty-eight hours to live, Daventry!" whispered a cloaked man to his companion, as they stood in a doorway, gazing at the Tower.

"Those were my own thoughts, Harry," replied his comrade, breathing hard. "But hush! Who comes yonder?"

The two men leant forward, and searched the night with haggard eyes.

"Three of them, Daventry." "They slouch along like thieves!" supplemented Gilbert.

"Three I make it. And they come this way."

There was a pause, and the first of the mysterious Indian file reached the doorway, and passed on.

The second reached it, turning back to look at the Tower as he went; and something in the twist of his shoulders against the sky made the cloaked man grasp his companion's arm.

"Is there a moon to-night?" said a deep voice in the darkness.

"A merry moon to-night!" came the reply. And all three stopped.

"Hush! Not so loud! And thank God we are all well met!" said Captain Lavender, stepping forth and squeezing Dick's shoulder. "Dear lad, we have been hoping against hope, but it is all over now. Follow us cautiously, and we will come to a place hard by where we may be at our ease."

For safety's sake they took a turn over the green, and, doubling back upon their track, entered a tavern, and passed up the narrow stair.

The curtains of the room were drawn, and on the table was food and wine.

"Now, upon my soul, captain," cried Peter Pouch, "with your leave we will eat first and talk presently."

And the three wayfarers sat them down straightway, and ate like men who have fared far, and fared fasting. Dick was the first one to push his plate aside.

"Is it true that he dies to-morrow?" said he, in a flushed voice.

"No; the next day."

"And have you been able to accomplish aught?"

"This much—that a stout ship awaits our bidding five miles down the river, and her boat lies even now within hail of yonder steps," replied Harry Lavender. "As for the rest, 'tis matter for Dame Fortune whether we can carry his Grace with us, or whether we fly alone. A bold stroke is our only chance, and that chance so slender that—"

The captain left his words unspoken, and made a hopeless gesture with his hands.

"He is in the Tower?"

"He is; and the guards are trebled.

And, so far, the Army shows no signs of rising in his favour, which would be the only hope of rescue at the last moment."

"Nevertheless, Lavender," said Daventry, who had been listening to Peter's story of the stolen coach, and how it had borne them into Paneras Fields before they

abandoned it, "I think much may still be done among the taverns. You know the trusty old swords whom peace has thrown back upon the dice-box for a living. And we have gold enough to buy a hundred of them—stout blades, who would sell their souls for a few broad pieces. While there is life there is hope, and we have a few hours before us."

"That seems an excellent plan, Daventry!" agreed Gilbert. "What do you think, Peter?"

"Good!" cried Sergeant Pouch, setting down his glass with a thud upon the table. "Let us raise a force of leather-lungs who shall cry 'Monmouth!' when the moment arrives. Who knows but we may turn the mob so in his favour that we may carry all before us? Such things have been in history, and why not again? I can lay hand on a score of such as we need not a stone's throw from here."

"The old war-dog barks," said Gilbert, smiling.

"Well, to it, boys! Every moment is precious, and our own risks are slight at present, since they will not dream that we have taken up our quarters at the very foot of the scaffold."

"First, though, 'twere well our friends should effect some disguise," said Daventry. "See, yonder is walnut-juice and a chestful of garments, with shears and plaster, and a hundred handy things!"

In a few moments the six conspirators sallied forth, Dick as dark as a gipsy, Ned wearing a flaxen peruke, and old Peter with a black patch over his left eye, and a strip of plaster on his nose that completely altered his appearance.

Peter, by reason of his superior knowledge of the locality, assumed the leadership of the little party, and led them to a riverside inn, at whose door he whispered: "Watch me. If there is danger, we will but enter and out again."

Dick and Ned exchanged glances under the light of the lantern that swung above the door.

Even in the midst of such peril, and all that depended on the next few hours, the adventure of the thing had eaten into their hearts, and their eyes sparkled with keen enjoyment.

Peter Pouch lurched into the tavern with a rolling gait, and, sitting down at a dirty table, called for a glass of schnapps.

The others took possession of a curtained nook which chanced to be empty, and, ordering a flask of canary, sat in silence, watching the movements of their confederate.

Late as was the hour, the tavern was full

Tell All Your Pals that "Morgan o' the Main!" Will Make Some Big Hit!

of revellers, and the one absorbing topic was the approaching execution of Monmouth.

For the most part, the sailors and swash-bucklers were loud in sympathy with the unhappy victim of his own ambition, but one man raised his voice against them.

He was a low-browed, vulgar-looking fellow, whose calling it was difficult to discover from his dress; but he presently proclaimed it with no uncertain voice.

"Spare him, would you?" said the man, laughing coarsely. "And where should I be if you spared every rascal whose proper end is the scaffold? Answer me that!"

"And who the eternal thunders are you?" grunted a battered old seaman, who bore marks of the Dutch wars upon his face. "Who are you that the death of a gallant gentleman should weigh one way or 'other?"

"Who am I, curse ye? If you don't know me now, old salt, you will when I hang you in chains for a pirate! Didst never hear of Jack Ketch? That's my name, and 'tis by my hand that Jimmy Scott will die, my boys—by this hand before you on the table, and which I will shake freely with any of you, for I am not proud, though the office of public executioner is as old as that of the King himself."

Instead of accepting the doubtful honour, the rest of the company shrank from such close proximity with the ruffian, and, one by one, they got up and left the tavern, pursued by the derisive laughter of the ruffian.

He looked across at Peter Pouch, who, however, avoided his eye, though his shoulders had taken upon them a certain squareness, which was a certain sign that Peter was very much on the alert, and meditating something.

He raised his head a few minutes later, and gazed searchingly at the man, but, the tavern door opening, he cast a swift glance at the newcomer, drew his breath in, and sank his face into his arms, which were resting on the table.

Sir Anthony Trevor had entered the room.

#### Sir Anthony Again!

**N**ED POUCH, whose seat commanded a view of the tavern door, instantly extinguished the candle that dimly lighted the recess in which they sat, and drew a curtain across the entrance.

"When your uncle has two feet of steel beneath his short ribs, 'twill be better for us all!" he whispered to Dick.

The conspirators had laid hands upon their swords when they saw Sir Anthony enter, but the hands fell away again on a second glance.

The baronet was a hunted man!

His clothes were disarranged with hasty travelling, he was unshaven, and very white, and his eyes sought every object in the low, dim room, as if afraid it might start up and arrest him in the King's name!

He looked at Peter, and dismissed him as asleep; the drawer snored at the farther end of the apartment, and the only intelligent being upon which his terrified eye lighted was Jack Ketch, the public hangman!

Master Ketch, sober enough to note the abject fear in Sir Anthony's every movement, and base enough to take any advantage of that fear which might put money into his own pockets, blinked at him without speaking.

The ruffian had not seen the League in the alcove, having been occupied with the discussion on the unhappy man who was the author of all these cross-purposes; so that a very remarkable situation presented itself in the smoke-darkened, quaint interior of the riverside tavern.

Sir Anthony's hand closed upon a half-emptied goblet of strong waters—such was his necessity—and drained the contents at a gulp.

"My friend," said he, "as you are a frequenter of this place, I take it you are a mariner; or, at any rate, one having some acquaintance with the water?"

"I will wager to know the right end of a rope as well as any man alive!" said Master Ketch, winking.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated the baronet, sinking on to a stool. "I have pressing need of a ship to France. My affairs, my business, or, rather, 'tis the business of others in which I am greatly concerned—demand that I should be in Paris without delay. If you can tell me of a captain who is leaving for a French port, I will pay you well for your pains!"

Master Ketch closed his bloodshot eyes until they were almost extinguished.

"Might I ask, sir," he said, jerking his thumb in the direction of the Tower, "whether your affairs or your business—or whatever in the name of sin you may call them—have to do with the gentlemen yonder? You know who I mean. Ha, ha! The mud on those fine riding-boots never came on to them in Middlesex; but I think I can name the county. Shall I say Somerset at a venture? I think we'll say Somerset—eh?"

Sir Anthony glanced over his shoulder in terror.

"Hush, man—hush! It matters not to you, and, if you will have your jest, I cannot prevent it. But I am in sore need, and here is gold in earnest."

He laid some coins on the table, and Jack Ketch rang them solemnly before placing them in his pouch.

"Have you any more?" he said, opening

one eye to the full. "Because"—and he let his great paw fall upon Sir Anthony's wrist—"unless 'tis worth my while to keep a silent tongue, 'twill pay better to wag it in a certain quarter you wot of! You are a rebel, and you've been out with Monmouth, and the sooner you put a strip of salt water between yourself and King James the better for you. Am I right, or am I wrong?"

"You are a scoundrel!" exclaimed Sir Anthony, glaring desperately at him.

"We'll wipe out that insult upon payment of five guineas!" said Jack Ketch, grinning. "No man shall affront a paid servant of the Crown in my hearing without pains and penalties. For the present you are a rebel, and it rests with me whether I—I mean whether you die the death, or pay through the nose!"

Sir Anthony Trevor always knew when he was beaten, and generally managed to wriggle when it came to making terms.

"You are a miserable hound," he began, "but—"

"That will be another five guineas!" interrupted Master Ketch. "You may call me all the objectionable creatures that ever went into Noah's Ark an you will, but there will be a small payment when we come to the settling! You were about to say?"

"That I have one hundred pounds on my person, and half of that sum is yours when you set me upon a ship!" said Sir Anthony sternly.

"Only a hundred?"

"I have said!"

"Item, one 'scoundrel'; item, one 'miserable hound!' Sixty pounds, my rebel, and 'tis a bargain! How do I know there are not five hundred guineas offered for your head?"

"Carry it to the king and see what you get for your pains!" said Sir Anthony, with a sneer.

"So be it," replied Ketch. "On the day after to-morrow, at six of the evening, I will convey you on board a craft that ships anchor from Wapping, and you will pay me the money."

"It is a bargain!" said Sir Anthony Trevor, trying to withdraw his hands.

But the other held them fast.

"Gently—gently!" said Ketch. "I have no guarantee that I shall see thee again, and you will be safer here than elsewhere, for your own sake. I will show you to a snug room above, where you will be well looked after and remarkably well guarded, since I carry the key in my own pocket!"

And, so saying, he took Sir Anthony's arm with a strength beyond the baronet's resistance, and led him to the stairs.

(Another splendid instalment of this grand serial next Tuesday, boys. It is the most thrilling instalment yet, so don't miss it.)



JACK KETCH BEFORE THE LEAGUE! An incident from next week's instalment!



Supplement No. 144.

Week Ending October 6th, 1923.

## A TEMPORARY TRIUMPH!

By A. E. Lovell.

**T**UBBY MUFFIN doesn't know the first thing about geography. If you were to ask him where the Scilly Isles were, he'd say, "Somewhere near Colney Hatch." And he'd inform you that Land's End was at the North Pole.

Tubby's ignorance is so profound that we felt really sorry for him when the geography exam. came along. We had visions of Tubby making a hopeless mess of it, and getting into hot water with Mr. Dalton. We even offered to give Tubby a hand with his geography before the exam. came off, so that he might avoid the wrath to come.

Tubby, however, loftily declined our help.

"It's quite all right," he said. "I shall win the geography exam. hands down, without the assistance of duffers like you."

"Why, you fat chump," roared Jimmy Silver, "you're as ignorant as a babe unborn on the subject of geography!"

"Oh, really, Silver—"

"Where's Canada situated?" demanded Jimmy.

Tubby Muffin frowned.

"You needn't try to pump me for information," he said. "I object to other fellows picking my brains. I know that Canada's the capital of America, but I'm not going to say so!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tubby blinked at us wrathfully, and then he rolled away. And we made no more offers to help him.

In due course we trooped into the Form-room to sit for the exam. It was compulsory. Several fellows would have wriggled out of it if they could, but there was no escape for them.

Tubby Muffin sat by himself in the back row. He had no chance of "cribbing," and we all anticipated that he would come a dreadful cropper.

Mr. Dalton ordered us to draw four maps, on separate sheets of paper, of the British Isles, North America, India, and Australia.

"When you have drawn the maps," he said, "you will fill in the names of

the principal towns, rivers, and mountains. You are allowed two hours for the task."

It proved a fairly difficult job for some of us. We managed the British Isles all right, and Australia wasn't so bad, for it's a fairly easy map to draw. But several of us were stumped when it came to drawing maps of India and North America, and filling in the most important places.

Every now and then our thoughts turned to Tubby Muffin, seated in solitary state in the back row. We imagined he was making a fearful hash of everything.

At the end of our two-hours' task the papers were collected, and we were dismissed.

Mr. Dalton sat up late that night, going through the papers. And the next morning we had the surprise of our lives. For the Form-master gave it out that Tubby Muffin had won the geography exam.

"Muffin's maps were perfectly drawn in every detail," said Mr. Dalton. "I confess I am very surprised. I imagined that Muffin would finish at the foot of the list."

Tubby Muffin fairly revelled in his amazing triumph. But it was a very short-lived triumph.

Mr. Dalton thought it passing strange that Tubby's maps should have been so accurate in every detail; so he began to make investigations. He paid a surprise visit to Tubby's study, and did some detective work. He discovered that Tubby had carefully traced the maps, by means of a sheet of carbon-paper, before sitting for the exam. And during the exam. he had simply inked over the faint blue tracings.

In cross-examination the fat junior admitted all this, and he was marched away to the Head's study for summary chastisement.

Tubby's yells of anguish could be heard at a considerable distance; but we had no sympathy to waste on him. It was agreed on all sides that his punishment was richly merited.

## EARTHQUAKES

can't upset the popularity of the Companion Papers!

## IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By Billy Bunter.

**M**Y DEAR READERS,—There was once a boy poet who wrote:

"History is very eggsiting  
When the reign's one of bludshed and fiting!"

He couldn't have said the same about Joggraphy. Of all the tame subjects we're ever called upon to tackle in class, Joggraphy is the tamest. It is a dull, dry, dreery, dismal, depressing subject. There is nothing to be said in its favor.

What shall it prophet a fellow to know that Portugal is the cappital of Spain, or that Switzerland is an island, or that Mount Everest is the highest peek in Wails? How does it help us to know that the River Thames rises in Yorkshire, and pours itself into the Wash? What bennyfit can we derive from the nollidge that America is situated in New York?

When we grow up, and become tinkers and tailors, or poets and painters, a nollidge of Joggraphy will not help us to succeed in our jobs. Poets sometimes find it a bit useful, but not much. Browning tried to air his nollidge of Joggraphy when he wrote:

"Hamelin town's in Brunswick,  
By famous Hanover city."

But that isn't poetry. It's more like a Joggraphy lesson!

Although I hate Joggraphy, and my four fat subbs hate it with equal fervor, I thought it would be a good idea to have a Special Joggraphy Number, if only to show our kontempt for the subject.

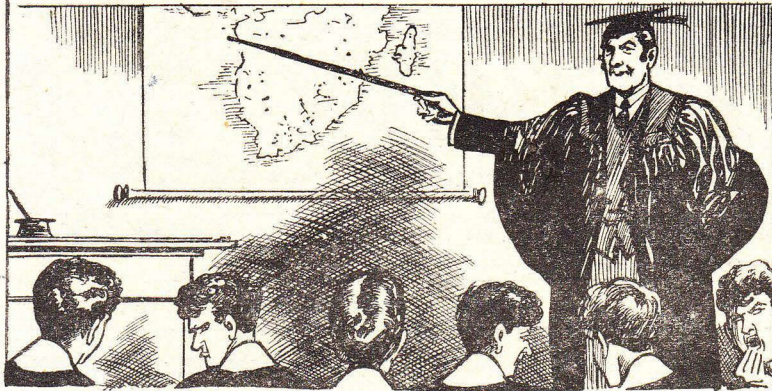
I don't agree at all with the methods of modern education. Instead of teaching us Latin and Greek and Joggraphy—all of which will be useless to us when we leave schol—why don't they teach us how to prepare a lobster salad, or make an apple dumpling, or something useful like that? A nollidge of kookery is never out of place, but a nollidge of Joggraphy is not the slightest use! At any rate, those are the honest sentiments of your plump pal,

YOUR EDITOR.  
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(Supplement 1.)

Keep in Touch with Billy Bunter! He Will Make You Roar with Laughter!

## Should Geography Be Abolished?



WE GIVE BELOW THE VIEWS OF SEVERAL ST. JIM'S JUNIORS ON THIS SUBJECT.

**TOM MERRY.**—"I consider that Geography is jolly interesting. Not quite so exciting as History, perhaps; at the same time, it's nice to have some idea of how the world is split up. If we travel abroad, we like to know something about the places we are going to visit; and Geography gives us that knowledge. No doubt the slackers and the dunces would like to see Geography abolished; but I can't say I share their views for one moment."

**BAGGY TRIMBLE.**—"What's the good of learning Joggraphy, I should like to know? Unless a fellow intends to travel a lot when he grows up, a nollidge of Joggraphy is no more use to him than a nollidge of shorthand is to a pork-butcher. I think it would be a jolly good idea to cut out the Joggraphy lesson, and have kookery classes instead. If Mr. Lathom sees this suggestion, I hope he will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it!"

**ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY** (in an interview).—"You can tell the weadahs of **BILLY BUNTAH'S WEEKLY** that I am not in favah of Geogwaphy. It's a beastly bore, bai Jove! I stwongly disapprove of, such a subject bein' taught in our schools. I considah that lessons in etiquette, chivalwy, an' good mannahs should be given in place of Geogwaphy. People are becomin' much too unconventional, in my opinion. They should be taught to wecognise the wules, wegulations, an' westwictions laid down by Society. This will do them a lot more good than learnin' that the Danube is the longest wivah in Amewica!"

**ROBERT ARTHUR DIGBY** (winner of the Governors' Exam.).—"Personally, I'm very fond of Geography, and its twin subject map-drawing. They are very easy to master, and are quite interesting. It's surprising how many fellows are ignorant concerning the geography of their own country. I asked Baggy Trimble the other day which was the biggest county in England, and he replied, 'Wales.' Of course, there are subjects which are more important than Geography; but I shouldn't like to see the latter abolished."

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**CURLY GIBSON.**—"i think the chap who invented Joggraphy ought to be frogmarched through the quad, and then ducked in the school fountain, and then made to run the gornlet; and then (if there was anything left of him!) he ought to be given something lingering, with boiling oil in it. Personally i always drop off to sleep when we have Joggraphy. It's a subject that bores me stiff! i think it ought to be dropped—as the resterong waiter said when he was carrying a tray that was too heavy for him! There are lots of other subjects we could learn instead, such as how to rear and trane White Mice; how to Spin a Topp; and how to chuck a good marbel. i hope Mr. Selby will give this matter his Ernest konsideration."

**HARRY MANNERS** (the camera fiend).—"I think we ought to drop Geograpy; And learn that choicer art, Photography!"

## MY WEAK POINT.

By Dick Penfold.

At Greyfriars there is many an artist,  
But I am quite the best and smartest.  
I'm good at drawing people's faces,  
Houses and school, and other places.  
Yet I'm a most amazing chap—  
I simply cannot draw a map!  
I made a lightning sketch of Cherry;  
He said it was delightful, very!  
I drew old Quelchy in his gown;  
He fixed me with a fearsome frown.  
Across my cheek his hand came—slap!  
"Don't draw me, Penfold—draw a map!"

I've drawn Wun Lung, and Squiff, and Toddy—  
In fact, I've cartooned everybody!  
I've made some most attractive sketches  
Of prefects, fags, and other wretches.  
But I've no talent—not a scrap,  
When asked to draw a beastly map!  
I drew a map of England once  
And Quelchy called me dolt and dunce.  
He said my drawing gave him pain,  
It looked more like a map of Spain!

## AN ESSAY ON ENGLAND.

By Sammy Bunter.

**E** NGLAND is a small island off the north coast of the Isle of White. It isn't quite an island, bekwase it's bound on the north by Scotland; but it's a peninsular, which is the next best thing to being an island.

England is bounded on the west by the Bristol Channel, and on the east by the Wash. On the south it is bounded by Portsmouth Harber.

England is split up into forty shires, or counties. The most principle cheef ones are Yorkshire, Hampshire, Barkshire, Kentshire, Surreyshire, and Middlesexshire.

England is full of rivers. The most important one is the Tems, which rises in the Cotswold Hills. I don't know where it goes to bed!

Other famus rivers are the Ooze, the Seven, the Nile, and the Niagara Falls.

England has a cappital, called London, which is rather a big villidge on the banks of the Tems.

Other big towns are Chester, Lester, Harridge, Norridge, Wooster, Gloster, Hartford and Dartford.

The cheef imports of England are frozen mutton, tinned beef, tea, coffy, shoogar, spice, and other kinds of tinned froot.

The cheef eggsports of England have slipped my memmery at the moment, so we'll give them a miss.

The population of England is forty million—about thirty-nine million forriners, and one million true Englishmen.

The highest mountaine in England is Mount Vesoovious, which eggsploodes every now and then; but they never feel the shock in this country—only in Italy.

The cheef seaports of England are Liverpool, Friardale, and Pegg; and the cheef inland towns are Southsea, Southend, and Southport.

England is a very plezzant country to live in, and I wouldn't swop it for Scotland, Wails, Timbuctoo, or any other forrin country.

The most famus publick school in England is Greyfriars; but there are'nt many English fellows there. We have a Chinee, and an American, and an Indian, and a Frenchman, and all sorts of funny people. The next new kid to arrive will probably be a Red Indian tribesman!

I have now told you all that I know about England; and I eggespect I shall be snowed up with letters congratulating me on my wonderful nollidge of Joggraphy!

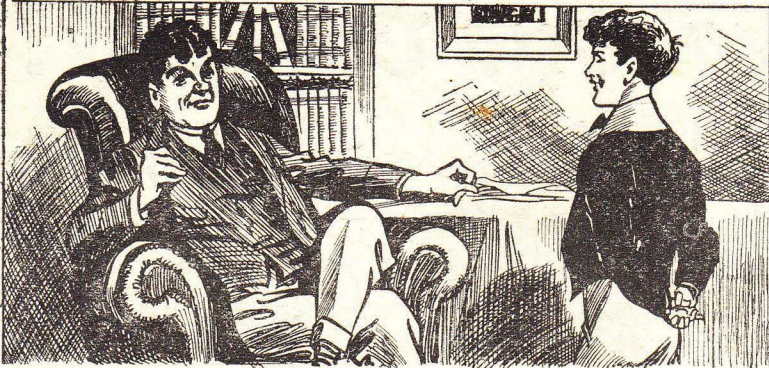
(Continued from previous column.)

I always meet with dire mishap  
Whene'er I try to draw a map!  
Some day they will be glad o' me  
At some big art academy,  
Where I shall teach the kids to draw  
Familiar scenes without a flaw.  
But I shall feel a foolish chap  
If they say, "Teacher! Draw a map!"

[Supplement II.]

Another Humorous Supplement in Next Week's Issue!

# The Geography Exam!



By TOM BROWN.

MR. TWIGG, the master of the Second, made the mistake of his life when he sought assistance from Coker.

This was how it happened. The fags had to be examined in geography, and it was a half-holiday at Greyfriars. The Head had ordered the exam. to take place that day, and there had not been time in the morning. Mr. Twigg therefore decided to examine half his pupils that afternoon, and to get a prefect to examine the other half.

But there was not a prefect to be found. The first eleven had a footer fixture, and Wingate and Gwynne, and all the high-and-mighty ones were absent.

As a last resource, Mr. Twigg came to Coker. He had no idea what an appalling duffer Coker was, or he wouldn't have invoked his aid.

Coker was the dunce of the Fifth; but Mr. Twigg, who never had anything to do with the Fifth, was not to know that.

"Might I trouble you to do me a favour, Coker?" said Mr. Twigg.

Coker was alone in his study. He rose respectfully to his feet as the master of the Second addressed him.

"Certainly, sir," he said. "Anything you like."

"You are prepared to give up two hours of your leisure this afternoon?"

"Oh, quite, sir!"

"That is extremely good of you, Coker. The fact is, I am holding an examination in geography. I propose to split my class into two sections. I myself will examine one section, and I will send the others to you."

"Very well, sir," said Coker.

"I shall be obliged if you will put them through their paces, and ask them a number of questions dealing with geography. Those who answer seventy-five per cent of the questions correctly you will consider as having 'passed.' Those who do not attain that percentage will have failed. Is that clear?"

Coker nodded.

"Then I will send the boys along to you," said Mr. Twigg.

Coker felt uneasy. He was painfully aware of his own limitations, so far as a knowledge of geography was concerned. He had always regarded geography as a tiresome subject, and he

had never taken the trouble to learn it. But he dared not tell Mr. Twigg that he was an ignoramus. The master of the Second had done him the honour of asking him to put certain fags through their paces, and Coker had agreed to do so. He could not back out now.

When Mr. Twigg had departed Coker glanced wildly at the bookcase in the hope of finding a geography book there. But he drew blank. There were history books, and Latin primers, and Greek lexicons; but if that bookcase could have spoken, it would have said: "Yes! We have no geography books!"

There was a scuttling of feet in the passage. The first of the fags was coming to be examined by Coker.

The Fifth-Former groaned. "Come in!" he called, as somebody beat a tattoo on his door.

It was Dicky Nugent who entered. Dicky's face wore a broad grin.

The fag had made up his mind to treat the whole affair as a joke, and to pull Coker's leg for all he was worth. He would probably have to pay dearly for it afterwards; but he didn't mind that.

Coker seated himself at the table, trying to look as much like a learned sage as possible. He frowned at Dicky Nugent.

"Take that grin off your face!" he commanded.

Dicky put his hand up to his face, and drew it away again, as if he had literally taken the grin off. He looked as solemn as an owl now.

"I'm going to put you through your paces," said Coker. "I'm going to ask you twenty questions, and you've got to answer fifteen of them correctly in order to pass."

"Fire away!" said Dicky Nugent. Coker hesitated a moment; then he rapped out:

"What's the capital of France?"

"Monte Carlo," was the prompt reply. Dicky Nugent expected Coker to rise up in wrath and cuff him. But nothing happened. Coker merely made a mark on a sheet of paper and went on with his catechism.

"Where does the River Thames rise?"

"At its source," said Dicky.

"How many counties are there in England?"

"Oh, about a dozen."

"Which is the largest?"

"Rutlandshire."  
 "And the smallest?"  
 "Yorkshire."  
 "What are our chief imports from America?"

"Jazz bands and cream-soda."  
 And so it went on until Coker had asked twenty questions, and Dicky Nugent had given the most absurd answers he could think of.

"I'm in for it now," thought Dicky. "Coker will haul me along to Twigg's study, and I shall get a fearful wiggling."

But the fag's expectations were not realised. Coker was actually eyeing him with approval.

"You've passed," he announced. "W-w-what?" gasped Dicky.

"You've passed," repeated Coker. "Cut along now, and tell the next kid to come in and be examined."

Dicky Nugent tottered out of Coker's study like a fellow in a dream.

Gradually the truth dawned upon him. Coker was so sublimely ignorant of geography that he had taken Dicky Nugent's answers to be correct!

"How did you get on, Dicky?" asked Sammy Bunter, who was the next to go in.

"Passed," grinned Dicky. "And so will you, and so will all of us. Give any old answers to the questions Coker asks you, and he'll take 'em as being correct."

Dicky Nugent's prophecy was fulfilled. Coker examined twenty fags in geography, and every one got through.

When Coker handed in his report to Mr. Twigg, that gentleman was highly gratified.

"I had no idea that my pupils were so well advanced in geography," he said. "In the section that I examined there were six failures. It would appear that all the smartest pupils were in your section, Coker. I am greatly obliged to you for your assistance."

Mr. Twigg was fairly purring with satisfaction.

But if he only knew!

*(Whilst on the question of examinations, I think I can safely say that if you examined all the competitions in the world you will not find one half so interesting, so easy, or which offers so many magnificent prizes as the one which is coming along in this paper!)*

**What Footballer's Name Is This?**



**£500 IN PRIZES**

Of course, you can guess this one. Buy this week's SPORTS BUDGET and see if you can guess the rest. First Prize £250, and many others. You must have a shot at it. Ask for No. 1 of the New FOOTBALL SERIES of

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[Supplement III.]

If You Want a Real Good Laugh, Read the "Weekly" Weekly!

**ANOTHER TOPPING SCHOOL IN THE BACKWOODS YARN!** **TROUBLE FOR FRANK RICHARDS!** Frank Richards is not very surprised when the first offer of a horse for sale arrives, but when several more follow and the sellers are persistent in saying he had asked for them, then he begins to wonder if everyone has gone suddenly mad. But there is someone who could tell him very well the reason for it all—and thereby hangs the tale!

# A Backwoods Comedy!



## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Extraordinary!

**T**RAMP, tramp! Clatter! Lessons were proceeding at Cedar Creek School, when that sudden trampling and clattering of hoofs was heard in the playground without.

"Whoa!" came a deep voice from outside, audible to everybody in the big lumber-school-room.

"Visitors!" murmured Bob Lawless, with a grin. And Chunky Todgers murmured: "Good! I can do with a rest!"

But Miss Meadows apparently was not expecting visitors, and she took no heed of the trampling under the windows.

"Anybody at home?" came the deep voice from outside. "Hi! Show up! Hi, there!" Then Miss Meadows frowned.

A minute later the school-room door opened, and Black Sally put in a shining, ebony face with a surprised look on it.

Miss Meadows glanced at her impatiently. "Gentleman to see Mass' Richards!" said Black Sally.

"What?" exclaimed Miss Meadows. Frank Richards looked up in astonishment. He was certainly not expecting a call during lessons from a gentleman with a string of jingling horses.

Miss Meadows glanced at him. "Richards! What does this mean? You cannot see anyone during lessons, as you know very well!"

"I don't know what it means, ma'am," answered Frank. "I wasn't expecting anyone, of course."

"Tell the gentleman that Richards cannot see anyone till twelve o'clock, when the class is dismissed."

"Yes, missy."

Black Sally withdrew and the door closed.

"What the dickens does that mean, Frank?" whispered Vere Beauclerc.

Frank shook his head.

He hadn't the faintest idea what it meant.

Miss Meadows resumed the lesson; but it was interrupted again in a couple of minutes.

The school-room door flew open, and a powerful-looking individual in huge boots and a Stetson hat tramped in.

He stared round the astonished school-room and touched his big hat to Miss Meadows.

"Skuse me, marm—" he began.

"But I do not excuse you, sir!" said Miss Meadows sharply. "You are interrupting the work here!"

"Sorry, marm, but I've come all the way from Thompson with three hosses for Mister Richards to see."

"What?"

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"Purty critters, every one of them," said the big man. "Where's Mister Richards? Praps you'll let him step out a minute, marm, to look at the critters?"

Frank Richards could only stare. All eyes in the class were turned upon him.

The horse-dealer was scanning the class, apparently trying to pick out "Mister Richards" from among the rest.

"Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

Frank stood up.

"This man says he has brought horses for you to see," said Miss Meadows. "You know perfectly well, Richards, that you should not make such arrangements for lesson time!"

"But I haven't, ma'am!" exclaimed Frank Richards, in bewilderment. "I haven't asked anybody to bring horses here for me to see!"

"Oh, come off!" exclaimed the horse-dealer. "Are you Mister Richards?"

"Yes; but—"

"Step out and look at the critters, then! There's three of them, and they're all first-class."

"But—"

"I guess, Mister Richards, I'm the man to come to for hoss-flesh—Bocus Bill, that's me! And, being in Thompson this morning with hosses to sell, I've mosseyed along to show you the critters."

"But—"

"Sorry to interrupt lessons, marm, but I didn't know the young feller would be at lessons, of course. I came right hyer, as stated. Mister Richards, you step out and look at them."

"But I don't want to buy a horse!" exclaimed Frank.

"What! You don't want to buy a hoss?"

"Certainly not!"

Bocus Bill stared blankly at Frank Richards, evidently surprised.

For some reason or other, which was a mystery to Frank, the horse-dealer had believed that he wanted to buy a horse, that was clear.

"Will you kindly leave the school-room at once?" said Miss Meadows.

Bocus Bill grunted.

"I guess I've humped it hyer from Thompson to sell that young fellow a hoss!" he answered.

"You hear what he says—"

"I hear, marm, not being deaf!" answered the horse-dealer warmly. "But wot about the time it's took me to hustle here from Thompson? If the boy has changed his mind, that's his business, not mine!"

"I haven't changed my mind!" shouted Frank.

"Then you want to buy a horse?"

"No, I don't! I've never intended to buy a horse!"

"You ain't never intended to buy a horse?" roared Bocus Bill, in great wrath.

"No!"

The big man glared at him, and the whip under his arm slid down into his hand. He looked as if he meant to use it.

"Little joke of yours, I s'pose—hey?" he demanded.

"I don't know what you mean!"

"I calculate you know what I mean well enough, young feller-me-lad!" said Bocus Bill darkly.

"Hyer, I've mosseyed all the way from Thompson, and there's my hosses cavortin' outside ready to be looked at. Now you say you don't want to buy a hoss! Well, that gets my goat, and no mistake!"

"There seems to be some mistake," said Miss Meadows quietly. "But you hear what Richards says—"

"I hear wot he says!" roared Bocus Bill.

"And now let him hear what I say! Hyer's me, and there's my hosses, ready for a trade. Good critters, every one of them, and the price reasonable. If the young gent chooses to come and look at them and do business, well and good. If not—"

"Kindly—"

"If not," roared Bocus Bill, "saving your presence, marm, I'm going to lay this hyer whip round him as a warning not to waste a busy man's time with his little jokes!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Frank.

"Now then!" shouted the horse-dealer, striding towards the class. "Do you want to buy a hoss, Master Richards?"

"No!" howled Frank.

"Then here's for your hide!"

Frank Richards stared at the man blankly. Beauclerc and Bob Lawless jumped up to stand by their chum. He needed it if the big horse-dealer got at him with his whip.

But Miss Meadows ran between.

Bocus Bill stopped.

He was a rough fellow, and was very angry, but he evidently did not wish to use rough measures with the schoolmistress.

"Look hyer, marm—" he began angrily.

"Stand back!"

"I'm going to lay my whip round that young jay for bringing me hyer all the way from Thompson for nothing!" roared the horse-dealer.

"There is some mistake—"

"Nary mistake! I suppose the kid knew whether he wanted to buy a hoss or not! And hyer's me, and there's my critters!"

Mr. Slimmey and Mr. Shepherd had drawn near, ready to interfere if Miss Meadows required protection.

But Bocus Bill plainly did not intend to hurt the "school-marm." It was Frank Richards he wanted to get at, and he could not do it with the Canadian girl in the way.

"You will not be allowed to touch Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows indignantly. "Leave the school-room at once!"



Bocus Bill gave Frank a glare over Miss Meadows' shoulders.

"You young raskil!" he exclaimed. "I guess I'd have hided you if it wasn't for your school-marm! All right, missus, I'm goin'!"

And with an angry snort Bocus Bill tramped out of the school-room.

He paused at the door to shake his whip menacingly at Frank Richards, and then disappeared.

The tramping of the horses was heard again in the playground.

Bocus Bill was departing from Cedar Creek with his string of unsold "critters."

### THE SECOND CHAPTER. Rough on Richards!

HERE was a murmur in the school-room.

Every eye was fixed on Frank Richards, who stood with a red and bewildered face.

Why Bocus Bill should have supposed he wanted to buy a horse, and should have taken the trouble to bring a string of "critters" to Cedar Creek for him to choose from, was a matter of deep perplexity to Frank.

His first suspicion was that the man was the worse for drink; but that was clearly not the case. Bocus Bill was sober enough, and he was very earnest and very indignant.

"Richards!" Miss Meadows' voice was very quiet, but very stern.

"Yes, ma'am?" stammered Frank.

"What does this mean?"

"I—I don't know."

"You did not ask the man to call here with his horses?"

"No. I've never seen the man before, that I remember."

"It is very singular," said Miss Meadows, eyeing him sharply. "I cannot understand how such a mistake could arise."

"I cannot either, ma'am," said Frank.

"But I never wanted to buy a horse. My uncle gave me a pony when I came to Canada, and I don't want two."

"Very well; you may sit down, Richards."

Frank sat down, in great bewilderment.

Miss Meadows accepted his word; but she looked a little suspicious, as was natural in the circumstances.

Silence was restored in the class, and Frank Richards received more attention than the schoolmistress for some time.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

There was a sudden sound of hoofbeats in the playground about an hour after Bocus Bill's departure.

Frank Richards started, and Miss Meadows compressed her lips.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Bob Lawless.

"Here he comes back again, I guess!"

"Bother him!" muttered Frank.

The tramping hoofs stopped outside the schoolhouse door.

There was a breathless pause in the school-room.

Black Sally's surprised face appeared in the doorway.

"Well, what is it?" rapped out Miss Meadows, in whose cheeks there showed a spot of red, indicative of rising temper.

"Gen'lman to see Mass' Richards—"

There was a buzz in the class.

"Is it the same man?" asked Miss Meadows.

"No, missy. This Mass' Barker of Cedar Camp," answered Black Sally.

"Here he comes!" murmured Chunky Todgers.

A tall, angular man, with a "lantern" jaw and a goatee beard, appeared behind the negroess in the doorway.

He raised his hat to Miss Meadows.

"I calculate I've looked in at the wrong moment, ma'am," he said politely.

"You certainly have, Mr. Barker!" replied Miss Meadows tartly.

"There wasn't any hour specified, you see. Perhaps you'll let Richards step out a minute to look at the horses, seeing that I've brought them from Cedar Camp."

"Richards!" exclaimed Miss Meadows angrily. "This passes all patience!"

Frank wondered whether he was dreaming.

The visit of Bocus Bill from Thompson was inexplicable, and here was another man from Cedar Camp with horses to sell.

"Franky, you jay!" murmured Chunky

Todgers. "You shouldn't play tricks like this in lesson-time! You'll get scalped!"

"I—I haven't!" stammered Frank.

"What's the galoot come for, then?"

"Goodness knows!"

Chunky Todgers closed one eye sceptically.

It was clear that the fat youth believed that this invasion of horse-dealers was some stunt planned by Frank to interrupt lessons.

It was pretty clear, too, that Miss Meadows shared that opinion now.

Her eyes, usually kind, glittered now as they fixed on the unfortunate schoolboy.

"Well, Richards," she said, "will you tell me now that you did not ask Mr. Barker to call?"

"I—I certainly did not!" gasped Frank.

"I haven't the remotest intention of buying a horse!"

At that statement the agreeable expression faded at once from the angular face of Mr. Barker of Cedar Camp.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

"I don't want to buy a horse!" shouted Frank.

"Why, you haven't seen the critters yet!"

"I mean what I say! I—"

"I guess you can't tell whether you want the critter or not till you've seen it," said Mr. Barker.

"Unless you mean to imply that I ain't the galoot you can do business with."

"I don't mean that—I mean—"

"Your school-marm will let you step out and see the horses. If you've got anything agin my horses, you'll only have to say so. I'm a reasonable man. But if you mean that my horses ain't any good, no how—"

"I—I don't!" gasped Frank. "I mean that I'm not thinking of buying any horses at all!"

"That won't do!" said Mr. Barker, with a disagreeable look. "I'm open to do trade, and I've brought you the critters here from Cedar Camp according. If they don't suit you, tell me what you want, and we may be able to do business."

"I don't want any horse at all!" yelled Frank, beginning to lose his temper. "What the thump have you brought them here for? I don't want to see them and I won't!"

"You won't even step out and look at my horses?" roared Mr. Barker.

"No, I won't!"

"Well, I swear!"

"Mr. Barker—" began the worried schoolmistress.

"Marm," interrupted Mr. Barker, "I guess I've been made a fool of. In your presence, marm, I won't treat that cheeky young rip as he deserves; but I leave it to you, marm, to see that he's punished for wasting a man's morning. I've brought four horses here for him to pick from, and now he tells me he never meant to buy a horse at all. Is that straight goods, marm?"

"Did Richards actually say that he wishes to buy a horse?" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"Certainly he did!"

"I didn't!" roared Frank Richards.

"Mr. Barker's statement is explicit, Richards. I can only conclude that you have been playing a foolish and inconsiderate trick!" said Miss Meadows sternly.

"But I—I haven't! I—" stammered Frank.

"You may rest assured, Mr. Barker, that Richards will be punished for having wasted your time in this manner."

"Very well, marm, I leave it in your hands," said Mr. Barker. "Sorry to have interrupted, marm." And Mr. Barker, with an angry and disdainful glare at Frank Richards, tramped out of the school-room.

He was jingling away with his horses in a few minutes.

Miss Meadows took a cane from her desk.

"Richards! Come here!"

Frank Richards went slowly out before the class.

His cheeks were burning.

It was impossible for Miss Meadows to doubt the plain statement made by Mr. Barker, and it followed that she could not credit Frank's denial.

Her eyes were fixed sternly on Frank's crimson, troubled face.

"Richards, it is clear to me that you have played a foolish trick," she said. "I presume that your object was to interrupt lessons here. You have wasted the time of two men who have come a considerable distance, in the belief that you wished to purchase their horses. I have no alternative, Richards, but to punish you severely."

"I—I haven't—"

"You do not deny Mr. Barker's statement?" exclaimed the schoolmistress angrily.

"Yes, I do," answered Frank. "I never asked him, or anybody else, to sell me a horse."

"You can hardly expect me to believe, Richards, that Mr. Barker has brought his horses here from Cedar Camp and made a false statement, for no reason whatever."

Frank Richards was silent.

There was simply nothing to say to that; and Frank almost wondered whether, in a moment of mental aberration, he might have asked the horse-dealers to bring their "critters" to Cedar Creek.

"Hold out your hand, Richards!"

"But—but, Miss Meadows—"

"That will do! Hold out your hand at once!"

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

It was but seldom that Miss Meadows administered severe punishment; but she felt that this was an occasion for it, and for once she did not spare the rod.

Frank Richards was squeezing his hands dimly as he went back to his place.

During the remainder of morning lessons he was chiefly occupied in rubbing his hands and wondering whether any more horse-dealers would arrive at the school with a string of "critters" to sell.

Fortunately, there were none, and morning lessons finished without further interruption.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Little Hasty!

FRANK, you ass—"

"Frank, you jay!"

Vere Beauclair and Bob Lawless spoke simultaneously as the Cedar Creek fellows came out of the lumber school after morning lessons.

"Of all the duffers!" said Chunky Todgers.

"What did you expect, Richards, after playing a trick like that?"

"Peskiest silly stunt I ever heard of!" remarked Eben Hacke.

"Vellee funnee!" murmured Yen Chin.

"Vellee funnee jokee, and vellee funnee Flanky getee stickiee! Oh, yes!"

Frank looked round at his grinning schoolfellows.

He was not in a pleasant mood.

"You silly asses!" he said hotly. "I don't know what it means, any more than you do!"

"Oh, draw it mild, you know!" murmured Tom Lawrence.

"If you can't take my word—" began Frank angrily.

"Go easy!" murmured Bob Lawless soothingly. "If you say you don't know what it means—seriously—"

"Well, I do!" snapped Frank.

"Well, I'm blest if I can understand it!" said Bob, much mystified.

The chums strolled out into the playground discussing the remarkable happenings of the morning. They were interrupted by a yell from Chunky Todgers.

"Ha, ha! You're wanted, Richards!"

Frank looked round.

"Dicky Bird!" he exclaimed.

"Now we'll see whether it's a Hillcrest stunt!" murmured Bob Lawless.

Dicky Bird, of Hillcrest School, was trotting in at the gates, mounted on his pony and leading a spare pony.

It was so remarkable for Dicky to pay a visit to Cedar Creek leading a spare steed, that the Cedar Creek fellows jumped to the conclusion at once that he had a horse to sell and there was a general shout for Frank Richards.

Dicky Bird nodded cheerily to Frank Richards and Co., seemingly surprised by the laughter round him.

"I reckon I'd trot over, Richards," he remarked. "Anybody else got in first? I couldn't miss lessons of course."

"Ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Yes, there's been two before you, Dicky! But it's all right; Franky hasn't bought a horse yet!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good!" said Dicky Bird. "My poppa has his pony to sell, Richards, and as you want one, I've trotted him over for you to see."

Frank Richards looked at him grimly.

He had no doubt now that the whole affair was a Hillcrest stunt, of which he had been the victim.

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"So you've come to sell me a horse?" he asked.  
 "Yep, if you want to buy one," answered Bird. "You can look at it, anyhow, and make an offer for me to tell poppa. It's a good pony."

You're rather funny merchants at Hillcrest," remarked Frank. "I dare say this is a funny stunt, Bird; but you should have been funny from a distance. It would really have been better for you, old scout!"

"I don't quite see—" "I'll make you see!" answered Frank. He made a rush at Dicky Bird, grasped him by the leg, and had him out of the saddle in a twinkling.

Dicky Bird roared as he came down: "Yoooop!" "Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Bob. "Roll him in the snow!"

"Coilar him!" "Yaroo! Help! Wharrer marrer? Groogh!" spluttered Dicky Bird.

Half a dozen hands were laid on the Hillcrest fellow, and he was rolled in the snow, struggling unavailingly.

"Bless my soul! What is the matter here?" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey, the junior master, hurrying to the spot.

"Only a Hillerest jay, sir!" said Bob Lawless cheerily. "He came here to be funny, so we're giving him some fun!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Yurrgghhh!" came from Dicky Bird, as he sat up in the snow, gasping and spluttering. "Let up! What have I done, you silly idiots? Oh dear!"

"Stop this at once!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey. The grinning schoolboys were willing to stop; even Frank Richards thought that the Hillerester had had enough.

Mr. Slimmey gave Bird a hand to help him out of the snow-bank, and the unfortunate youth wriggled out, spluttering.

"Now, Bird—" began Mr. Slimmey. "I guess they're all gone mad!" gasped Dick Bird. "I came here to sell Frank Richards a horse—"

"What?" shouted Mr. Slimmey. "And—googh!—and they—yow-ow-ow—"

"You shouldn't be so funny, Dicky!" said Bob Lawless, chuckling.

"You silly jay!" roared Dicky Bird wrathfully. "What is there funny about selling a horse? If Richards don't want to buy a horse he can say so, I suppose?"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Slimmey. "This is very odd! Did Richards say he wished to purchase a horse, Bird?"

"Of course he did!" gasped Dicky Bird. "I guess I shouldn't trot the critter here for nothing, should I?"

"I never said anything of the kind!" shouted Frank Richards.

"You did!" yelled Dicky Bird. "I didn't!"

"Not to me personally, of course," snorted Dicky Bird. "I saw the notice you put up in Gunten's Stores at Thompson."

"What?" howled Frank. "Perhaps you were sleep-walking when you did that!" hooted Dicky Bird, gouging snow out of his hair and his ears.

"I—I—I never did!" gasped Frank. "If there's a notice up in the store, I never knew it—and I had nothing to do with it."

"Gammon!"

"It's true, you silly ass!" howled Frank. "I understand now. I suppose it's a joke of Gunten's—the cheeky rotter! What are you cackling at, Bob, you chump?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. And even the grave Mr. Slimmey grinned.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.  
 Called to Account.**

**F**RANK RICHARDS did not join in the general chortle. He was exasperated.

All was clear now as to the mysterious visits of the horse-dealers. It was not surprising that Bocus Bill, and Mr. Barker had supposed that Frank Richards wanted to buy a horse, if there was such a notice up in the store at Thompson.

It was common enough for a notice to be put in the store by any man who had something to sell, or wanted to buy some article. If a citizen of Thompson wanted a fiddle, or wanted to sell a sleigh, he would notify the fact to his fellow-townsmen by means of a notice stuck up by the stove at Gunten's Store.

If Frank Richards had, indeed, wished to buy a horse, it was quite probable that he would have called at the store with such a notice, to be pinned up near the big stove and read by all Thompson.

Such a notice was undoubtedly there, though Frank Richards knew nothing of his name being appended to it.

"It's Gunten, of course!" he muttered to the chuckling Bob. "Dicky Bird took it for genuine, so it's not his stunt."

Bob Lawless nodded. "I guess it's quite bright for Gunten," he said. "What a stunt! Why, if that paper stays there, Franky, you'll have all the horse dealers in the valley calling on you one after another."

"And leading strings of horses for you to select from," chuckled Vere Beauclere. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"It is evidently a foolish joke!" said Mr. Slimmey, smiling. "You had better call at the store as soon as possible, Richards, and have the notice taken down, as it is not genuine."

"I will, sir," said Frank. Mr. Slimmey walked away, still smiling. Dicky Bird was grinning now, in spite of the snow.

"I suppose it's a joke on you, Richards," he said. "But you can't blame a galoot for thinking you wanted a horse, when it's there in black and white. I guess you might have let me explain before you bundled me into the snow, though."

"You can reckon that we take that back," said Bob, laughing. Dicky Bird grinned.

"Give a chap time to speak, next time," he said. "I've brought that blessed pony over here for nothing, anyhow. Sure you don't want to buy a pony, Richards?"

"Quite, thanks!" said Frank. "What I specially want just now is to see Kern Gunten."

He hurried away to the corral for his horse. His chums led out their steeds at the same time, for a ride to Thompson.

It was necessary to get the notice taken down as quickly as possible, if Frank

was not to receive visitors that afternoon, with strings of horses for sale. Dicky Bird was still cleaning off snow when the three chums rode out at the school gates.

"Don't quite slaughter Gunten, Franky," said Bob Lawless, as they rode swiftly along the trail to Thompson. "It's rather a good joke, in a way."

"It's got me a licking from Miss Meadows!" growled Frank. "Never mind; Slimmey will tell her, and she will know that you didn't deserve it."

"That doesn't make my hands feel any better, fathead!"

"Nope; I suppose it doesn't," admitted Bob. "But think how much worse it would have been if Bocus Bill had got at you with that big whip!"

"Br-r-r-r!" was Frank's reply. But he recovered his good-humour during the ride, and was no longer in a slaughterous mood when the chums trotted into Main Street at Thompson.

Outside Gunten's Store a string of horses were tied to a post, and Bob uttered an exclamation as he saw them.

"Here's one of the dealers, by gum!" he exclaimed. "Franky, had you better go in? If it's Bocus Bill—"

"I'm going in," answered Frank. "We ought to have brought a gun!" chuckled Bob.

The chums dismounted and tethered their horses, and walked into the store. Kern Gunten was there, sitting on the counter, being home for dinner from Hillcrest School.

He was talking to a powerfully-built man, whom the chums recognised at once as Bocus Bill.

The horse-dealer had a big whip tucked under his arm, and the tone of his voice as he spoke showed that he was in a wrathful mood.

"Moseying around all morning!" he was saying. "Wasting time! Turning up his nose at my critters, by Jerusalem, without even looking at them! If it hadn't been for the schoolmarm, I'd have larrupped him. You believe me!"

"Like his cheek, I guess!" said Gunten. "He doesn't seem to know his own mind."

Gunten started as he caught sight of the Cedar Creek chums coming in.

Bocus Bill followed his glance; and a thunderous expression came upon his bronzed face at the sight of Frank Richards.

He strode towards the three schoolboys, letting the big whip slide down into his hand.

"By thunder!" he exclaimed. "So here you are!"

Gunten grinned. He had looked alarmed for a moment, and had made a step towards the parlour door; but now he stayed. It looked as if Frank Richards had walked into trouble, and Gunten was prepared to enjoy it.

"You young varmint!" roared Bocus Bill, shaking his whip at Frank. "You don't want to buy a horse—eh?"

"No!" said Frank. "You want a lambasting—eh?"

"Thanks, no!" "Look at that!" roared the angry horse-dealer, pointing with his whip at a paper pinned up near the stove. "You put that up, and then you say you don't want to buy a horse, after a man moseying around all morning!"

Frank Richards looked at the paper. It ran, in large, scrawling letters:

**"WANTED TO BUY!  
 A GOOD HORSE.**

Price no object, for a good animal. Call on Frank Richards, Cedar Creek School, any time."

That was the announcement that had brought Bocus Bill to Cedar Creek, and after him Mr. Barker and Dicky Bird.

The paper was not in Frank Richards' handwriting; but that, of course, made no difference, as his "fst" was not known in Thompson.

"You see that there!" hooted Bocus Bill. "I see it," answered Frank.

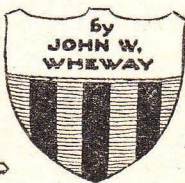
"What does it mean, if you don't want to buy a horse?" demanded the dealer, taking a firm grasp on his big whip.

"That's what I've come here to find out," answered Frank Richards. "I never put up that notice, you see, Mr. Bocus Bill."

"Oh, come off!" answered the horse-

**THE GREATEST FOOTER YARN EVER WRITTEN—**

**FED-UP WITH FOOTBALL!**



Appearing in next Monday's Bumper Issue of our Splendid Companion Paper, "The Boys' Friend."

**JUST YOU READ IT—IT'S A TREAT!**

THE POPULAR.—No. 246.

**The New Boy at Cedar Creek School Causes a Sensation! He's Some Live Wire!**

dealer. "Own up that you did it for a fool joke, to waste people's time!"

"But I did not!"  
 "I guess it's your name ain't it?"  
 "It's my name, but not my writing!"  
 "I guess I don't know nothing about that; but I know I'm going to take it out of your hide, or else sell you a horse!" declared Bocus Bill.

"You're going to do neither," answered Frank Richards quietly. "Keep that whip away, please. I've come here to see the fellow who put that notice in my name—you, Kern Gunten!"

Gunten shrugged his shoulders.  
 "I guess I don't know anything about it," he answered.

"Look here, that chicken won't fight," said Bocus Bill. "You can't get out of a hiding so easy as that, young feller-melad! Moseying around all morning, by gum! You're going to get it, hot!"

And he strode at Frank, grasping the whip.

The next moment he stumbled over Bob Lawless' foot and as he staggered he was grasped by two pairs of hands, and went down on the floor with a terrific crash.

"Yaroo! Let up!" he roared.  
 "Sit on him!" gasped Bob.

Bocus Bill struggled furiously.  
 But he was downed, and Frank Richards ran to the aid of his chums. Burly as the horse-dealer was, the three sturdy schoolboys were too much for him, and he was pinned to the floor.

Gunten looked on, breathless. The affair was taking a turn he did not like.

"Let up!" bellowed Bocus Bill. "My eye! Oh, gum! I'll hide you all round! Let up, I keep on telling yer!"

A crowd was gathering in the doorway of the store, much entertained by the scene within.

From the back room, Old Man Gunten came striding into the store, his fat face red with wrath.

"What does this mean?" he shouted.  
 "How dare you kick up a shindy in my store? You young rascals! Stop this at once!"

"Can't be did, Mr. Gunten," answered Bob Lawless. "The galoot's on the war-path, and we've got to hold him!"

"Let up!" yelled Bocus Bill. "Yaroo! Gerroff my head! I'll limb yer!"

"Stop this shindy at once!" shouted the storekeeper angrily. "Kern, fetch me a stick to lay round these young rascals!"

"Yep!"

Gunten rushed into the back room, and returned with a big stick, which he handed to his father. A burly ranchman detached himself from the grinning crowd in the doorway and strolled into the store. It was Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch.

"Go easy, boss!" said the ranchman, pushing the fat storekeeper back.

"Let me pass—"

"Go easy, I tell you!" answered Billy Cook. And he gave Old Man Gunten another shove, perhaps harder than he intended, and the fat Swiss sat down with a heavy bump and a howl.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**

**Right at Last!**

"**Y**OW!" "Easy does it," said Billy Cook soothingly. "Let's hear what's the row, Mr. Gunten."

"You—you—you—" spluttered the storekeeper.

"Yes, yes; that's all right," said the ranchman. "Never mind letting off steam now. What's the row, Bob Lawless?"

"Look at that notice by the stove," answered Bob. "This galoot wants to pitch into Franky, for fooling him about buying a horse."

"I'm going to skin him!" roared Bocus Bill.

The ranchman glanced at the paper.  
 "Waal, what did Frank put that up for, if he don't want to buy a horse?" he inquired.

"I didn't!" gasped Frank. "Somebody put it up in my name, to start silly idiots bringing me horses to sell!"

"Gammon!" bellowed Bocus Bill. "I'm goin'—"

"Tain't Frank's handwriting," commented Billy Cook, inspecting the paper closely. "You know anything about this, Mr. Gunten?"



**THE TRICKSTER FOUND OUT!** "I'll teach you to waste a man's time, and play tricks on him!" roared Bocus Bill. He grabbed up the whip and made for Kern Gunten. Lash! Lash! Lash! The whip curled round the Swiss boy's legs. "Yarooop!" (See Chapter 5.)

"Eh? Yes. My son put that there," he answered. "He was asked to do so by Richards, I suppose."

Kern Gunten's jaw dropped.  
 He made a retrograde movement towards the back room, but Billy Cook strode forward and caught him by the collar.

"Not so fast," remarked the big cattleman. "We'll hear what you've got to say first about this hyer."

"Let me go!" panted Gunten.  
 "Put it up, did he?" howled Bocus Bill.

"Young Gunten put that paper up, did he, boss?"

"Yes!" snapped Mr. Gunten, quite unaware of the fact that he was giving away the falsehoods Gunten had uttered a few minutes before. "I suppose Richards asked him to."

"I never asked him," shouted Frank; "and he's just denied that he even saw it put up! He said he found it there, and supposed I'd put it up."

Mr. Gunten glanced at his son, puzzled, as the Swiss schoolboy wriggled in Billy Cook's strong grasp.

"What nonsense! Why did you put up the paper, Kern, if Richards did not ask you?" exclaimed the storekeeper angrily.

"It—it was only a joke on Richards!" gasped Gunten, realising that further falsehoods were useless. "Only a joke—"

"You young fool!" snapped the storekeeper. "What do you play such jokes for? However, there is no harm done."

Snort from Bocus Bill!  
 "No harm done! Hyer's a man moseying round all the morning with a string of critters to sell, wasting time, and nearly hiding the wrong galoot for playing him tricks! No harm done! I reckon there's going to be some harm done, boss, and I'm going to do it!"

And he grabbed up his whip and started towards Kern Gunten.

Billy Cook released the Swiss schoolboy.

"Vamoose!" he said briefly.  
 Gunten did not need telling to "vamoose."

He jumped away as Billy Cook released him, and dashed for the parlour door; but the horse-dealer headed him off, and his whip curled round Gunten's legs.

Lash, lash, lash!  
 "Yaroooh!"

There was a fearful howl from the Swiss.

"Stop!" shouted Mr. Gunten.  
 "I guess not!" answered Bocus Bill, and he lashed away, Gunten dodging wildly round the store to escape.

Lash, lash!  
 Kern Gunten hopped, and dodged, and yelled, and leaped, and ran. He seemed to be performing weird gymnastics in his frantic efforts to escape the lashes of the long whip.

The thrashing had come home to the right party at last; and it was being well laid on.

"I guess you won't fool a galoot again in a hurry!" grunted Bocus Bill. "Take that! I guess you'll think twice next time! Take that!"

"Yaroooh! Help!"  
 "And that—and that!"

Kern Gunten made a wild break for the doorway. The yelling crowd opened for him to pass, and he sped into the street.

Bocus Bill dashed on his track, the long whip still lashing; and Gunten's wild yells and the horse-dealer's heavy footsteps died away up Main Street. Bob Lawless wiped his eyes.

"Oh, gum! Gunten's little joke is funnier than he ever supposed it would be!" he gasped. He jerked down the notice from the wall. "Time we got off. Ha, ha, ha!"

And Frank Richards and Co. chortled as they rode away to Cedar Creek, to the accompaniment of wild yells from the distance, where Kern Gunten was still dodging the horse-dealer's whip.

THE END.

(There will be another splendid story of the School in the Backwoods next Tuesday. Do you know there is a 15,000-word story of Frank Richards & Co. in "The Holiday Annual"?)

**YOUR FAVOURITE SCHOOLBOY CHARACTERS!**

Harry Wharton & Co. are in desperate straits. They have been forced to forfeit their pocket-money for the rest of the term, and now their state of impecuniosity causes them to turn to ways and means of "raising the wind!"

**"HARD UP!"**

A Gripping, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton and Co. of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.****Bunter Saves His Bacon!**

**"S** QUASH him!"  
"Jump on him!"  
Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove Form at Greyfriars were angry. In fact, they were very angry.

In the first place, they had tarred and feathered Ponsonby of Highcliffe for a particularly caddish trick, and Ponsonby had sent in a bill for sixteen pounds, damage to his clothes—and a little bit added by way of spite. Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, had paid the money, and was stopping all pocket-money and "tips" until the sum of sixteen pounds was repaid.

To make ends meet Bob Cherry had hit upon the idea of caddying at the golf club for Sir Hilton Popper, a peppery old gentleman who was a governor of the school. Caddy and golfer had had a row—and that was the end of that—method of raising the wind. But Bob had earned two shillings, and that money had gone in buying a little tuck for tea.

But Billy Bunter had found the tuck. The tuck had gone, but Bunter was still in the study when the Famous Five came in to tea. Hence their anger.

They were hungry—very hungry. Tramping over the golf links had given a keen edge to their appetites—which were always very good, anyway. And Bunter had left hardly anything, short as was the time he had had for bolting the feed.

"I—I say, you fellows," mumbled Bunter. "Don't be waxy, you know. I—I came here to do you a good turn."

"You fat toad—"  
"You beastly fat burglar—"  
"You villainous and esteemed rotter—"  
"Slaughter him!"

"I—I say, chuck it, you know! I—I was only giving you a sample of what I—I can do, you know," said Bunter. "I've got a good idea for raising the wind, and I really came here to tell you chaps about it. It's a really ripping idea, and I'm willing to go ro. with you chaps. I am really!"

"Rats!"  
"Rot!"  
"Only some more of his whoppers," said THE POPULAR.—No. 246.

Bob Cherry wrathfully. "Catch Bunter doing anybody a good turn! Collar him!"  
"I—I say, give me a chance, you know!" stammered the Owl of the Remove apprehensively. "I've got a really spiffing idea for raising the wind, and I'm going to take you fellows in—"

"You've taken us in too often, you rotter! Bump him!"

"Hold on!" roared Bunter, as the angry juniors grasped him and yanked him off the study carpet. "I tell you I mean business—honour bright—"

Bump!  
"Yarooooh! I tell you, it's a ripping wheeze—heaps of money in it—you fellows back me up, and we'll make money hand over fist—Ow!"

Wharton looked sharply at the fat junior, Billy Bunter seemed to be telling the truth for once—at least, he was very much in earnest. Wharton made a sign to his followers, and they slammed the fat junior into the armchair.

"We'll give you a chance," said Harry grimly. "If you've really got an idea in your thick noddle, spout it out. If it's any good we'll let you off. If it isn't we'll rag you till you won't know yourself in the looking-glass! Now, pile in!"

"Grooogh!" gasped Bunter.  
"Buck up!" growled Bob Cherry. "The fat beast has only left half a loaf and a bit of toast! What are we going to have for tea?"

"I—I say, you fellows, just listen to me!" said Bunter, recovering his breath a little. "You heard me imitate old Quelch's rasp this morning?"

"Yes, you spoofing porpoise!"  
"That was really only to give you a sample of what I could do," Bunter explained. "You know what a splendid ventriloquist I am—"

"We know what a pilfering spoofer you are!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Buck up with the idea, and don't jaw!" said Wharton. "Mind, if there isn't anything in it you're going to get the ragging of your life! And I don't suppose for a moment that there's anything in it!"

"Well, give a chap a chance!" said Bunter. "Don't you do all the talking, Wharton. You know what a first-class, ripping ventriloquist I am!"

"Come to the point!" roared Nugent.

"That is the point!"

"What!"

"That's the point," said Bunter. "You remember once there was a ventriloquist professor giving a show in Courtfield, and he was seedy, and got me to take his place, dressed up like him. It wasn't much of a success, I admit—"

"What is the fat idiot driving at?" demanded Bob Cherry, addressing space. "I'm coming to the point, fathead! Why shouldn't we get up a ventriloquist show here, at Greyfriars?"

"Eh?"

"I'm a splendid, first-class ventriloquist—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"And we could give a show worth seeing—worth hearing, I mean. With me doing all the business it would be bound to be a success."

"Is that the idea, you fat duffer?"

"Yes, it is," said Bunter, with dignity—"and a jolly good idea, too! I require you fellows to back me up, and I'll do the whole thing."

"You utter ass, the fellows are all fed up with your rotten ventriloquism, and nobody would be ass enough to pay to hear you playing the giddy goat!"

"You don't understand yet. I've thought this idea out," said Bunter loftily. "Some chaps can do thinking—not all—and I'm one of those who can. Now, they say that nobody's a prophet in his own country; the fellows who get fed up on my ventriloquism would pay to go and hear a professional ventriloquist, who wouldn't do the thing half so well."

"I dare say there's something in that," admitted Wharton. "Nobody denies that you can do ventriloquism, you fat duffer! But getting fellows to pay for hearing you do it is a horse of quite another colour."

"They wouldn't know it was me," explained Bunter. "You've got lots of stage props belonging to the Junior Dramatic Society, and you could make me up as a professor, and the fellows wouldn't know me from Adam. Make me a chap with whiskers and beard, in a frock-coat, and there you are! Put up a notice that Professor Something-or-Other is coming here to give a ventriloquist entertainment in the Rag, admission sixpence. Lots of

Buy the POPULAR Every Week and You Will Be Certain of the BEST!

the fellows would come, and we'd divide the profits—ahem!—I mean, you fellows could divide five per cent of the takings, and I'd have the rest."

"You're too generous, Bunty!" said Bob Cherry, with a shake of the head.

"Well, I'm a generous chap," said Bunter. "Always. You deal fairly with me, and I'll deal fairly with you."

"You'd have to if we go co. with you," growled Johnny Bull. "But my opinion is that the idea is silly rot; and we'd better bump the beast for scoffing our tea."

"Hear, hear!"

"Hold on!" yelled Bunter, as Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry and Inky made a movement towards him. "I say, you fellows—Wharton, look here—"

Wharton held up his hand.

"Order!" he said. "We'll think over this. I don't know that there's anything in it, but it's a chance. What Bunter says is right—fellows will pay to see a stranger do things when they won't let one they know bore them with anything of the kind, even if it's better. We could make Bunter up so that the chaps wouldn't know him; and there's no denying that the fat beast can ventriloquise. It's the only thing he can do, but he can do that well."

"Good enough for a show," said Squiff. "What about getting permission for the entertainment, though? The Head would have to know."

"Oh, that's all right!" said Wharton. "We use the Rag for our plays and meetings, and we could ask Quelchly if we can give a ventriloquial show there. That's all we need tell him, and he's bound to say 'Yes.'"

"And if the fellows pay to come in they will get a good ventriloquial show for their money, if that's what they want," said Nugent thoughtfully. "We shall give them value for their money."

"I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "Better than they'd get from the regular ventriloquial entertainers, anyway. You know what a ripping—"

"Yes, we know. Don't tell us again, for goodness' sake!" said Johnny Bull.

"Besides, I could make the doll say all sorts of things that would tickle the fellows," said Bunter. "They wouldn't know me, but I should know them; and I'd make the ventriloquial doll talk to them and say things—I'd keep 'em in a roar all the time. And making a doll talk is much easier than the kind of ventriloquial bizney you've heard me do. The fact is, I'm a ripping—"

"Shurrup! Shall we give it a trial, you chaps?" asked Harry Wharton, looking round. "We'll make all the arrangements, provide all the props, and manage the whole bizney, and Bunter can do the ventriloquism. And all the proceeds will be whacked out equally—divided into seven equal parts among the lot of us."

"If there are any proceeds!" said Johnny Bull sceptically.

"Look here!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "If I'm going to do all the work, I'm going to have more than an equal share. I could do it on my own if I liked, only I've let you fellows into it out of sheer generosity."

"Go and do it on your own, then!" growled Bull.

"Ahem! I'd rather have the help of you chaps, of course. I should want to borrow your stage props, and you'd have to make me up. Then we should want doorkeepers, or the fellows would get squeezing in for nothing, and—"

"Then play the game, you spoofer!"

"I'm willing to let you fellows have half the profits to divide, and I'll take half—"

"You'll take a thick ear if you jaw much more," said Wharton savagely. "But we won't haggle with the beast. Let him take half."

"That's right, then," said Billy Bunter. "You fellows can make all the arrangements, and get the Rag ready, and—do all the work, you know. I'll give the entertainment—the brainy part of the bizney."

Wharton looked round inquiringly.

"Is it a go?" he asked.

"It's a go!" said the Co. unanimously.

"Good! We'll give it a trial. If it doesn't come to anything, it will be a lark, anyway, and no harm done."

"I say, you fellows, it's bound to be a

tremendous success. You know what a ripping—"

"Rats!"

"Ain't we going to bump him for scoffing our tea, then?" demanded Johnny Bull indignantly.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No. You can buzz off and practise your rotten ventriloquism, Bunter, and we'll make the arrangements for the show. The sooner the quicker. We'll give it tomorrow night in the Rag. Get out!"

"But I say—"

"Well, what do you want now?" demanded Wharton.

"There's some more toast—"

With one accord the chums of the Remove hurled Billy Bunter forth from the study. And then they had a frugal—an exceedingly frugal—repast upon the fragments that the Owl of the Remove had not had the time to "scoff."

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**

**Plenty of Audience!**

**T**HE news that Professor Packer was going to give a ventriloquial entertainment in the Rag soon spread. Bunter might have "spread," too, if the fellows got to know he was Professor Packer!

There was quite a crowd outside the doors of the Rag when the Famous Five arrived to open them. Skinner & Co. claimed they had a right to go into the Rag if they wanted to, and tried to get in now. That was as far as they got—trying. There was sixpence to pay for right of entry that night!

Quite a number of sixpences were taken, and the Rag began to fill. Nugent minor and a crowd of the Second Form turned up, but there were more fags than sixpences. Dicky Nugent demanded a reduction for quantity; and as the fags were clustering round the door in great numbers, Wharton decided to let them in for what they could hand out.

The Second-Formers crowded in at the rate of about a penny a time. Then came an army of the Third, led by Tubb and Paget and Bolsover minor. Tubb loudly insisted upon his right to go into the Rag if he wanted to; but Paget handed out threepence, and another compromise was made—Third-Formers going in for twopence each. As Bob Cherry remarked, all was grist that came to the mill.

So far there had been no serious trouble. Skinner & Co. were still waiting outside, like very discontented Peris at the gates of Paradise. But trouble loomed ahead when Coker & Co. of the Fifth came along.

Coker and Potter and Greene of the Fifth Form bestowed patronising smiles upon the Removites who guarded the door.

"Hear you're getting up a little entertainment—what?" asked Coker affably.

"A first-class entertainment," corrected Bob Cherry.

"We're going to give you a look-in—I may call it a leg-up," said Coker. "Of course, it's all rot—hardly worth our attention—but I believe in encouraging the fags."

"Oh, certainly!" said Potter. "We'll look on for a few minutes, anyway."

"You're in the way, Cherry!" remarked Coker.

Bob Cherry grinned cheerfully.

"And I'm going to keep in the way till you've handed out your tanners," he replied.

Coker laughed good-humouredly.

"We're giving you a look-in, just to encourage you," he explained. "Of course, we're not going to pay anything."

"Then we'll manage to do without the encouragement," said Bob. "Next please!"

"Look here!"

"No admittance except on business. Move on, and make room for the quality!" said Bob tersely.

"We're going in!" roared Coker.

"Tanner, please!"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Tanner a time!"

Coker & Co. exchanged a glance. Fitzgerald and Bland of the Fifth joined them. The five seniors pressed forward in a body. Harry Wharton & Co. opposed their entrance manfully, but six juniors were not much use against five big seniors. Coker

& Co. shoved their way through, and marched triumphantly into the Rag, leaving most of the doorkeepers strewn on the floor.

Then there was a rush of Skinner & Co. before the Famous Five were prepared to deal with them. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth followed with a rush, and fellows crowded in in great numbers. Coker & Co. had broken up the defence, and the way was open, and the Famous Five had no chance of lining up across the doorway again. Juniors and seniors and fags crammed in, but the moneytaking was at an end.

"Play the game!" roared Bob Cherry, in great indignation. "We haven't engaged Professor Packer to give you rotters a free show!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shove in, you chaps!"

"Come on!"

"Boot 'em out!" roared Johnny Bull.

But for the six juniors to boot-out that rushing crowd verged on the impossible. The fellows seemed to be taking it as a huge joke, and they crowded in, laughing and cheering. The Rag was getting packed now, but only a minority had paid at the doors. The general opinion was that it was like the cheek of the Famous Five to "bag" the room for their show. They had asked Quelchly's permission; but they hadn't asked the permission of the Fifth, the Shell, the Fourth, the Third, and the Second. Partly, therefore, from indignation at their "cheek," and partly from a desire to rag the Famous Five, the fellows crammed in without paying for admission. Harry Wharton & Co. were quite helpless to stem the torrent, and they gave it up at last, in a considerably dishevelled state.

The audience—those who had paid and those who hadn't—were shouting for the performance to begin. All the seats and forms, arranged with so much care by the Co. to accommodate a large audience, were occupied, and a crowd of fellows were standing. Coker & Co., in the front seats, kept up a steady stamping on the floor, in the style of an impatient "pit" waiting for a performance to commence.

Stamp, stamp, stamp!

"Where's the professor?"

Stamp, stamp, stamp!

"Begin! Begin!"

"On the ball!"

Stamp, stamp, stamp!

"Where's that blessed professor?"

"Faith, and we're waiting for the show!"

"Begin, you bouncers, or we'll rag the place!"

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp!

Bang! Bang!

"My only hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"We shall have the prefects here if this goes on. And three-quarters of the rotters haven't paid!"

"We're in for it!" said Harry ruefully.

"Anyway, the professor can get here now without being spotted."

"Here he comes!"

"Right-ho! I'll announce him."

Harry Wharton went on the raised stage at the end of the room.

"Gentlemen—"

"Begin!"

"Produce your professor!"

Stamp! Stamp! Stamp!

"Gentlemen, the performance is about to commence. The professor is here. Gentlemen are requested to behave themselves, and not play the giddy goat, or we shall have the prefects down on us, and there won't be any performance at all."

"I guess I shall want my tanner back, then!" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"Why, you rotter, you haven't paid at all!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I shall demand a tanner if there's no performance. I ain't coming here for nothing. No, sir—not F. T. Fish!"

"Here comes the professor!"

"Bravo!"

Professor Packer walked into the Rag. All eyes were turned curiously upon him. Nobody recognised Billy Bunter in his new guise. They beheld a middle-aged-looking gentleman, with beard and whiskers and moustaches, in a black frock-coat and white spats, with gold-rimmed glasses, with a

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silk hat in one hand, and a bag in the other. He was an extremely fat gentleman, but in no other point did he resemble the Owl of the Remove.

"This way, professor!" called out Harry Wharton.

The audience cheered the professor as he mounted upon the stage and laid down his black bag upon a table. They watched him curiously as he opened the bag and took therefrom a large doll. It was not much like the usual ventriloquist's doll, the juniors having manufactured it in Study No. 1 with their own hands, and certainly in finish it left something to be desired. But it answered the purpose, and that was enough.

The professor sat down, and took the doll upon his knee.

"Gentlemen," said the professor, in a high-pitched voice, "I have the honour—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Get on with the washing!"

To present to you the celebrated talking doll, Albert, who has performed before all the crowned heads of Europe, America, and the Colonies."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess we don't have any crowned heads over there!" growled Fisher T. Fish.

"Go it, professor!"

"Go it, Albert!"

"Pile in!" roared Coker of the Fifth.

"Not so much jaw! Get on with the washing!"

"Professor," came a squeaking voice, apparently from the talking doll, "I shall not speak this evening unless that little boy is quiet."

"Which little boy, Albert?" asked the professor.

"That little boy in front, with the face like a kite, who is standing up."

"Coker turned crimson.

"Why, you—you cheeky rotter—" he began.

"Sit down! Ha, ha, ha! Shut up, Coker!" came a yell from the rest of the audience.

Coker sat down, and scowled at Potter and Greene, who were grinning. And, some degree of quiet having been obtained, the professor proceeded with his entertainment.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Professor Goes Strong!

"ALBERT!" said the professor, in a deep voice.

"Yes, papa?" came the squeaking voice. Certainly the answer seemed to proceed from the doll, and the audience were satisfied that the professor was a genuine ventriloquist, at all events.

Bolsover major remarked to Bulstrode that this was very different from Bunter's rotten ventriloquism, and Bulstrode agreed that it was.

"Albert, you are going to entertain the young gentlemen this evening."

"Yes, papa."

"You are going to tell the young gentlemen things about themselves, Albert."

"Yes, papa."

Coker snorted loudly.

"What rot!" he said. Coker's temper had been ruffled by Albert's previous remarks. "Of course, it's all spoof. He doesn't know anything about us."

"Order!" called out Squiff.

"Rats!"

"Albert, who is the young gentleman who is talking?"

"He's a silly ass, papa!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" roared Coker, getting up.

"Order!" bawled the audience. "Sit down, Coker!"

"I'm not going to stand—"

"Then sit down!"

"I'm not going to stand any cheek!"

"Yah! Sit down! Order!"

"Tell us something more about the young gentleman, Albert," went on the professor, when Horace Coker had subsided again, with a frowning brow.

"Yes, papa. His name is Broker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He is the biggest ass in the school. He was in the Shell, but his Aunt Judy came down on the Head, and threatened

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to larrup him with her umbrella if he didn't shove Broker into the Fifth."

The audience yelled with delight. It was often said that Coker owed his remove into the Fifth to the influence of his Aunt Judith, who had interviewed the Head on the subject no end of times; though probably the story of the umbrella was quite imaginary.

Coker's face was quite purple now.

"You rotters!" he roared, glaring at the Famous Five. "You've been telling that old donkey things about me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Order!"

"Tell us something more about the young gentleman, Albert."

"He thinks he can play cricket," squeaked Albert. "But he can't play cricket for toffee. He thinks he can play footer. But he can't play footer for toffee. He thinks he can keep his end up against the Remove. But he can't keep his end up against the Remove for toffee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hear, hear!" roared the Removites.

"And he hasn't paid to come in," squeaked Albert. "He has come in on the nod. He can't afford to pay sixpence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Has anyone else come in on the nod, Albert?" asked the professor, deeming it prudent to give Horace Coker a rest.

Coker was in a state of fury, and looked as though he were about to rush on the stage and take summary vengeance upon Albert and the professor together.

"Yes, papa."

"Who is it, Albert?"

"A Yankee bouncer, with a face like a pocket-knife."

"That's you, Fishy!" roared Bolsover major. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is his name, Albert?"

"His name is Codfish, papa."

"Look hyer!" roared Fisher T. Fish, jumping up. "I guess—"

"Sit down!"

"Order!"

"Why hasn't Codfish paid to come in, Albert?" asked the professor.

"Because he hasn't a tanner about him, papa. He says his father is a millionaire in New York, but he ain't."

"He is!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"What is he, then, Albert?" asked the professor.

"He's a pawnbroker, papa."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess my popper ain't a pawnbroker, and you know it, you jays!" howled Fisher T. Fish, shaking a furious fist at the Famous Five, who sat in a grinning row on the stage. "You've put that mugwump up to this!"

"Order! Sit down, Fishy!"

"Can you tell us anything more about Codfish's father, Albert?"

"Yes, papa. He has a face like a knife, just like Codfish's chivvy, and talks through his nose. He is in prison at present, and ought to have been there long ago."

"It's a lie!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish leaped up and made a rush towards the stage. He bounded upon it, only to fall into the grasp of the Famous Five, who closed upon him like one man. Fish went hurtling back among the audience, and landed on the floor with a bump and a yell. He sat up, looking very dusty and dazed.

"Ow! Yow! I guess— Grooogh!"

"Sit down, or get out!" rapped out Harry Wharton. "You didn't pay to come in, Fishy, and you can travel as soon as you like."

"Ow! I guess—"

"Order! You'll be put out if you don't ring off!"

Fisher T. Fish lumped back to his seat. The audience was grinning with delight. Certainly Albert's remarks were very personal, but there was no doubt that he was exceedingly entertaining. Indeed, Temple of the Fourth remarked that it was worth a tanner, and stated his intention of paying after the performance, an intention which he soon had reason to change. For as it happened, Temple of the Fourth was the next victim of Albert's personal remarks.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### Spoof!

"GO it, professor!"

"Pile in, Albert!"

The audience were in great good-humour—with two exceptions, naturally. Coker and Fisher T. Fish couldn't see anything funny in it, but the rest of the crowd thought it very funny indeed.

"Who is the young gentleman with the pink necktie, Albert?"

"That's Temple of the Fourth, papa."

Temple shifted uneasily in his seat.

"They've told the professor my name, of course," he murmured to Dabney. "I'm jolly well not going to stand any rot!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. But he was grinning with anticipation. Cecil Temple of the Fourth Form was somewhat given to "swank." The audience waited with keen interest to learn Albert's opinion of him.

"Is he a nice boy, Albert?"

"No, papa. He is a swanker. He sets up to be a nut. He curls his hair with curling-tongs in his study."

"I don't!" yelled Temple.

"Yes, you do!" squeaked Albert. "And you use a facewash."

Temple looked just now as if he had been using a facewash of the deepest crimson. He sat and glared at the professor and the doll.

"He sings in the choir," went on Albert, "and he practises in his study. When he practises, the other fellows stuff cotton-wool in their ears."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"They don't!" screamed Temple. "It's a whopper!"

"He's got a pair of curling-tongs in his pocket now," went on Albert.

"I—I—I haven't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The audience shrieked. Temple's dandified ways were well known, and more than one fellow had suspected that the beautiful curl on his brow was not due entirely to nature.

"Look here, this is too thick, and I'm not going to stand it!" exclaimed Temple, jumping up. "I'll jolly well knock the stuffing out of that silly doll! I'll—"

"Order!"

"Sit down!"

"Tell us something about those bounders on the stage!" shouted Fry of the Fourth.

"Let's have something about Wharton!"

Harry Wharton gave the professor a warning glance, but the whiskered and spectacled ventriloquist did not seem to see it. He addressed the doll.

"Will you oblige the gentlemen, Albert, by telling them something about the young gentlemen on the stage?" he asked.

"Yes, papa. The chap at the end of the row is named Wild Bull. He owes Bunter of the Remove two shillings."

"Why, you—you rotter!" spluttered Johnny Bull wrathfully. "Owe you two shillings! Why, I—"

"Shurrup!" whispered Bob Cherry hastily. "Don't give the show away, you ass!"

"The next chap is named Bob Cherry. He takes number elevens in boots."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you silly ass!" growled Bob Cherry. "Let my boots alone! Get on with the entertainment, you thumping chump!"

"The next one is Nugent. He is his mamma's darling, and—"

"Shut up, you silly idiot!" howled Nugent.

"The next one is Hurree Skurry Jampot Bang. He is a nigger."

Hurree Janset Ram Singh jumped up.

"I will not permitfully allow the esteemed rotter to call me a nigger!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "I—"

Harry Wharton dragged him back into his seat.

"Don't give it away, Inky!" he muttered. "We'll bump him afterwards for his cheek."

"The bumpfulness will be terrific!" growled the Nabob of Bhanipur, as he reluctantly sat down again. "The cheekful beast is pulling us by the esteemed leg."

"Go it, Albert!" chorused the audience. They were highly delighted to hear Albert "going for" the promoters of the entertainment. The faces of Harry Wharton &

Next Week's Story of Greyfriars Is Entitled: "The Black Removites!"

Co. were an entertainment in themselves now.

"Who is the next young gentleman, Albert?" asked the professor, apparently oblivious of the furious looks and signs of the Famous Five.

"His name is Wharton, papa. He never has any money, and he has got up this entertainment to raise the wind."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What else can you tell us about the young gentleman, Albert?"

"He is hard up, papa. He goes up and down the Remove passage looking for somebody to stand him a feed."

"Why, you—you—" gasped Wharton; but his words were drowned in a yell of laughter from the audience.

Billy Bunter had suffered many personal observations from the Famous Five, and he was taking this opportunity of "getting his own back." And he was doing it very thoroughly, too. He had not finished with Wharton yet. It was scarcely possible for the chums of the Remove to stop him without giving the whole show away, and that, of course, was out of the question. William George Bunter had the whip-hand for once, though the Famous Five were mentally promising him all sorts of things afterwards.

"He pawned his Sunday bags yesterday with old Lazarus at Courtfield," went on Albert's squeaky voice.

"I didn't!" yelled Wharton.

"He's got the ticket in his pocket now!" squeaked Albert.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He owes Bunter of the Remove five bob, and won't pay him. He's jealous of Bunter."

"Why is he jealous of Bunter, Albert?" asked the professor.

"Because there's a certain young lady who thinks a great deal of Bunter, and won't have anything to say to Wharton."

Harry Wharton gave the professor a furious look.

"Shut up, you fat fool!" he whispered fiercely. "If you mention Marjorie here I'll smash you, and chance the consequences!"

But the professor went on unheeding.

"What is the young lady's name, Albert?"

"Marjorie!" squeaked Albert.

Hazeldene of the Remove jumped up in his place, his face very red.

"Look here, you chaps. I'm not going to stand this!" he shouted.

"What the dickens do you mean by bringing my sister's name into your rotten entertainment, I'd like to know?"

"We didn't!" stammered Wharton. "It's that fat beast—I mean—"

"Where does the young lady live, Albert?" went on the professor, enjoying the furious and discomfited looks of the chums of the Remove.

"At Cliff House School, papa. She—"

Albert got no further.

Bob Cherry, forgetting everything else in his wrath, made a sudden rush at the professor. Bob's big fist smote Professor Packer, and the professor gave a roar and rolled over on the stage. The doll crashed on the floor. Albert's squeaking was at an end. The audience roared with laughter; this unexpected development of the entertainment struck them as funnier than what had preceded.

"Hurrah! Go for him, professor!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared the professor, sitting up. "Bob Cherry, you beast—yow-yah! Don't kick me, you rotter! Yow-ow! Help!"

"My hat, I know that voice!" shouted Vernon-Smith. Bunter had forgotten to disguise his tones. In fact, he had no time to think about such things. Bob Cherry was kicking him round the stage, and the ventriquoist was dodging and squirming wildly to avoid Bob's heavy boots.

"Who is it?" yelled the juniors.

"Ow! Yow! Help! I say, you fellows—Help! Keep him off! Ow—yow—wow!"

"Bunter!" yelled the Removites.

"Billy Bunter!"

"It's all spoof! It's Bunter!"

"Yah! What a swindle!"

"Taint a professor at all! It's Bunter!"

The game was up now with a vengeance! All the audience were upon their feet, wildly excited. There was no doubt now that it was Bunter, for in his wild rolling on the stage his hair and beard and whiskers and moustache had come off, and the fat face of the Owl of the Remove was revealed. The make-up was not sufficient to disguise him without the hirsute additions, and everybody in the room recognised William George Bunter.

"Ow! Help! I say, you fellows—Help! Yaroooh! Draggimoff! Yow—ow—ow!"

"Bob, for goodness' sake—"

"Chuck it, Bob!"

"The game's up!" groaned Squiff.

"The gamefulness is up, with an esteemed vengeance!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Under the esteemed circumstances, I may as well give Bunter the kickful recompense he has been asking for!"

"Yow—ow—ow! Inky, you beast—keep off! Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the audience. "Go it!"

The chums of the Remove "went it." Bunter's rascality had spoiled the whole show; the game was up, and the Famous Five meant to make the fat junior wriggle for it. And Billy Bunter was wriggling now. The angry juniors dribbled him round the

stage as if he had been a football. Bunter jumped and dodged, and squirmed and wriggled, but he could not escape six pairs of boots, all busy on him at the same time.

He rolled off the stage at last, and floundered among the audience, where Hazeldene swooped down on him, and started booting him. The fat ventriquoist, howling with rage and anguish, bounded away towards the door. He presented a shocking appearance now. His face was streaming with perspiration, his hair was tousled, the make-up on his features was mingled with dust, his frock-coat was spit up the back. He gasped spasmodically as he fled to the door, and many of the audience helped him along with shoves of their boots as he fled. The dishevelled Professor vanished out of the doorway—it was the Professor's first—and last—appearance on the professional stage, and it could not be by any stretch of the imagination be called a success.

Amid the yells of laughter of the audience, Fisher T. Fish waved his hand and roared:

"It's a swindle! Money back!"

And the other fellows took up the cry.

"It's a swindle! Taint a professor at all! Money back!"

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.  
Not A Financial Success!**

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. looked utterly dismayed.

The entertainment, which had been designed to replenish the exchequer, had been an utter, hopeless, ignominious failure. It had all been Bunter's fault—and the chums of the Remove could have kicked themselves for having entered into any compact with Bunter at all. From a financial point of view it had hardly been a success, for more than half the audience had come in without paying—the door-keepers had not succeeded in collecting more than ten shillings from the whole crowd. And now the audience, discovering that the great professor was only the old familiar ventriquoist of the Remove, in whiskers, were demanding their money back. And the demand came loudest from the fellows who had not paid at all. Skinner, and Snoop, and Fish, and some other unscrupulous young rascals were on the make.



**FED UP WITH THE BOGUS PROFESSOR!** Bob Cherry made a sudden dash at the professor and smote him full in the chest. The ventriquoist gave a yell and rolled over on the stage. "Yow-wow!" he yelled. "Bob Cherry, you beast—ow—ow!—don't kick me, you rotter! I—I—ow!" (See this page.)

"My hat!" muttered Bob Cherry. "There's going to be a row! I—I'm sorry I lost my temper with that fat beast, you chaps, but—but—"

"Oh, he asked for it," said Wharton, savagely. "He would have gone from bad to worse if he hadn't been stopped. We were asses to trust him at all."

"The ass-fulsness was terrific!" said Inky ruefully. "But what are we going to do now, my beloved chums? They are asking for their esteemed money returnfully back."

"The rotters—most of 'em haven't paid at all."

"Blessed if I know which have paid and which haven't," said Johnny Bull. "They came in jolly quickly—"

"Money back!" roared Bolsover major. "Where's my tanner? It's a swindle!"

"Yah! Give us our tanners."

"Where's my three-D?" yelled Dicky Nugent.

"Where's my tuppence?" howled Tubb of the Third.

Coker of the Fifth jumped on a form. Coker had snarled under the personal remarks of Albert, and Coker intended to make matters warm for the Famous Five now.

"Hand the money back, you young rotters!" he shouted. "If you don't pay up, we'll jolly well make you!"

"You didn't pay anything, Coker, you rotter!" howled Bob.

"I'm going to see justice done, as a senior," said Coker, loftily. "I'm not going to stand by and see the fags swindled."

"Bravo, Coker!" yelled Tubb. "Where's my tuppence?"

Harry Wharton waved his hand for silence. But it was not easy to reduce that excited crowd to order. They were swarming towards the stage now.

"Gentlemen—"

"Yah! Money back!"

"Gentlemen, listen to me! You can't call it a swindle—it was a fair show! We gave you a good ventriloquial entertainment, and it doesn't matter a brass farthing whether the ventriloquist's name is Bunter or not."

"Beggad, that's quite true," said Lord Mauleverer. "Chuck it, my dear fellows. We've had a jolly good tanner's worth."

"The last scene was easily worth a bob," grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Yah! Spoofer!"

"Money back!"

There was a rush at the stage, headed by Bolsover major and Coker and Skinner. Matters began to look serious for the promoters of that ventriloquial entertainment.

"Give the rotters their money back," growled Johnny Bull. "We don't want their measly tanners, anyway. It was a rotten idea from the start."

"Gentlemen!" yelled Harry Wharton. "Anyone not satisfied with the entertainment will have his admission money refunded—"

"Where's my tuppence?"

"Step up one at a time, and money will be returned to all who are not satisfied," yelled Wharton desperately.

"I guess I want a tanner—"

"You spoofer bounder, you didn't pay to come in."

"I guess—"

"Chuck that spoofer bounder out!"

The exasperated entertainers grasped Fisher T. Fish, and hurled him off the stage. The voice of the American schoolboy was heard no more. Apparently he had decided that he would make no further claim for a "tanner."

The Co. poured out the evening's takings on the table, and there was a rush of fellows for their admission money. Some of the audience who had paid did not claim the return of their sixpences and threepences, being satisfied that they had had their money's worth. Some of those who hadn't paid contented themselves with yelling. But quite a crowd demanded sixpences and threepences, and there certainly weren't enough sixpences and threepences to go round.

Skinner insisted upon sixpence, and Bob Cherry gave him a "dot" on the nose that put an end to his unscrupulous claim. But Snoop secured a sixpence, and had the unparalleled "nerve" to come back again in the crowd and demand another—whereupon Tom Brown and Bolsover major seized him and "chucked" him out. In the scuffle the

table was upset, and the coins that had not been distributed rolled about the floor, with eager fags rushing after them.

"Pay up!" roared Coker. "Pay up! Shell out, you young rotters! Shell out."

"We've parted with every blessed cent," howled Bob Cherry. "You can divide it up as you like. There's no more!"

"I haven't had my tanner yet!" roared Ogily.

"Where's my tuppence?" shrieked Tubb.

"Somewhere on the floor," said Wharton desperately. "Scramble for it."

"I ain't going to scramble for it—I want my tuppence."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Here, you hold on!" shouted Coker, as the six entertainment-promoters started for the door. "You haven't paid up yet."

"I tell you we've got nothing left, idiot!" yelled Bob Nugent.

"Hold 'em!" shouted Coker. "Turn their pockets out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five and Squiff were surrounded by grinning juniors. Their tempers were at boiling point now, and they hit out recklessly, and several fellows rolled among the seats—but there were too many for them. Some of the Remove rallied to the rescue—but they were hustled back by the ragers. Temple and a crowd of the Fourth were in the lead, with Coker & Co., and a horde of fags. The Famous Five were seized and rolled over, and their pockets turned inside out. Not a coin was revealed, however, and the claimants who were not satisfied had to go without, or to join in the scramble for the sixpences and coppers that had rolled away, into corners, and under the seats.

"Let us go, you rotters!" roared Johnny Bull, who was pinned down with Temple and Dabney sitting on him.

"No hurry," said Temple coolly. "It was your turn a little while ago, and now it's ours! This is where you get it in the neck, you spoofer."

"Bump them!" shouted Coker. "They've spoofered us all—passing off that fat rotter on us for a ventriloquist! Bump them!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The six chums struggled desperately, but they struggled in vain. The fellows who had been spoofered, whether they felt that they had had their money's worth or not, intended to make things warm for the spoofer—and they did. Six unhappy youths were bumped on the floor—hard—and then rolled over, and helped towards the door by a couple of score of boots. They picked themselves up and fairly ran for it, with a hooting crowd chasing them out of the Rag.

Dusty and dishevelled, the Co. reached No. 1 Study, and sunk down there exhausted and gasping for breath.

"Oh, my hat! What an evening!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"Any more schemes for raising the wind?" gurgled Johnny Bull. "I think we shall get rich quick at this rate! Ugh! Ow! Oh!"

"The hard-upfulness is better than this," murmured Hurree Singh. "I for one do not want any more schemes for raising the esteemed wind. I prefer to remain stony brokeful."

"It has been a sell, and no mistake," said Harry Wharton. "It was all Bunter's fault, of course—not that we should have made much, anyway, and most of the rotters never paid anything to come in. We've had all our trouble for nothing, and a ragging in the bargain."

"I say, you fellows—"

Six deadly glares were turned upon the fat figure that appeared in the doorway. Billy Bunter had removed his guise of the Professor, though there was still plain traces of grease-paint about his fat face. He blinked at the chums of the Remove through his big glasses.

"I say, you fellows, where's my share?"

"Your share?" repeated Wharton.

"Certainly. I was to have half the takings. I suppose you've taken about five or six pounds?"

"Ass! We took about ten shillings!"

"Oh, crumbs! Look here, you didn't do your part of the bizney properly! You undertook to act as doorkeepers, and you ought to have seen that they all paid. You haven't carried out your part of the bargain," said Bunter indignantly.

"Have you, you fat villain?" hooted Nugent.

"Yes, I have. I was getting on splendidly,

when you fellows interrupted me. Why, I kept the audience in a roar from the very start. I'm a born entertainer."

"You—you—you—"

"I say, you fellows, you're jolly well not going to spoofer me, you know. If you've been silly idiots enough to make only ten shillings from a big audience like that, I claim the lot of it. Little enough, too, for the trouble I've taken. You can jolly well hand it all over to me."

"You're welcome to all we've got," grinned Johnny Bull. "The audience asked for their money back, fathead, when they found out it was only a silly porpoise and not a professor at all, ass!"

"You've handed the money back!" gasped Bunter blankly.

"Yes, you fat reptile!"

"You—you rotters! You've swindled me! Look here, I'm going to have my ten bob!" roared Bunter furiously. "It was agreed that—"

"We promised him half what we got," said Bob Cherry, jumping up. "What we've got is a jolly good ragging. We'll pass on half of it to Bunter."

"Good egg! Collar him!"

"Here, I say, you fellows! Hold on! Yah!"

"Bump, bump, bump, bump!"

"Yow-ow! Help! Murder! Fire! Yow!"

Billy Bunter flew into the passage, and rolled over there, and the study door slammed after him. Bunter did not open it again.

For the rest of that evening the chums of the Remove were suffering from various aches and pains—the only results obtained from that excellent scheme of a ventriloquial entertainment for raising the wind. They were as hard-up as ever. But the next day, when Harry Wharton proposed to hold a council of war to consider a new plan for raising the wind, he was answered by a general groan from the Co.

"Oh, don't!"

"Nuff's as good as a feast!"

"Fed up, old man!"

"Cheese it!"

"But we're hard up!" exclaimed Wharton.

"The hard-upfulness is great, my worthy chum, but the raisefulness of the wind is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "I, for one, prefer to remain hard-up. Let us bear it grinfully."

"You know what Shakespeare says—"

"Blow Shakespeare!" said Wharton crossly.

"Blow him as much as you like; but he says it's better to bear the ills we have than to fly to others that we know not of. I've had enough of trying to raise the wind. It will make me an old man before my time," said Nugent pathetically.

"I believe my hair's going grey already," said Bob Cherry. "For goodness' sake let's stay hard up. The cure is worse than the disease—it is really, Wharton, old chap."

"My sentiments exactly," grinned Squiff. "We'll take Inky's advice and bear it grinfully."

And Harry Wharton gave it up.

But an unexpected visitor in the person of Colonel Wharton put an end to the impecunious state of the Famous Five—or the Stoney Five, as they had been latterly known.

He dropped in to see his nephew, and he was entertained to a tea of dry bread and weak tea. A few questions, and he was in possession of the facts of the case—and a visit to the Head, and a further visit to the tuckshop, put quite a different complexion on life for the Famous Five.

Nevertheless, there was still "one up" against Ponsohy of Highcliffe, and doubtless it would not be very long before that "one" was wiped off.

THE END.

(Now you must turn to page 2.)

Don't forget there is always a grand, long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. in—

**THE MAGNET.**



**THE JAPE OF THE SEASON!**

Gordon Gay, the cheery Grammarian leader, is ever on the look out to pull the legs of his rivals at St. Jim's. Gay is famous for his amazing japes, and this week's is not an exception. It is more than amazing. You will enjoy reading the story!

**A HIGHLY AMUSING ST. JIM'S STORY!**

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# HIGH JINKS AT ST. JIM'S.

Another Tip-Top Story of the  
Chums of St. Jim's School.

By

**MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.****Dodging the Dentist!**

**W**ISH something would happen to break this awful monotony!" Monty Lowther muttered that remark. He had to mutter, lest Mr. Linton should hear him.

Morning lessons were proceeding in the Shell Form-room. The subject was geometry—a subject which bored most of the juniors stiff. They simply loathed it. Monty Lowther likened it to the Seven Plagues of Egypt rolled into one.

Never had the hands of the Form-room clock seemed to travel so slowly. They simply crawled; in fact, it almost seemed as if the clock had stopped.

"Geometry's certainly a fearful bore," whispered Tom Merry, in response to Monty Lowther's remark. "But I don't see how anything can happen to break the monotony—unless we rise in revolt, and that's out of the question."

Mr. Linton, who was engaged in drawing weird and wonderful triangles on the black-board, spun round sharply.

"There is a great deal of whispering going on!" he said sternly. "It must cease."

The lesson dragged on wearily. But Monty Lowther had his heart's desire at length.

Suddenly the door of the Form-room opened, and Kildare of the Sixth came in. He had a list in his hand.

"What is it, Kildare?" asked Mr. Linton, rather testily.

"A number of boys are wanted, sir," said the captain of St. Jim's.

"Indeed! By whom?"

"Mr. Wrench, sir."

Mr. Linton raised his eyebrows.

"And who, pray, is Mr. Wrench?" he asked.

"The dentist, sir. He has come over from Wayland, on the Head's authority, to hold an inspection of teeth."

Mr. Linton looked annoyed.

"I wish Mr. Wrench would arrange his visits at a more opportune time," he said.

"His untimely arrival will disorganise morning lessons. But if Doctor Holmes has sanctioned this inspection of teeth, I suppose I am hopeless in the matter. Who are the boys you want, Kildare?"

The captain of St. Jim's consulted his list. And the juniors eyed him with some apprehension. They had longed for something to happen which would break the

taking a section of fellows from each Form." "Very well," said Mr. Linton, rather grudgingly. "The boys whose names have been called will proceed to the sanatorium, where Mr. Wrench awaits them."

Monty Lowther gave a groan as he rose to his feet.

"Out of the frying-pan into the giddy fire!" he murmured. "We've escaped geometry, but there's something a jolly sight worse in store. I hate dentists."

"Same here," muttered Manners.

The six juniors trooped out into the passage.

"Cheer up!" said Tom Merry, encouragingly. "It mightn't be so bad as we think. It's only an inspection of teeth. We're not likely to have any extracted."

The juniors were joined in the passage by another party, which Kildare summoned from the Fourth Form-room.

Jack Blake and D'Arcy, Herries and Digby, and Reilly and Trimble, were the members of this party. None of them seemed to relish the idea of going to the dentist. With one exception, however, they were quite prepared to go through with the ordeal.

The exception was Baggy Trimble.

Baggy was shaking from head to foot. He was in a state of blue funk. Baggy, like everybody else, was not in love with dentists. He had visions of all sorts of dreadful things happening to him. His teeth were not of the best, owing to the enormous quantity of sweets he consumed. And he pictured himself sitting in the dentist's chair, having about half-a-dozen teeth extracted, one after the other.

The more he thought about it, the more panic-stricken Baggy became.

"I—I must dodge it somehow!" muttered the fat junior, under his breath.

But when he tried to "dodge it," Mr. Lathom caught him, and Baggy was compelled to go to the dentist with the master behind him.

The Form-master went straight to the sanatorium. When he got there—with the fat junior quaking behind him—he found Mr. Wrench busily engaged in holding the examination.

Mr. Wrench was a dapper little man. He was dressed in sober black, and he had a short, pointed beard. His locks were long and straggling, like a poet's, and his eyes were adorned by a pair of enormous spectacles. His general appearance was not calculated to inspire his victims with a sense of confidence or cheerfulness.

Tom Merry & Co., and Jack Blake & Co., were lined up in a row before the dentist.

Mr. Wrench was in the act of inspecting Monty Lowther's mouth. He did this with the aid of a magnifying-glass, and he prodded Monty's teeth with a very sharp instrument.

"Nasty tooth here—this will have to come out," he said, in gruff tones. "So will this molar. The bicuspid is not in very good condition, but I will try to save them for you by stopping them. This incisor is rather loose—"

"Ow!" gasped Lowther. "It'll be looser still if you poke it about like that! By the way, when are you going to do all these extractions and stoppings?"

"This afternoon, probably," said Mr. Wrench.

"Oh, crumbs!"

Monty Lowther shuddered at the prospect of a very painful hour in the dentist's chair. Suddenly Mr. Wrench became aware of the presence of Mr. Lathom, with Baggy Trimble in tow.

"I wish you a good morning, sir," he said gravely.

"Good-morning," said Mr. Lathom. "This boy, Trimble, has compelled me to use force to bring him to you."

Mr. Wrench smiled grimly. Mr. Lathom rustled away, leaving Baggy Trimble to face the ordeal of having his teeth overhauled.

Having dealt with Monty Lowther, the dentist turned to Baggy.

"Open your mouth, boy!" he commanded.

Baggy reluctantly obeyed. And Mr. Wrench started to tickle up his nerves with the sharp instrument.

The fat junior shrieked and squealed like a soul in torment.

"Yow-ow-ow! Yah! Groo! Yarooooop!"

"Drop that!" said Mr. Wrench sharply.

"Anyone would think I was hurting you."

"You are!" wailed Baggy. "Stop puncturing my gums, you beast! Wow!"

Mr. Wrench calmly continued his investigations.

"You have evidently been in the habit of eating a lot of sweets," he said. "You have ruined your teeth, and I shall find it necessary to extract quite a number of them this afternoon."

"Ow!"

Baggy Trimble paled at the prospect.

"C-c-can I have gas?" he faltered.

"You seem to have plenty of that commodity, as it is," said the dentist. "I wish you'd keep quiet."

"If I can't have gas, will you give me a local dejection?" asked Baggy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Although feeling far from happy themselves, the juniors roared.

"I shall be so busy this afternoon," said Mr. Wrench, "that I shall have no time to play about with anaesthetics. You will have to grin and bear it. I sha'n't hurt you very much—just a few mild pangs—"

"Yarooooop!"

Having completed his examination of Baggy Trimble's capacious mouth, Mr. Wrench went right along the line; and he

THE POPULAR.—No. 246.

You Will Find An Extra-long St. Jim's Story In This Week's "Gem"!

startled every junior by his gruesome threats of what he proposed to do that afternoon. There were going to be wholesale extractions, and fillings, and fillings, and scalings, and what not. And even the pluckiest of the juniors couldn't help feeling a bit scared. Dentists were their natural enemies; and Mr. Wrench was a particularly nasty type of dentist.

"You may go now," he said, waving his hand towards the door. "I will summon you again this afternoon."

The juniors trooped back in silence to their respective Form-rooms. They had plenty to think about, and their thoughts were far from pleasant.

It really looked as if there was going to be quite a butchery, on a minor scale, in the afternoon. Nobody liked having teeth extracted, least of all without an injection of some sort to mitigate the pain.

It was a very gloomy procession that made its way back to the Form-rooms. Even Monty Lowther had lost his wonted cheerfulness; and the prospect of an afternoon in the dentist's "torture chamber" was painful in the extreme.

### THE SECOND CHAPTER. Rough on Ratty.

**T**OM MERRY & CO. would have been mightily surprised had they observed Mr. Wrench's antics immediately following their departure from the sanny. The dentist threw himself into his chair, and kicked up his heels in a paroxysm of merriment.



**TROUBLE FOR THE AMATEUR DENTIST!** Mr. Ratcliff shot out of the chair and caught Mr. Wrench in the middle of his chest. "Yarooop!" The dentist was bowled over like a skittle, and he measured his length on the floor. (See Chapter 1.)

"Ha, ha, ha! Talk about a jape! This lowers all previous records! I've put the wind up the troops, and no error! They all think that something terrible's going to happen to them this afternoon. If they only knew!"

Yes, if they only knew!

But the juniors did not know—did not even suspect—that Mr. Wrench was other than he represented himself to be. They would have had the shock of their lives had they known that he was not Mr. Wrench at all, but that prince of japers, Gordon Gay of the Grammar School!

How had Gordon Gay worked this amazing jape?

It had been fairly simple.

In the first place, the Grammarian had known that Mr. Wrench was visiting St. Jim's that day, but not until the afternoon. Also, he knew exactly what sort of man Mr. Wrench was, and he had "made up" accordingly.

Gordon Gay was a wonderful impersonator, as witness the occasion when he had come to St. Jim's in the capacity of temporary porter.

The black suit, the wig, the goat-beard, and the glasses, had transformed Gordon

Gay from a cheery schoolboy into a middle-aged, dapper little gentleman—a perfect "double" of the real Mr. Wrench.

The latter gentleman was due to arrive at St. Jim's that afternoon, and one of the wards in the sanny had already been fitted up as a dental surgery. The chair was there, and the filling machine, and all the instruments.

The only two persons who knew that Mr. Wrench was not supposed to turn up till the afternoon were Gordon Gay and the Head. And the Grammarian had taken good care that the Head had not seen him arrive.

"It worked like a charm!" gurgled Gordon Gay. "Jolly lucky that we've got a whole day's holiday at the Grammar School, or I should never have been able to work this stunt. Everything has gone without a hitch. I gave those fellows a proper scare. They all think they're going through tortures worse than the Spanish Inquisition!"

And Gordon Gay laughed loud and long at the complete success of his daring jape. He had accomplished all that he had set out to do. He had played his part so

showed no outward and visible sign of the uneasiness he felt.

"Good-morning, sir!" he said, resuming his gruff tones.

"Good-morning!" groaned Mr. Ratcliff. "Are you busy, at the moment?"

"Not at all."

"Then perhaps you would be good enough to remove a tooth which has been tormenting me?"

Gordon Gay's uneasiness grew into actual alarm. He had not come to St. Jim's with the idea of extracting any teeth. That part of the programme would be performed by the genuine Mr. Wrench. Gordon Gay knew nothing about dentistry, and he shrank from trying his 'prentice hand on Mr. Ratcliff.

The Housemaster pressed his hand to his cheek. The pain of the offending molar was making him very irritable.

"I am waiting, sir, for an answer to my question!" he snapped.

"I will remove the tooth with pleasure, sir," said Gordon Gay, "but I was on the

point of going to lunch when you came in. If you would wait till this afternoon—"

"Wait!" almost shrieked Mr. Ratcliff. "I have already waited the whole night and the best part of the morning. I do not propose to wait any longer. Can you not see that I am suffering acute anguish? This constant nagging pain is nearly driving me insane!"

"I feel very sorry for you, sir—"

"If you mean that, you will remove the tooth here and now, without any further preamble."

Gordon Gay gave an inward groan. It was impossible to put Mr. Ratcliff off. The Housemaster was determined to get rid of his aching tooth.

If Gordon Gay persisted in trying to wriggle out of it, Mr. Ratcliff would begin to smell a rat. And that would never do.

It was a frightful dilemma, but Gordon Gay resolved to put a bold face on the matter. He beckoned Mr. Ratcliff to the chair.

The Housemaster seated himself, and laid his head back, and opened his mouth wide.

Gordon Gay produced the magnifying-glass, and a steel instrument with a wire at the end. He made a pretence of examining Mr. Ratcliff's mouth, and he tapped

Gordon Gay's heart beat quickly. But he

**"Baggy's Unlucky Day!" Will Make You Scream With Laughter Next Week!**

one of the Housemaster's back teeth with the instrument.

"Yes, this is certainly a very bad tooth," he muttered.

"What!" cried Mr. Ratcliff. "That is not the tooth that is aching!"

"Oh!"

"You are behaving like an ignorant quack, sir! This is the tooth that I wish removed."

And Mr. Ratcliff indicated another back tooth, on the opposite side of his mouth.

Gordon Gay assumed an expression of great gravity.

"That will be a very difficult tooth to extract, sir," he said. "It cannot be done without gas, and I haven't the necessary apparatus."

"What nonsense!" said Mr. Ratcliff. "If you were a properly qualified dentist you would have had the tooth out long ago, instead of raising all sorts of obstacles and objections! I do not want gas. An injection of cocaine will suffice."

"I am sorry, but I have no cocaine—"

"No gas—no cocaine—and you call yourself a dental surgeon!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff, his wrath rising. "I really cannot understand why Doctor Holmes engaged you to come here. You appear to be little better than a raw novice, sir! I am extremely angry!"

"Calm yourself, my dear sir—"

Mr. Ratcliff gave a snort.

"Who could be calm in such circumstances?" he said. "Since you appear to have no anaesthetics, I will have the tooth extracted without them. Do not dally any longer."

The crisis had come to a head now, and Gordon Gay was beginning to wish he had never set foot on the school premises.

There was only one thing to do in the circumstances. And Gordon Gay nerved himself to do it.

It would be an ordeal for him, and for Mr. Ratcliff also.

Gordon Gay was going to have a shot at taking out the tooth!

The bogus dentist rummaged about among the instruments, and produced a pair of fearsome-looking forceps. Then he advanced towards Mr. Ratcliff.

"Grip the chair tightly, sir," he said. "I will endeavour to give you as little pain as possible."

Mr. Ratcliff gripped the arms of the chair so tenaciously that his knuckles stood out sharp and white.

With a hand that trembled, in spite of himself, Gordon Gay inserted the forceps into the patient's mouth, and they closed over the crown of the tooth.

Then, clenching his teeth and closing his eyes, Gordon Gay gave a violent tug.

The tooth did not budge. There is a certain knack in extracting teeth—a deft jerk of the wrist, which only comes by long experience.

Gordon Gay didn't possess that knack. Consequently the tooth, which was a very stubborn one, remained where it was.

But Mr. Ratcliff didn't! He shot out of the chair with a fiendish yell that rang through the sanatorium.

"Yaroooooh!"

The Housemaster had shot up so suddenly that Gordon Gay was taken completely by surprise. The Housemaster's head butted into his middle, and bowled him over backwards like a skittle.

Crash!

Gordon Gay measured his length on the floor, and Mr. Ratcliff stood glaring down at him.

"You are a dangerous ruffian, sir!" hooted the Housemaster. "You call yourself a dentist, yet you are not capable of performing a simple extraction! That savage wrench that you gave caused me the most extreme anguish, yet the tooth remained stationary. I refuse to endure any more atrocities of that sort. I go!"

And Mr. Ratcliff went, to the infinite relief of Gordon Gay.

The Grammarian picked himself up, and dusted his trousers with his hands.

"Phew! I wouldn't go through that again, not for a term's pocket-money!" he muttered. "It was a fearful ordeal for poor old Ratty, but it was a jolly sight bigger one for me—if he only knew! I'd better quit now, before any other masters come along with raging toothache!"

And Gordon Gay made a hurried exit from the sanny, and from the school premises.

THE POPULAR.—No. 246.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Pleasant Surprise!

"THIS way to the slaughter-house!"

It was Monty Lowther who made that gruesome observation.

Midway through afternoon lessons a fresh summons had arrived for the six Shell fellows and the six Fourth-formers, to proceed to the sanny, where Mr. Wrench awaited them.

The dentist was there. To all appearances he was the same dapper little gentleman who had examined the juniors' teeth that morning. Nobody suspected otherwise. Indeed, they had no reason to do so.

The dentist stood in the doorway, and beckoned to Tom Merry to enter first.

"Keep your pecker up, Tommy!" muttered Manners, as the captain of the Shell stepped into the dreaded apartment.

To Tom's surprise, Mr. Wrench greeted him very cordially. To Tom's further surprise, Mr. Wrench did nothing in the way of extraction. He simply filled a tooth that was in need of stopping; and he did the job so skilfully that Tom Merry felt hardly any discomfort.

"There! That will be all," said the dentist kindly. And Tom walked out of the room like a fellow in a dream. He could scarcely credit his good fortune.

Monty Lowther was the next victim. But Monty found, to his joy, that he wasn't victimised at all. Mr. Wrench told him that his teeth were in perfect condition, and that there was nothing to be done. This was in direct contradiction to what Mr. Wrench had said that morning; but Monty Lowther didn't remind the dentist of what had been threatened on that occasion. He was only too relieved at escaping scot-free.

One by one the juniors went in to their doom—as they thought. But when they seated themselves in the dentist's chair, they found that Mr. Wrench was extremely kind and considerate.

There were a few extractions, it was true; but they were performed skilfully and painlessly. Even Baggy Trimble had nothing to complain about.

The juniors were very much mystified. They could not reconcile Mr. Wrench's threats of the morning with his kindness of the afternoon. It was a queer business altogether, and they could not make head or tail of it.

The most astonished person of all was Mr. Ratcliff.

In spite of the anguish he had endured that morning, the Housemaster paid yet another visit to the dentist. His toothache was more acute than ever, and he realised that he would get no rest until the offending molar was out.

"Good - afternoon, sir!" said Mr. Wrench.

Mr. Ratcliff did not return the salutation. He sank into the big chair, and groaned aloud.

"For pity's sake remove this terrible tooth!" he implored. "I do not mind how much you hurt me, so long as you succeed in getting it out!"

Mr. Wrench saw at a glance which tooth it was that had given the Housemaster a sleepless night. He promptly picked up a syringe and made an injection into the gum. Then he produced a pair of forceps.

Mr. Ratcliff prepared himself for fearful agony. His expression was that of a martyr.

To the Housemaster's utter amazement, however, he did not feel the slightest twinge.

One deft movement of the dentist's wrist, and, here presto! the tooth was out, and Mr. Ratcliff's troubles were over.

"Extraordinary!" murmured the Housemaster.

"I beg your pardon, sir?" said Mr. Wrench.

"I repeat, it is extraordinary! When I came to you this morning your behaviour was most brutal—"

"Sir!"

"I come to you again this afternoon, and you take out my tooth without causing me the slightest discomfort!"

Mr. Wrench stared blankly at his patient. "I do not understand you, sir," he said.

"You did not come to me this morning. I did not arrive here until after lunch."

"What!" shouted Mr. Ratcliff.

"You must be dreaming, sir. This is the first time we have met to-day."

"Then—then who was the man—the very image of you—who was here this morning?" gasped the Housemaster.

Mr. Wrench shook his head.

"I haven't the foggiest notion, sir," he said. "I only know that I did not arrive until this afternoon."

"In that case," said Mr. Ratcliff, "somebody must have impersonated you. Now that I come to look at you closely, I can see that you differ in several slight respects from the person who was here this morning. Your hair is not so long; neither is your beard. And your spectacles are slightly smaller in size."

Mr. Wrench looked astonished.

"Do you seriously mean to say, sir, that somebody was here this morning, masquerading as myself?"

"Most certainly that was the case," said Mr. Ratcliff. "And I will leave no stone unturned to discover the author of this amazing hoax."

But, although the Housemaster made the most searching inquiries, he failed to discover the identity of the practical joker.

# FRETWORK

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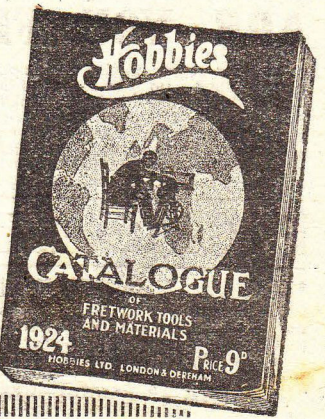
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The Story of a Precious Recipe and Some Amusing Adventures!

The St. Jim's juniors, however, were not kept in ignorance.

Next morning a letter arrived for Tom Merry—a letter which came as a veritable bombshell.

On opening the envelope, Tom came upon the following brief message:

"Another score for the Grammarians! When is St. Jim's going to wake up?"  
 "(Signed) GORDON GAY  
 "(alias Mr. Wrench.)"

The news of the Grammarians' latest triumph over their old rivals spread through the school like wildfire. But it did not reach the ears of Mr. Rateliff. Which was extremely fortunate for Gordon Gay!

After receiving that message from the Grammar School, Tom Merry & Co. met together in solemn conclave, in order to discuss ways and means of turning the tables on their Rylcombe rivals.

And it was not long before they were able to do this. A little suggestion from Monty Lowther, and Gordon Gay & Co. were completely "dished" inside their own school, and in the end had to admit that St. Jim's were top-dogs.

THE END.

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IN A FORTNIGHT'S TIME

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