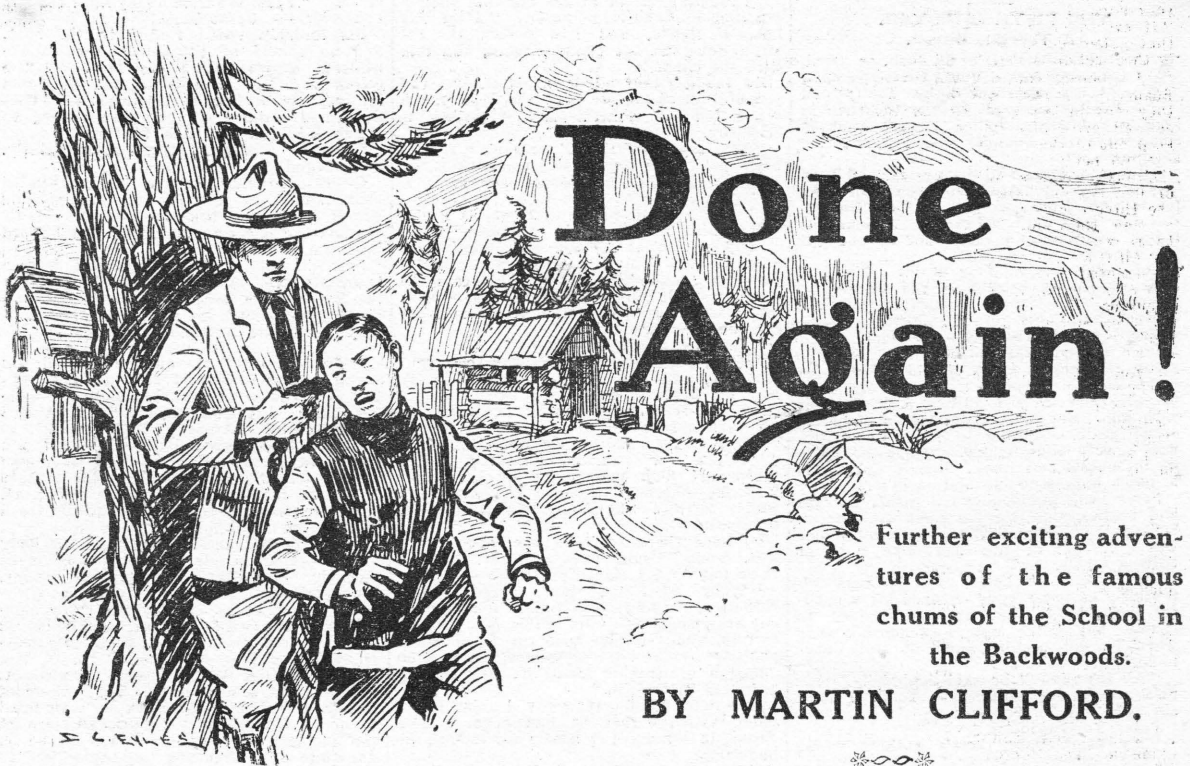


**THE RASCALITY OF YEN CHIN!** More than once Frank Richards & Co. had helped the wily Chinee of the Lumber School out of scrapes, and made allowances for his apparent inability to distinguish between right and wrong—but there comes a time when there can be too much of this wasted leniency!



Further exciting adventures of the famous chums of the School in the Backwoods.

BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
Black Louis!

**B**OB! Billy Cook, the foreman of the Lawless Ranch, called out, as Bob Lawless and Frank Richards came trotting down the trail on their way to school in the sunny spring morning.

The ranch foreman met them half-way to the timber, through which the trail ran to Cedar Creek School.

The two schoolboys drew rein.

"Hallo!" called back Bob Lawless. "Anything up, Billy?"

Billy Cook's bronzed, rugged face wore a very serious expression. He nodded in reply to Bob's question.

"Yep!" he said.

"Kootenays on the war-path?" grinned Bob.

"Nope! But I reckon you'd better keep to the trail, and not go cavorting around in the timber," said the ranch foreman.

"There's a gang of half-breed traders from the North-West camped in the timber, and the less you see of them, the better it will be for your health, I guess."

"Traders from the North-West?" repeated Frank Richards, with some interest. "They won't hurt us, I suppose."

"Waal, they call themselves traders," answered Billy Cook. "Hoss-thieves and bulldozers would be a better description, I reckon. There's six or seven of them, and every one of the crowd looks as if he'd be better inside a calaboose than outside. If you don't want to lose your hosses, you steer clear of that crowd. They're camped between the trail and Thompson, right in the timber, and if you see them, you take my tip, and vamoose the ranch."

And, having given them that weighty warning, Billy Cook rode on, leaving the chums of Cedar Creek to pursue their way.

Bob Lawless glanced at his English cousin and smiled as they cantered on towards the timber. The sturdy Canadian schoolboy was not alarmed.

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"I'd rather like to see that crowd, Bob," Frank Richards remarked.

"Well, Billy's right," answered Bob Lawless. "If they're a gang of half-breeds, the farther off they keep the better. I've heard of them already—some of them were mixed up in a row at the Red Dog in Thompson yesterday. They're more bulldozers than honest traders. I reckon—judging by what I've heard of Louis Leronge, their leader, I guess we'll keep clear of them, Franky!"

The schoolboys rode into the timber, towards the fork of the trail where they were accustomed to meet their chum, Vere Beauclerc, on the way to Cedar Creek School.

Beauclerc was generally early, as the meeting-place was only a short distance from his father's shack on the creek; but on this especial morning he was not in sight when Frank and Bob came trotting up to the fork.

"The Cherub's late for once," remarked Bob. "I dare say we shall sight him from the corner, though."

The thick timber hid the branch trail from their sight as they rode up; but as they neared the fork, the sound of a sharp voice came through the trees.

"Let my rein go at once!"

"Hallo, that's the Cherub's voice!" exclaimed Bob. "He's landed into trouble with somebody."

"Come on!" answered Frank, touching his horse lightly with the whip.

The two riders came round the bend in the trail at a gallop, more than ready to go to their chum's help if he needed it.

Vere Beauclerc, mounted upon his big black horse, was halted in the middle of the branch trail. A dusky hand was on the rein. A tall, slim, dark-faced half-breed was holding it, his eyes glittering at the schoolboy from under his beetling black brows.

"Let go!" Beauclerc was not at all alarmed, but he was angry. "How dare you stop me?"

The half-breed laughed softly.

"There are few things that Louis Leronge does not dare, if he chooses, mon petit!" he answered. "Get down into the trail!"

"I shall do nothing of the sort!" answered Beauclerc angrily. "And if you do not release my rein at once, I shall use my whip, I warn you."

The half-breed's eyes gleamed.

He dropped one hand to his belt, where the haft of a long hunting-knife was visible. Whether he intended to draw the weapon or not, he had no time. Frank Richards and Bob Lawless came dashing up, and Bob reached out with his whip, lashing at the half-breed's arms with the heavy butt.

Crack!

Louis Leronge uttered a howl of pain, as he received that sudden and unexpected crack on the elbow. His arm dropped to his side, and he released Beauclerc's rein and spun round. Bob and Frank drew in their horses.

"Just in time, old scout!" said Bob. "I guess this is one of the half-breed gang Billy Cook warned us about, Franky. Keep your distance, you scoundrel, or you'll get hurt!"

The half-breed was staring at the rancher's son with a blaze in his black eyes, quivering with rage and pain. The three schoolboys drew closer together. The ruffian was armed and he looked furious enough to attempt to use his weapon.

"Corbleu!" he muttered, between his teeth.

"Do you want any more?" asked Bob disdainfully. "You can't frighten us with your black looks, Mister Leronge. And I warn you that if you play any tricks in this section, you'll hear from the sheriff at Thompson."

"What did he want with you, Beau?" asked Frank, as the sullen half-breed did not speak.

Beauclerc shook his head.

"I don't know—unless he's taken a fancy to my horse," he answered. "He had only just stopped me when you came up."

The half-breed stepped back from the trail, muttering to himself. Frank Richards and Co. set their horses in motion again, the trader watching them as they went with glittering eyes. Whatever had been his

You Will Meet the Jolly Chums of the Lumber School Again Next Week!

intentions, he apparently did not consider it worth while to try conclusions with the three.

The trio rode on up the trail towards Cedar Creek, and the timber hid them from the eyes of the muttering ruffian.

"I guess you came jolly near to losing your horse, Cherub," remarked Bob Lawless. "If ever a galoot looked like a horse-thief, that galoot does. He won't find it healthy in this section, if that's his game."

"I suppose that was his game," assented Beauclerc. "They will get into trouble if they stay in this section, I fancy. We may as well give the fellows at school a tip to keep out of the timber on this side."

"You bet!" Chunky Todgers was adorning the gates of Cedar Creek with his fat person, when the three chums rode up. He seemed to be waiting there for Frank Richards and Co. to arrive.

"All O.K., you galoots?" he asked, as they dismounted.

"Why shouldn't we be?" answered Frank Richards.

"Then you haven't seen anything of the half-breeds?"

"Oh, you know about them, do you?" "You bet!" answered Chunky Todgers. "There's a lot of talk about them in Thompson. Black Louis—man named Leronge—is the king-pin of the gang. They're down from the North-West ranges, and they're a tough crowd. There's talk of hosses missing already."

"Velly bad man!" chimed in little Yen Chin, the Chinese. "Playee pokee at Red Dog, kickee up shindy, you bet. Playee pokee in camp in timbee— Oh, velly bad man, oh yes!"

Bob Lawless gave the little Chinese a suspicious look.

"How do you know they play poker in their own camp, you young rascal?" he asked. "Have you been there?"

Yen Chin shook his head. "No goey—no goey!" he exclaimed, in a great hurry. "Me, Yen Chin, good boy! Guntee tellee me!"

"Oh, so Gunten goes there, does he?" "Guntee velly bad boy!" said Yen Chin. "Me no likee Guntee. No speakee to him. Me good boy."

"Blessed little humbug!" growled Bob. "If I catch you hanging round their camp, I'll give you the trail-ropes, Yen Chin. You've given us trouble enough with your heathen tricks!"

"Me solly!" murmured Yen Chin. "Me velly good boy now!"

"Oh, rats!" said Frank Richards. "Very good boy till the next time, I suppose. Don't forget the trail-ropes!"

The chums led in their horses to the corral. Yen Chin blinking after them with a glimmer in his almond eyes. For a few days, since his gambling escapade with Kern Gunten, of Hillcrest School, Yen Chin had been on his best behaviour—at all events, so far as Frank Richards and Co. had been able to observe. But it was very probable that the little heathen's repentance was not much more than skin-deep.

Frank Richards and Co. found that the traders were the subject of a good deal of talk at the lumber school that day. Black Louis and his crowd had camped in the timber on their way back to the North-West, after a trading round of the settlements, and they were not the kind of neighbours the good folk of the Thompson Valley desired. And all Cedar Creek agreed that the sooner Black Louis and Co. took the trail for the North-West the better it would be for everybody concerned.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**

**Yen Chin's Confession!**

"FLANKY!" "Hallo, kid!" "Good-bye, Flanky!" Frank Richards looked curiously at Yen Chin, the little Chinese of Cedar Creek School.

Yen Chin's little yellow face wore the most lugubrious of expressions, and his almond eyes were sad and sorrowful.

He seemed to be in the lowest depths of doleful dumps.

"Good-bye, Flanky!" repeated Yen Chin. "Where are you going, then?" asked

Frank. "The bell will be going for classes in a few minutes."

"Me go dlownee in cleek."

"What?" yelled Frank. Yen Chin nodded sorrowfully. He looked as if his mind was fully made up.

"Dlownee in cleek," he said. "Pool lil' Chinee soon be deadee. Me say good-bye to handsome ole Flanky befole dlownee in cleek."

And Yen Chin turned on the path that led from the school gates towards the creek and started.

Frank Richards stared blankly for a moment or two, and then he darted after the little heathen and grabbed his pigtail. Whatever might be the trouble on Yen Chin's mind, Frank Richards certainly did not intend to let him drown himself in the creek.

"You young ass!" shouted Frank. "Stop!"

"Lettee go, ole Flanky. Me go dlownee and—"

"You silly young ass!" said Frank wrathfully. "Are you trying to pull my leg?"

"No pullee Flanky leg. You pullee my pigtail!" wailed Yen Chin. "Hurtee pool lil' Chinee. You lettee go. Oh, yes!"

"Hallo, what's the row?" asked Bob Lawless, coming along with Vere Beauclerc towards the gates.

Frank Richards kept a tight grip on Yen Chin's pigtail.

"Allee light," answered Yen Chin. "Me go dlownee in cleek. Me say good-bye to handsome Bob."

"Let me catch you drowning yourself in the creek!" answered Bob wrathfully. "I'll give you a jolly good lambasting with a trail-ropes! What have you got in your silly heathen noddle now?"

"Chinee velly bad boy," said Yen Chin tearfully.

"We know that already."

"Too badee to live," said the Celestial. "Missy Meadee velly mad with Yen Chin when findee out. So me go dlownee in cleek. Oh, yes!"

"What's the matter, kid?" asked Beauclerc.

Yen Chin sighed deeply. It was evident that something weighed very heavily on his conscience, which was not a new experience for Yen Chin of Cedar Creek. The heathen's ways were not as the white man's ways, and Yen Chin, though he had his good points, was a pretty thorough young rascal in a good many respects.

"Get it off your chest!" said Frank Richards encouragingly. "Have you been gambling again, you young rascal?"

"Playee piecee card," confessed Yen Chin. "You young scallywag!" growled Bob.

"Didn't I promise you the trail-ropes if you played poker again?"

"You promised not to, Yen Chin," said Frank.

"Chinee keepee plomise," said Yen Chin.

"No playee pokee. Playee euchre."

"Well, that comes to the same thing. Does Miss Meadows know?"

"No knowee yet."

"Well, she needn't know," said Frank. "We'll keep it dark; not that you need have told us. And don't do it again!"

"Never no mole!" said Yen Chin.

"Dlownee in cleek. Chinee velly bad boy. Playee euchre, and losee all money. Stonee bloke!"

"Serve you right!"

"Me knowee," said the little Celestial.

"Chinee velly bad. Me tief!"

"What?"

"Steealee piecee dollee."

Frank Richards and Co. became very serious as the little Chinese made that startling confession.

"You've stolen somebody's dollars?" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc aghast.

"Me velly bad boy."

"You awful young rascal!" said Frank.

"Me velly solly; go dlownee in cleek."

"You won't drown yourself in the creek, but you'll get a jolly good hiding!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "And you'll take the dollars back at once! Do you hear?"

"No can!"

"And why not?"

"Losee dollee; playee piecee card."

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

It was no wonder that the little Chinese was in a lugubrious and repentant mood if he had stolen dollars and lost them at cards.

The Oriental passion for gambling seemed a part of Yen Chin's nature, and although Frank Richards and Co. had done their best

to cure him of it—even to the extent of a friendly application of the trail-ropes—Yen Chin was always sure to break out again sooner or later.

"Whose money was it?" asked Frank at last.

"Missy Meadee."

"You—you've stolen money from the schoolmistress?" gasped Frank, in almost helpless dismay.

"Me velly bad boy."

"How much?" asked Bob.

"Twentee dollee."

"And you've lost it?"

"Losee allee lot."

"Great gophers!" said Bob Lawless.

"Blessed if I don't think we'd better take him straight to Miss Meadows!"

Yen Chin gave a howl.

"No takee to Missy Meadee. Allee light if me go dlownee in cleek."

"Shut up, you little idiot!" said Frank impatiently. "Where did you get the money?"

"Missy Meadee desk."

"Miss Meadows always keeps her desk locked," said Beauclerc.

"Me findee key."

The chums of Cedar Creek looked at one another blankly.

More than once—many times, in fact—they had helped Yen Chin out of scrapes, for, little rascal that he was, they made allowances for his heathen training, and for his apparent inability to distinguish between right and wrong. And he had sometimes shown good qualities in his character. Frank Richards had not despaired of making him honest, with plenty of effort, in the long run, though it was an uphill task.

But this confession was really the limit; actual theft of money was a thing that could not be condoned, even in a heathen who "sat in darkness."

"Better take him to Miss Meadows!" said Bob Lawless at last. "I—I suppose he will be turned out of the school. Poor little wretch!"

"No goey to Missy Meadee!" wailed Yen Chin. "Dlownee in cleek if go to Missy Meadee in face; me velly wicked, bad boy."

"Come with me, you little idiot!" answered Frank Richards. "We'll see what can be done."

"You no tellee Missy Meadee!" pleaded Yen Chin.

Frank looked at his chums.

"No," he said at last. "We—we'll see what can be done, you awful little rascal. Come in now."

"Flanky velly good handsome ole boy—oh yes," said Yen Chin contentedly. And he trotted in quite cheerfully with the Co. to afternoon lessons.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**

**The Way Out!**

FRANK RICHARDS and Co. had plenty of food for thought that afternoon—not all furnished by the invaluable instruction they were receiving from Miss Meadows.

Yen Chin and his crime weighed heavily on their minds.

It was no wonder that Miss Meadows found them somewhat absent-minded in class, and was rather sharp with them that afternoon. They could not help thinking of what would happen if the schoolmistress went to her desk and missed the money.

Glad enough were the three when the class was dismissed at last.

They joined Yen Chin in the play-ground. The little Chinese was looking very lugubrious, but his eyes watched their faces with curious intention. He seemed to have forgotten his intention of "drowning" himself in the creek.

"You tinkee what do, nicey ole Bob?" he asked.

"Blessed if I know what to do," answered Bob Lawless gruffly. "I suppose it was Gunten you've been gambling with?"

"Me velly bad boy," said Yen Chin humbly.

"Was it Gunten?" demanded Bob.

"Guntee velly bad boy."

"Will you answer my question, you heathen? Tell me whether it was Gunten won the money from you?"

"Oh, yes," said Yen Chin, driven to a direct reply at last.

"The awful rotter!" said Frank Richards,

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setting his teeth. "Last week we made him hand back what he'd got out of this little idiot, and now—"

"We'll do the same again," said Beauclerc.

Yen Chin looked alarmed.

"No speakee to Guntee!" he exclaimed.

"Why not?" snapped Bob.

"Me no wantee.

"It doesn't matter a rap what you want. If Gunten's got the money, he's got to refund it."

"But—but—" stammered Yen Chin.

"Well, but what?"

The Chinese blinked helplessly at the chums. Evidently he was nonplussed, and dismayed, too, at the idea of Gunten being asked for the money.

"Suppose—suppose—" he stammered.

"Well, suppose what?" grunted Bob.

"Suppose Missy Meadee goee desk, findee money, gonee!" mumbled Yen Chin. "Velly angly."

Bob knitted his brows.

"I—I suppose she might miss the money any time," he muttered. "Oh, you awful little villain! There may be no time to get it back from Gunten before—" He paused.

"Me go dlownee in cleek—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Bob irritably.

"Enough of that, Yen Chin," said Beauclerc quietly. "Talk sense. The question is what's to be done?"

"Me knowee."

"Well?"

"Nicey ole Bob givee me twentee dollee, and me puttee in desk, allee samee," suggested Yen Chin. "Then allee light."

"We've not got twenty dollars," said Frank Richards.

"Borrow him," suggested Yen Chin.

The three chums looked at the Chinese and at one another. Yen Chin seemed to be satisfied that theirs were the right shoulders to bear the burden.

"Borrow the money!" repeated Bob.

"I—I suppose we could do that. But—but— Look here, Yen Chin, if we raise the money, and trust to getting it back from Gunten, will you go straight to Miss Meadows and confess what you've done, and hand her the dollars?"

"Missy Meadee velly angly with pool lil' Chinee."

"You've done wrong—awful wrong, Yen Chin," said Frank Richards quietly. "You don't seem to understand it, but what you've done is a crime. It's up to you to confess to Miss Meadows, and hand the money back. If we find the money, will you do it?"

The little heathen's eyes glistened for a moment.

"Flanky tinkee all l'ghtee if do?" he asked.

"Yes, yes."

"Me do as nicey ole Flanky say."

"Well, I suppose that's good enough," said Bob Lawless. "Give Miss Meadows the money, and tell her you're sorry, and hope for the best. It's the only thing now. And we'll see you go into her room, too, you young rascal."

"Me goey."

"Wait here for us," said Frank.

The Cedar Creek fellows were starting for home, and there was no time to lose. In their own possession the chums had half the amount required, and it was necessary to borrow ten dollars.

Fortunately, their credit was good at the lumber school. Tom Lawrence, Dick Dawson, and Hopkins had the honour of making contributions—to be paid back the following week. And the chums rejoined Yen Chin, with the whole sum of twenty dollars in their possession.

The Celestial's almond eyes glittered at the sight of the money. Bob Lawless took him by the pigtail.

"Now you'll come to Miss Meadows," he said. "We'll see you as far as her door."

"Nicey ole Bob!" murmured Yen Chin.

"Oh, dry up with your soft sawder!" grunted Bob.

He led the Chinese into the lumber school; Yen Chin was not exactly to be trusted, Bob Lawless tapped at the door of Miss Meadows' sitting-room.

"Come in!" came the voice of the schoolmistress.

"Go in!" whispered Bob.

Yen Chin nodded, and entered the sitting-room, closing the door after him. Bob rejoined his chums outside the building.

"All right now," he said. "I've landed

him with Miss Meadows. We'll wait till he comes out."

And Frank Richards and Co. waited, somewhat troubled in mind by the heavy financial liability they had incurred, but feeling that they had done the best thing possible under the circumstances.

They would not have felt so satisfied on that point, however, if they could have witnessed the interview between Yen Chin and the schoolmistress of Cedar Creek. Well as they knew the deceptiveness of the little heathen, they were far from fathoming Yen Chin's duplicity on this occasion.

"What is it, Yen Chin?" asked the Canadian schoolmistress kindly, as the little Chinese presented himself.

"Yen Chin velly solly—"

"What have you done?"

"Me losee nicey ole book Missy Meadee givee me," said Yen Chin tearfully. "Lossee nicey ole book in cleek. Me velly bad boy."

Miss Meadows smiled.

"That is not very serious, my boy," she answered.

"Me velly bad boy. You givee me stickee."

"Not at all. I shall give you another book," said Miss Meadows kindly. "You will take more care of this one, Yen Chin?"

"Me takee velly great care. Missy Meadee velly good to pool lil' Chinee."

"Which book was it, Yen Chin?"

"Jolaphy."

"Oh, geography."

"Nicey ole jolaphy bookee."

Miss Meadows rose, and selected a new schoolbook from a shelf and handed it to the Chinese.

"Me tanky Missy Meadee velly muchee!" murmured Yen Chin gratefully.

And he tucked the book away inside his loose garments, and left the schoolmistress' sitting-room. Outside the door he grinned and gave a silent chuckle. But his yellow face was very serious as he joined the chums, waiting for him in the porch. Arrived there, he rubbed his hands together hard, and sobbed a little.

"Well?" said Frank Richards.

"Allee light!" moaned Yen Chin. "Me givee money, and Miss Meadee velly mad with pool lil' Chinee. Givee me muchee stickee!"

"Well, if that's all you've got, you've got off cheap," said Frank Richards, with a deep breath of relief. "You'd better keep straight after this, Yen Chin."

"Me keeppee velly staight."

"And now we'll get off to Thompson and see Gunten," said Bob Lawless grimly. "He owes us twenty dollars. What are you grinning at, Yen Chin, you Chinese image?"

"Me feelee velly happy now allee light!"

"Better keep it all right, then, now it is all right. Come on, you chaps! You're going home our way, Yen Chin. Come on!"

"Me comee with nicey ole Bob!"

The four schoolboys rode away together,

last out of the gates ere Black Sam closed them for the night. They rode up the Thompson trail; but Yen Chin soon dropped behind. Frank Richards looked back at him.

"Get a move on, kid!" he called out.

"Pool ole hoss tired," answered Yen Chin.

"Allee light, me follow!"

"Right-ho!"

Frank Richards and Co. rode on at a gallop, and the little Chinese was soon out of sight behind. When the Co. had disappeared, Yen Chin turned from the trail. His horse seemed lively enough now, and there was a grin on the little yellow face, as he followed a rough track through the timber, in the direction of the half-breeds' camp.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### Light at Last!

**H**ERE we are!" Frank Richards and Co. rode up with a clatter to the door of Gunten's store in Main Street at Thompson.

It was too late to catch Kern Gunten as he left Hillcrest School; but the business the chums had with him did not brook delay. They had determined to visit him at his home.

They left their horses tethered to a post outside, and strode into the store. There was the usual crowd in the store, and Old Man Gunten was at a counter. His son was not to be seen.

"Is your son about, Mr. Gunten?" asked Bob Lawless. "We've called to see him."

"I guess you'll find him inside," answered the storekeeper, without turning his head.

"Thanks!"

Frank Richards and Co. passed into the back parlour, where they found Kern Gunten at tea, with his chum Keller. Mrs. Gunten was not present, for which they were thankful.

Gunten jumped up in surprise at the sight of his visitors. Frank closed the door into the shop.

"What the thunder do you galoots want here?" demanded Gunten.

"I guess we've called for twenty dollars!" answered Bob Lawless.

Gunten stared at him blankly.

"Twenty dollars!" he repeated.

"Sure!"

"I reckon you've come to the wrong shop, then," said Gunten, with a laugh. "You won't get any dollars out of me."

"I'll put it plainly," said Bob. "Last week we made you give back the money you'd won from Yen Chin at cards. We're here now on the same stunt."

"Do you want it twice over?" sneered Gunten.

"Nope! We want twenty dollars this time, that you've swindled out of him. And we're not going without it. You can call in your father if you like, if you want him to know."

"I'll call in my father fast enough if you try to bulldoze me!" answered Gunten disdainfully. "I've not played with Yen Chin since that time, and not even seen him, except once at the half-breeds' camp in the timber. You won't bully twenty dollars out of me, I reckon!"

Bob Lawless started.

"You've seen Yen Chin at the half-breeds' camp!" he exclaimed.

"Yep. Some galoots go there to play poker with the traders—they're pretty well heeled!" grinned Gunten. "I saw Yen Chin there yesterday; he'd been playing euchre with Black Louis, and lost every cent he had. Louis Leronge is a tin terror with the pasteboards—I've found that out!"

"My hat!" murmured Frank Richards.

"Has he been raising money from you again?" asked Gunten, greatly amused.

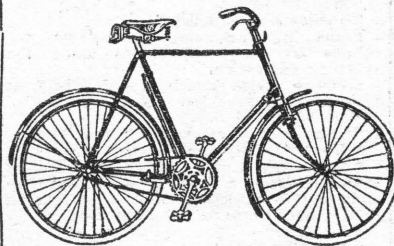
"Ha, ha, ha!—and losing it at the half-breeds' camp. You've been finding money for Black Louis to spend in fire-water. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" echoed Keller.

Bob Lawless stood dumb.

He had not doubted for a moment Yen Chin's statement that he had lost the money to Gunten; the previous affair had made him take that much for granted. But he remembered now the hesitation the Chinese had shown in naming Gunten. And the manner of the Swiss was not that of a guilty party. He evidently did not care whether his father was called in or not—and if he had been the

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guilty party he would certainly have shrunk from that.

In fact, a glimmering of the truth was dawning on Bob's mind now. Once more the cunning little heathen had fooled the good-natured chums of Cedar Creek.

"We can't take Gunten's word," said Frank Richards, breaking the silence.

Gunten gave a sneering laugh.

"You can suit yourselves about that," he answered.

"Keller here knows that I haven't played with the Chinese. You can ask Dicky Bird, if you like, whether Yen Chin has been anywhere near our school. If Yen Chin says I've won his money, he lies. By gum, he hasn't had any money for me to win that I know of—he only had a dollar about him when he played with Black Louis, and he lost that on the game."

"Only a dollar!" repeated Beauclerc.

"Sure!"

"He had twenty dollars——" began Frank Richards.

Gunten laughed again.

"He's been stuffing you," he answered.

"You made me give him back his ten dollars last week, so he's spun you a yarn about

"We've been done!" said Frank. "It's too late now——"

Bob Lawless' eyes gleamed.

"I know my way to the half-breeds' camp," he said. "Are you fellows game to come with me?"

"Phew! But——"

"We may catch Yen Chin there before he's gambled away our money."

"But the half-breeds——"

"I'll borrow a gun, and then I guess they won't chip in!" said Bob determinedly.

"I'm not letting that money go without a tussle. Hallo! Billy Cook! Billy Cook!"

The stalwart figure of the ranch foreman loomed up in the light of the store-front.

"Hallo, young Bob! What are you young scallywags doing in Thompson?" asked the ranchman, eyeing them.

Bob Lawless explained hastily. Billy Cook chuckled.

"You're a set of young jays!" he remarked. "I guess I'll come with you. I've got my rifle on my saddle, and I rather reckon Louis Lerongé won't argify with

their horses, they caught sight of the Chinese. He was seated on a log near the fire, and a black-browed half-breed was seated on the other end of it, shuffling a pack of greasy cards.

The game did not seem to have commenced yet. Yen Chin had apparently found the half-breed traders at their evening meal. Some of them were still eating as Frank Richards and Co. came up.

Black Louis looked up, and scowled as he saw the Cedar Creek fellows. He evidently remembered his previous meeting with them.

His hand made a movement, which seemed instinctive, towards the hunting-knife in his belt.

Billy Cook dismounted, and carelessly lifted the rifle from his saddle. The ranch foreman was ready for trouble, if trouble arose.

"That's your antelope, I guess?" he remarked, jerking his head towards Yen Chin.

The little Chinese spun round on the log.

His yellow face was the picture of dismay at the sight of Frank Richards and Co.

"Flanky!" he muttered.

"You heathen!" shouted Bob Lawless,



**ROUNDING UP THE MEXICAN TRADERS!** Black Louis made a savage stride towards Bob Lawless, the hunting-knife half drawn from his belt, but Billy Cook thrust forward his rifle. His finger was on the trigger. "Go slow!" said the rancher. "I guess you'll find trouble if you don't let Yen Chin come away quietly." (See Chapter 5.)

twenty dollars, thinking you could screw it out of me. You jolly well won't, though."

Bob Lawless shook his head.

"It's not that!" he said. "He didn't want to give us your name. I—I think now——"

"Where is he?" asked Gunten. "Let him come here and say to my face that he's played with me since that row last week."

"He was coming with us, but he dropped behind on the trail——"

"Most likely to go to the half-breeds' camp!" grinned Gunten. "If he's got any money about him, that's where he's bound for you bet!"

Frank Richards jumped.

"Bob——" he ejaculated.

"Oh, he has some money then, has he?" asked Gunten, grinning. "Have you been lending him any? Ha, ha, ha! Did you give him the twenty dollars you thought you were going to squeeze out of me?"

And Gunten roared.

Frank Richards and Co. looked at one another with sickly looks. The duplicity of the rascally heathen was dawning upon them at last. Gunten and Keller chuckled explosively.

that! Get on your horses, and I calculate I'll see you through!"

And in a minute more the three schoolboys and the ranch foreman were riding away into the timber, heading for the camp of Black Louis.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**

**Caught in Time!**

**A** FLARE of red flame danced on the dark foliage. In the midst of the timber, the camp of the half-breed traders was pitched in a little grassy glade. Half a dozen rudely-built shacks stood close by a trickling spring, and close by them a camp-fire blazed and roared.

Five or six figures moved about in the ruddy glare of the fire. As many horses and two or three pack-mules were tethered close at hand. It was a wild, picturesque scene that burst upon the view of Frank Richards and Co. as they came in sight of the half-breeds' camp.

A pony they knew well was cropping the grass in the glade, and it was evidence enough that Yen Chin was there. And as they came towards the camp-fire, walking

grasping him by the shoulder. "Get up! You're coming away with us!"

Yen Chin wriggled.

"No can come!" he gasped.

"And you'll give us the twenty dollars, you swindling little rascal!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

Bob Lawless dragged the Celestial to his feet, and there was a plaintive wail from Yen Chin:

"You lettee lone! You go away, ugly ole Bob! We wantee playee poken!"

"I'll give you playing poker!" growled Bob, shaking him. "You awful rascal——"

"Yaroooh!"

Black Louis sprang to his feet, his eyes glittering under his beetling brows.

"Let up!" he rapped out savagely. "Let the Chow alone! What business is it of yours?"

"This much—that he's fooled us into handing him the money you want to win from him!" retorted Bob hotly. "And he's not going to lose a cent of it here! So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

(Continued on page 26.)

**Keep Your Eyes Open for "The Shadow of Disgrace!" Next Week!**

"Lovell, this isn't the way to treat your minor, his first day in the school!"

"You—you don't understand—" stammered Lovell.

"No, I don't!" said Bulkeley sharply. "What's he doing up here, anyway? Has he seen the Head?"

"Yes, yes! I—I just met Mr. Bohun downstairs, and he told me to bring my minor to his study."

"Well, that's not the way to take him—by the collar. Lovell minor, you can clear off, and go to your Form-master at once!"

Lovell minor looked at Bulkeley rebelliously. But there was something in the big Sixth-Former's manner that stopped the rebellious words on Teddy's lips. Teddy did not know who the Sixth-Former was, but he understood that he was not a person to be "cheeked."

"I don't know where he is," he answered sullenly.

"You might have shown your minor the way about, Lovell."

"I—I—"

"Well, I'll take him! Come with me, kid!"

Bulkeley went down the stairs again, and did not look back to see whether the fag was following. He took that for granted. But Master Teddy hesitated, in two minds whether to follow the prefect, or to return to Peel's study and finish his smoke.

"You'd better go, kid!" said Putty of the Fourth good-naturedly. "That chap is captain of the school, you know. Cut after him!"

Lovell opened his lips, and closed them again. If he had told Teddy to follow Bulkeley, it was pretty certain that the fag would have refused to go. Even after what had passed, poor Lovell was anxious to protect the obstinate fag from his own folly.

Fortunately for Teddy, he decided to do as Bulkeley had told him, and after a last glare at his major he trotted down the stairs after the Sixth-Former.

Bulkeley glanced round in the lower passage, and found the fag at his heels.

"This way!" he said.

He led the way to Mr. Bohun's study, and knocked at the door.

"Lovell minor, sir!" he said, opening the door.

"Thank you, Bulkeley! Come in, Lovell minor!"

Teddy Lovell entered the study, and Bulkeley closed the door and walked away. Lovell was looking over the banisters, anxious to see whether Teddy was in for more trouble, and greatly relieved to see him disappear quietly into Mr. Bohun's study. Bulkeley glanced up at him.

"Lovell!" he rapped out.

"Yes, Bulkeley!" muttered the Fourth-Former.

"That minor of yours is new here. It would be only decent to look after him a bit at first, and help him through!"

"I—I—"

"And taking him by the collar isn't the way to do it!" said Bulkeley gruffly. "Try to be a bit better-tempered with him!"

And the captain of Rookwood walked on, without waiting for a reply from the unfortunate Lovell. Lovell bit his lip hard, and came down the stairs to wait for his minor. It was some time before Teddy emerged from Mr. Bohun's study, and when he did so his face was dark and sulky. His eyes glittered as he saw his brother in the passage.

"How did you get on with your Form-master, Teddy?" asked Lovell, speaking as calmly and cordially as he could.

"Find out!"

"Teddy, old chap—"

"Oh, shut up! Let me alone!"

Lovell minor turned his back on his major and walked away. Lovell made a movement to follow him, and then desisted.

With a heavy heart he ascended the stairs and passed through a grinning crowd in the Fourth-Form passage to the end study. In that study he found Jimmy Silver & Co., who assumed an elaborate unconsciousness of the scene in the passage. Lovell gave them a grim look, pulled out his books, and started on his preparation, with a knitted brow. It was not a happy evening in the end study.

THE END.

(There will be another fine long complete story of Rookwood in next week's bumper issue.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 250.

## "DONE AGAIN!"

(Continued from page 21.)

"Hands off, I tell you!" growled the half-breed.

"You'll see!" answered Bob; and he swung the yelling Yen Chin towards his pony. "Get on that hoss, you rascal!"

Black Louis made a savage stride towards Bob, the hunting-knife half drawn from his belt. Billy Cook thrust his rifle forward. His finger was on the trigger, and his steady eye gleamed along the barrel with a deadly gleam.

"Go slow!" said the Canadian ranchman laconically. "I guess you'll find trouble if you don't, my Injun friend!"

Black Louis halted, and the other half-breeds, with lowering looks, gathered round him. Billy Cook eyed them coolly.

"Nope, I reckon I wouldn't try a rush if I was you," he remarked. "Cause Why? Black Louis gets the first ball, and I reckon I've another for some of you! And the sheriff of Thompson has a rope for the whole crowd if there's bloodshed in this section. I reckon I'd go slow!"

Billy Cook's advice was too good not to be taken. The half-breeds went slow—very slow indeed. Black Louis jammed the knife back into his belt and turned away with a muttered oath.

The hapless Chinese was thrown upon his pony, with a weebegone face. Then Bob Lawless held out his hand.

"Twenty dollars," he said briefly—"and sharp, before I start on you with my whip!"

"Niecey ole Bob—"

Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!" yelled Yen Chin. "Allee light! Me wantee payee nicey ole Bob!"

With a dolorous face, the heathen handed out the twenty dollars—fortunately, still safe in his pocket, owing to the prompt pursuit.

"Now, you goey 'way!" he said disconsolately.

"We're going," agreed Bob, "and you're coming, too!"

"Me stayee—"

Whack!

"Lettee up!" yelled Yen Chin. "Me comee! Me wantee comee!"

"Come, then!"

And Yen Chin came!

The next day, at the lumber school, Yen Chin was all repentance and pathetic looks. But his pathetic looks were wasted on Frank Richards and Co., and when he sidled up to them, Bob Lawless' heavy boot cut short his remarks, and he fled. The heathen Chinese had passed the limit this time, and there was no more forgiveness for him.

THE END.

(You simply must not miss next Tuesday's roaring Wild West yarn. It's the real goods! Tell all your pals about it!)

## "RESTORING THEIR RIGHTS!"

(Continued from page 18.)

So saying, Tom Merry handed over the petition. A hush fell upon the assembly as the Head perused it. It was a hush of expectancy. What would the Head do? Would he be very angry? And, if so, would his anger be directed against the fellows who had signed the petition, or against Mr. Ratcliff?

Having read the petition the Head folded it up and put it in his pocket.

"You may leave this matter in my hands, Merry," he said quietly.

"Thank you, sir!"

The fellows on the platform formed a gangway for the Head to pass through. And a taxicab conveyed Dr. Holmes up to the school.

The St. Jim's fellows followed, excitedly discussing the petition, and the possible consequences.

When the Head arrived at the school the first thing he did was to send for Mr. Ratcliff.

Nobody knew what passed at that interview between headmaster and House-master. But it was observed that Mr. Ratcliff looked even more sour and ill-tempered than usual when he emerged from the Head's study.

"The Head's given him a jolly good dressing-down, I expect," said Jack Blake. "Serve him jolly well right—the old tyrant!"

"Yes, rather!"

Later in the evening an announcement appeared on the school notice-board—an announcement which sent the St. Jim's fellows into ecstasies of delight.

"NOTICE.

The ban on football has been removed; and those who have had footballs confiscated should apply to Mr. Ratcliff for their return.

(Signed) "RICHARD HOLMES,

"Headmaster."

That was all; but it was enough. Mr. Ratcliff's brief reign of terror had come to an end. That was one good thing. And the Anti-Football League had come to an end. That was another good thing.

The grand old game of football would be revived with renewed zest at St. Jim's, and—to quote a time-worn phrase of Monty Lowther's—everything in the garden was lovely!

THE END.

(Next week's splendid tale of the chums of St. Jim's has a laugh in every line. Don't forget—the title is "Glyn's Spectroscope!")

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