

**THE SEARCH FOR THE UNKNOWN HERO!**

Who saved Mr. Peckover's life one dark night on the Thompson Trail? That is a problem with which the headmaster of Hillcrest is faced. There is a big reward out for the hero, and so attractive that it draws forth two claimants. One is Chunky and the other the little Chinese of Cedar Creek. Who is the hero?



**Wanted -  
a  
Hero!**



Another Roaring, Long, Complete Story, dealing with the adventures of **FRANK RICHARDS & CO.**, the chums of Cedar Creek, the Lumber School of the Canadian Backwoods.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**

**Chunky Catches It!**

**Y**OU'RE in for it!" Chunky Todgers made that remark as Frank Richards & Co. dismounted at the gates of Cedar Creek in the frosty morning. "Who's in for it, fathead, and why?" inquired Frank Richards politely.

Chunky Todgers jerked a fat thumb towards the lumber schoolhouse. "Look!" he answered.

The chums of Cedar Creek looked. Outside the porch of the schoolhouse they sighted a thin, angular figure—the well known ungainly form of Mr. Ephraim Peckover, the headmaster of Hillcrest School.

Mr. Peckover was in conversation with Miss Meadows, the headmistress of Cedar Creek, who was in the porch.

As the chums looked at him he stepped into the porch, evidently accepting an invitation from Miss Meadows to enter the house.

"Oh, gum!" groaned Bob Lawless. "Peckover again! What does he want here this morning?"

"Us!" said Vere Beauclere, with a smile.

Frank Richards frowned. "He may just have called on Miss Meadows," he remarked. "He mayn't be on the war-path, you chaps."

"Rats! He's after you!" grinned Chunky Todgers.

"How do you know, Fatty?" "He was after you last time," said Todgers. "I'll bet you a Canadian dollar to a red cent that he's after your scalp! You've been over to Hillcrest again, rowing with Dicky Bird—"

"We haven't!" growled Bob Lawless.

"Or snowballing old Peckover again!" grinned Chunky. "You're in for it! It will be a licking this time! I say, the cane is rather nasty on a frosty morning!"

"Oh, dry up!" "Peckover didn't look so sour as usual," said Chunky. "I dare say that means mischief, though. Most likely

he's feeling happy because he's going to see you caned. You really should let him alone, you know. Peckover is dangerous."

"You silly ass!" exclaimed Frank Richards. "We haven't done anything this time, at any rate."

"I guess Peckover thinks you have!" chuckled Todgers. "He's gone in for a pow-wow with Miss Meadows now. You'll be called in soon. You galoots do have bad luck, and no mistake!"

"Br-r-r!" grunted Bob. Chunky Todgers chortled, apparently seeing something amusing in the bad luck of the Cedar Creek Co. But his fat chortle suddenly ceased as the exasperated chums collared him and sat him down in the snow.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Chunky. Frank Richards & Co. led their horses to the corral, not in a good humour, leaving Master Todgers roaring.

"Yow-ow-ow! Gimme a hand up!" howled Chunky. "Oh dear! Yen Chin, you grinning heathen, gimme a hand up!"

"Me velly glad helpee Chunkee," said Yen Chin, the little Chinese of Cedar Creek. "Oh, yes!"

He grasped Chunky's podgy hands and pulled him up, but apparently Chunky's weight, which was considerable, was too much for Yen Chin. Chunky was nearly on his feet when he was suddenly let fall again, and the little Celestial collapsed upon him. There was a smothered roar from Todgers as he was squashed in the thick snow.

"Groooooooch!" "Pool ole Chunkee hurt?" inquired Yen Chin, as he sat upon the chest of the fat schoolboy.

"Yow-ow! Gerroff!" "Yen Chin solly—"

"Gerroff, you pesky heathen!" howled Chunky Todgers. "Lemme gerrup! I'll pulverise you!"

"Pool lil' Chinese tly helpee Chun-kee—"

"Gerroff!" Chunky Todgers struggled furiously

under the Chinese, who grinned down at his flushed and furious face serenely. Yen Chin of Cedar Creek had his own peculiar sense of humour.

"Lil' Chinese outee bleath," he explained. "When gettee bleath, gettee up and helpee Chunkee again—oh yes!"

"Draggimoff, somebody!" wailed Chunky Todgers. "Lawrence, Dawson, you grinning jays, drag him off, will you? I'm being smothered!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tom Lawrence took the Chinese by the pigtail and jerked him off the hapless Chunky. That fat youth scrambled breathlessly to his feet, with a deadly gleam in his eyes.

"Hold him a minute till I get my breath!" he gasped.

Yen Chin jerked his pigtail away and fled, hotly pursued across the playground by Chunky Todgers. The little Chinese dodged in at the porch of the schoolhouse, well ahead of his fat pursuer.

A minute later Chunky Todgers came pounding in at top speed.

In the hall inside Mr. Peckover, of Hillcrest, was standing speaking to Miss Meadows, but Chunky had no time to see him or to stop. He rushed in, and collided with the Hillcrest master's back.

Crash! Chunky Todger's weight was no light matter, so to speak, and Mr. Peckover was taken quite by surprise by that sudden and unexpected attack in the rear. He pitched forward helplessly, and Miss Meadows had just time to jump back, narrowly escaping an embrace from the Hillcrest master. As it was, Mr. Peckover fell on his knees, and a casual observer at that moment might have supposed that he was proposing to Miss Meadows.

"Oh!" gasped Chunky, as he staggered back from the shock.

"Oh!" stuttered Mr. Peckover. "What—what—what—"

"Bless my soul!" said Miss Meadows.

"I—I—I— Ow!" came from Mr. Peckover, as he blinked round, still on

his knees. "I—I have been assaulted! Ow!"

"Todgers!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "How dare you!"

"I—I guess I didn't see!" stammered Chunky. "I—I'm sorry, ma'am. I—I—I—"

"You young rascal!" shouted Mr. Peckover, as he staggered up. "Really, Miss Meadows, this—this—this—"

"I am very sorry, Mr. Peckover. Todgers will be punished severely."

"I—I guess I didn't see him, Miss Meadows. I—"

"Come here, Todgers!"

"Oh dear!"

"Kindly excuse me a moment, Mr. Peckover, while I punish Todgers."

"Certainly, madam!" gasped Mr. Peckover. "With pleasure!"

"You will fetch the cane from my desk, Todgers."

"Oh dear!"

"At once!"

Chunky Todgers fetched the cane. A grinning face looked at him in the school-room as he fetched it; but Chunky had no time to waste on Yen Chin just then. He carried the cane to Miss Meadows, and was rewarded by a "lick" on each fat hand, a proceeding which Mr. Peckover watched with evident satisfaction. Chunky Todgers tucked his fat hands under his arms and rolled dismally out into the playground, while Mr. Peckover followed Miss Meadows to her study. The "pow-wow" was apparently not over yet.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Happy Anticipations!

**F**RANK RICHARDS & CO. came away from the corral, after putting up their horses, with rather worried looks.

The appearance of Mr. Peckover at Cedar-Creek that morning was quite unexpected by the chums.

More than once—many times, in fact—the Hillcrest master had laid a complaint before Miss Meadows concerning the cheery Co; but on the present occasion they were quite unaware of any cause for complaint. But they felt a foreboding that Mr. Peckover's visit had to do with their honourable selves.

"It's come out, somehow, I guess," said Bob Lawless. "Peckover has found out that it was you over at Hillcrest last evening, Franky."

"Looks like it," grunted Frank. "Dash it all, it was lucky for him I was there, as I chipped in when that ruffian, Keno Kit, was going to knock him on the head. But I was sure that he didn't recognise me in the dark."

"Looks as if he did, after all."

"Anyhow, he can't have anything to complain of, in the circumstances," remarked Vere Beauclerc. "You saved him from being robbed—may even have saved his life."

"Bother him!" said Frank. "Whether he complains or not doesn't make much difference, if he recognised me. Miss Meadows will be awfully wild if she knows I went over to Hillcrest at all, when I was supposed to be detained in the school-room. And after she gave us strict orders not to go near the place again without permission, too!"

"You had to go, to explain to Dicky Bird—"

"Miss Meadows won't see that."

"No, I suppose she won't," agreed Beauclerc. "It's got to be kept dark, if possible. Of course, Peckover may have come over about something else. Not a word till we're sure that it's found out, anyhow."

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The discussion ceased as Chunky Todgers joined the chums in the playground. Frank Richards' visit to Hillcrest was to be kept a secret, if possible. It was true that that visit had turned out very fortunately for Mr. Peckover; but that did not alter the fact that it had been made in direct disregard of Miss Meadows' strict injunctions. Frank had had good reasons for going—good, at least, from his own point of view—and he had felt justified in breaking detention for the purpose. But it was not much use expecting his headmistress to agree with him.

It was not only the punishment involved that troubled the chums; but disobedience of Miss Meadows' orders, so soon after they had been given, savoured of disrespect, if the matter came out. Frank Richards did not want Miss Meadows to think him wanting in respect.

"Well, what are you grinning at, you fat jay?" asked Bob Lawless as Chunky Todgers came up. "Do you want to be bumped in the snow again?"

Chunky backed away.

"Here, no larks!" he exclaimed. "I say, I've downed old Peckover!"

"What?"

"Cannoned into him from behind, and fairly sent him flying!" grinned Chunky. "I've been caned for it—ow! But I don't care. Fairly knocked him spinning, you know!"

"Gammon!"

"I did!" howled Chunky indignantly. "You wouldn't have had the nerve. I had! I bumped right into the pesky galoot—"

"Rats!"

"And knocked him over!"

"Bosh!"

"But I did!" howled Chunky Todgers wrathfully. "And I'm the only chap at Cedar Creek who'd have had the nerve."

"If you did, it was an accident!" growled Bob.

"Not a bit of it," said Chunky obstinately. "I rushed right into him, you know. I made out it was an accident; but—"

"And so it was, you fat fraud!" said Frank Richards. "Here, collar him, and roll him in the snow!"

But Chunky Todgers did not wait to be rolled in the snow. He departed hurriedly, to spread further the tale of his heroism in "flooring" the obnoxious Mr. Peckover. But, to his great exasperation, he found no believers. Every fresh hearer positively declined to believe that Chunky had floored Mr. Peckover intentionally and with malice aforethought. And the more Chunky asserted that he had the more they declared that he hadn't, and the hapless Chunky realised that he might as well have told the truth.

Mr. Slimmey came out of the School House, and called the Cedar Creek fellows into the school-room. It was not quite time for morning lessons to begin, but nearly all Cedar Creek had arrived. The assembling of the school showed that something was "up"; and it was pretty clear that that "something" was in connection with Mr. Peckover's visit. Frank Richards & Co. thought that they could guess what it was, and their faces were rather grim as they took their places in the school-room with the rest.

"Somebody's got to be identified, I guess," remarked Eben Hacke. "Old Peckover is complaining again, and he's after somebody. Have you been up to some of your stunts, Lawless?"

"Nope!" grunted Bob.

"Richards, perhaps. You don't look very cheery, Richards," grinned Hacke.

"I say, I hear that Miss Meadows is going to complain to Mr. Lawless if you show up at Hillcrest again, after the rows

you've had there. What will your uncle do, Richards?"

"Oh, rats!" said Frank crossly.

He was not inclined to discuss that matter.

Certainly his uncle would be angry if he received a formal complaint from Frank's headmistress, and the prospect was not pleasant.

Indeed, now that it was too late, Frank Richards realised that it would have been wiser not to have paid that visit to Dicky Bird at Hillcrest, in the face of Miss Meadows' stern prohibition.

But it was too late, and Frank could only hope that the matter was not to come to light, though his hope was very faint now.

There was a hush in the crowded school-room as Miss Meadows entered with Mr. Peckover. If there was going to be a storm, it was evidently about to burst.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Wanted—A Hero!

**M**R. PECKOVER glanced round the crowded room, and the Cedar Creek fellows noticed with surprise that the Hillcrest's master's face was not wearing its usual sour expression.

For once, the unpleasant gentleman seemed to be in a good temper.

But Frank Richards & Co. were not relieved. It was only too probable that good-humour on Mr. Peckover's part meant that he had a happy anticipation of witnessing the administration of punishment.

That even Ephraim Peckover might have some kindly qualities concealed under his sour exterior was a possibility that hardly occurred to them.

A pin might have been heard to drop in the big school-room. Every fellow was waiting to learn who was the victim. They did not dream, so far, that there was not to be a victim at all.

It was Miss Meadows who spoke first; while Ephraim Peckover glanced round at the crowded boys and girls, still with that unaccustomed expression of benevolence upon his hard countenance.

Miss Meadows raised her hand to command attention; but it was not necessary. Every eye was fixed on the Canadian schoolmistress and Mr. Peckover.

"I have a question to put to the school," said Miss Meadows. "I desire to know whether any Cedar-Creek boy was near Hillcrest School yesterday about nightfall."

Frank Richards gave an involuntary start.

He had the best of reasons for knowing that a Cedar Creek fellow had been there, for he was the fellow.

But he was not called upon to condemn himself, and he remained silent. He thought that Miss Meadows' eye lingered on him. Perhaps she had seen him start. The colour deepened in his cheeks.

"It is not a question of any wrongdoing," Miss Meadows added quickly. "Mr. Peckover has called to tell me that last evening an attack was made upon him near his school by some unknown ruffian, who attempted to rob him. He was aided by a boy whom he did not recognise in the darkness, and saved from robbery, perhaps severe injury."

"Oh!" murmured Frank, in great relief.

Mr. Peckover had not recognised him, after all, that was clear. And it was growing clear, too, that this visit of the Hillcrest master was not of a hostile nature.

Exactly what he had come for was rather a puzzle. But that, too, was soon made clear.

"Mr. Peckover is assured that his rescuer was not a Hillcrest boy," continued Miss Meadows. "It seems that the lad hurried away, after rendering assistance, for some unknown reason. Mr. Peckover thinks it may have been a boy belonging to this school, and he desires to ascertain whether that was the case."

"Phew!" muttered Bob Lawless. "The boy in question acted very bravely," said Miss Meadows. "He took a very great risk upon himself in going to Mr. Peckover's assistance. If that boy is now present, let him step forward, and receive Mr. Peckover's thanks for his gallant action."

There was a buzz, and then silence.

Frank Richards did not move.

Only his chums Beauclerc and Bob Lawless, knew that he was the unknown rescuer of Mr. Peckover, and it was evident now that the secret could be kept. Mr. Peckover's thanks were not greatly desired. Frank was quite indifferent on that point; but he wanted very much to keep Miss Meadows from learning that he had disobeyed her commands.

Fortunately, Miss Meadows did not think of Frank, or the colour in his cheeks might have excited suspicion. She was aware that Frank had been detained in the Cedar Creek school-room at the time of Mr. Peckover's rescue, and she had not the remotest suspicion that he had quitted it by way of the window for that eventful visit to Hillcrest.

In the silence that followed, Mr. Peckover took up the tale, as it were.

"My boys," he said, with quite a genial tone in his rusty voice, "if the brave lad who helped me last night is present, I shall be very glad to know him. I had a narrow escape from severe injury, perhaps death. This lad came to my rescue in the most gallant manner. I hope I am grateful."

"Oh gum!" murmured Bob.

He had never suspected Mr. Peckover before of being of a grateful nature.

"I was also saved from a considerable loss," continued Mr. Peckover. "I had drawn a sum of money from the bank in Thompson, and no doubt the thief had watched me, and waylaid me on purpose to obtain it. I desire very much to know who it was that assisted me. The boy ran away before I could recognise him, which makes me think it was most likely a boy belonging to this school."

Some of the Cedar Creek boys grinned.

"It may be some boy whom I have punished for visiting Hillcrest and entering into disputes with my boys," said Mr. Peckover. "If so, I assure him that I forgive him freely. If he is present, let him stand forward. I desire to thank him for the aid he rendered; and I have also brought with me a slight gift as a reward."

Bob Lawless closed one eye at Frank.

"Now's your chance to bag ten cents, old chap!" he murmured.

"Shurrup!" whispered Frank.

Mr. Peckover was fumbling in his pocket.

To the astonishment of the school, he produced a banknote.

"Let the boy step forward and accept this fifty-dollar bill as a reward for his gallant action!" he said.

"Fifty dollars!"

There was quite a buzz.

Mr. Peckover was not known as a generous gentleman—quite the reverse. If he had produced a dollar, or at the most a five-dollar bill, it would have

been more in keeping with what Cedar Creek thought of him.

But evidently Mr. Peckover, for once, was not doing things by halves. It was a bill for fifty dollars that he flourished rather grandly under the astonished gaze of the school.

But Frank Richards did not stir.

He did not want Mr. Peckover's money; indeed, he would have refused a reward for his services, in any case.

But, to Frank's amazement, a claimant was not wanting!

There was a stir in the class as a fat and podgy figure hustled forward. And then there was a howl.

"Todgers!"

"Chunky Todgers!"

"Oh Jerusalem!"

Chunky Todgers rolled out before the class, with a flushed, fat face.

"Here I am, sir!" he gasped.

"Todgers!" howled Bob Lawless blankly.

"My hat!"

Frank Richards caught Todgers by the shoulder.

"You fat rogue——" he began.

"Leggo!"

"You—you——"

"You lemme go, Frank Richards! Mr. Peckover's waiting for me!" gasped Chunky Todgers.

"But you—you didn't——"

"Yes, I did! I'm the chap!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Chunky Todgers jerked himself away from Frank's grasp and rolled on towards Mr. Peckover. Arrived before that gentleman, he held out a fat hand.

"I'm your man, sir!" he gasped.

"You, Todgers!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"Yes, ma'am!" said Chunky confidently.

"Bless my soul!"

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Rival Claimants!

**C**HUNKY TODGERS' fat hand was extended for the fifty-dollar bill. To do the fat and fatuous Chunky justice, he was thinking less of the cash than of the glory involved in the affair.

To shine in the eyes of his school-fellows was Chunky's great ambition; but he was, unhappily, not endowed by nature with the qualities that shine. Any glory acquired by Chunky had to be reflected glory, as it were.

And this seemed a safe opportunity for imitating the jackdaw who borrowed the plumes of the peacock.

Nobody else had claimed the glory or the cash, which seemed to Chunky a certain indication that the claimant was not present. If any other fellow wasn't entitled to make the claim, Chunky saw no reason why he shouldn't make it. There were plenty of reasons, certainly; but Chunky Todgers did not stop to think of them. It was a case of now or never, and Chunky rushed in without stopping to do much thinking.

"So it was you, Todgers!" exclaimed Mr. Peckover, with an expression of something like disbelief in his face.

"Yes, sir," said Chunky. "I'm jolly glad I was there, sir!"

"Why did you not stop to speak when I called to you after you had rendered me assistance?"

"I—I—I cleared off, sir," stammered Chunky, "because——because you're always so rotten, sir——"

"What?"

"I—I mean, you're so waxy if a Cedar Creek chap comes round Hillcrest," stammered Chunky Todgers; "that's why, sir. Besides, I'm so modest, I didn't want you to thank me!"



**THE RIVAL HEROES!** Little Yen Chin pushed his way out of the class. "Me speakee!" he exclaimed. "Me tellee tluth. Todgsee bad boy! Me helpees Mr. Peckovee and savee life—oh, yes! Me takee fitee dollae!" (See Chapter 4.)

"Indeed!"  
 "That's it, sir!"  
 "You acted very bravely, Todgers!"  
 said Miss Meadows.

Chunky purred.  
 "The fact is, I'm rather a brave chap, Miss Meadows," he said. "The other fellows don't think so, but I am. I'm not the galoot to brag, I hope; but I guess there ain't many galoots at Cedar Creek as brave as I am!"

"Ahem!"  
 "Well," said Mr. Peckover, "as it was you, Todgers—"  
 "Me speakee!"

It was a sudden piping voice from behind Frank Richards & Co.. Little Yen Chin, the Chinese, pushed his way out of the class.

"You may go to your place, Yen Chin!" rapped out Miss Meadows.

But the little Chinese came on.  
 "Me speakee—oh, yes!" he exclaimed.  
 "Me tellee tluth. Chunkee Todgee velly bad boy. Me, Yen Chin, good boy. Me helpee Mr. Peckovee!"

"What?"  
 "Poor li'l Chinee takee fitee dollee," said Yen Chin calmly. "Chunkee Todgee no tellee tluth. Me helpee Mr. Peckovee and savee lifee—oh, yes!"  
 "Upon my word!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

There was a buzz among the Cedar Creek crowd, which swelled to a roar. Everyone had been astonished by Chunky Todgers' statement that he was the unknown and gallant rescuer; but Yen Chin's additional claim fairly "put the lid on." For it was quite certain that there hadn't been two rescuers, and that one at least of the claimants was making a false claim, and there was a growing impression that both of them were doing so.

Mr. Peckover glanced from Chunky Todgers to Yen Chin, and from Yen Chin to Chunky Todgers, in a state of great bewilderment.

The double claim staggered him.  
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter in the crowded room. Miss Meadows frowned and raised her hand.

"Silence!"  
 It was not easy to restore silence, but the laughter died away at last. Miss Meadows did not seem to see any cause for merriment; her brows were wrinkled in a deep frown.

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Peckover, when his voice could be heard. "This is very extraordinary! Both these boys claim—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Silence! One of them is speaking untruthfully!" exclaimed Miss Meadows. "I am more shocked than I can say. Todgers—"

"It was me, ma'am!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers eagerly.

"What?"  
 "It was me!"

"Do you mean 'it was I'?" exclaimed Miss Meadows, irritated by Chunky's ungrammatical eagerness at that moment.

But Chunky did not understand that. Chunky Todgers never did understand anything in a hurry.

"Nunno, not you, Miss Meadows—me!" he said breathlessly. "I didn't mean it was you, of course. It was me."

"You should not say 'it was me.'"  
 "I didn't! I said it was me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
 "Be silent! Todgers, you are an utterly stupid boy! I mean that you should have used the nominative case."

"Me usee nominative casee if Missy Meadee wantee," said Yen Chin, apparently with the idea of ingratiating himself.

"Todgee bad boy; me, Yen Chin, good boy, velly blave. Me usee nominative casee."

"You are as stupid as Todgers!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, greatly exasperated. "Mr. Peckover, I am sorry that such a thing should have occurred here. I am ashamed of these boys. I mean, I am ashamed of one of them. Only one boy was on the spot when you were attacked, I understand?"

"Exactly!"  
 "Then one of these claims is false. Todgers, do you solemnly declare that you were the boy who aided Mr. Peckover last evening?"

For one brief moment Chunky Todgers hesitated.

He had not thought the matter out, and he had not quite realized that he was committing himself to a falsehood. He had supposed that the affair would pass off without questioning.

Yen Chin's unexpected claim changed all that. There was plainly going to be some very direct questioning.

But the hapless Chunky realized that he had committed himself now, and that it was too late for retreat.

He gasped out an affirmative.  
 "Yes, ma'am!"

The die was cast now!

"And you, Yen Chin?" said Miss Meadows, fixing her eyes upon the little Chinese. "You state that it was you who came to Mr. Peckover's aid?"

"Yes, Missy Meadee," said Yen Chin meekly.

"Extraordinary!" ejaculated Mr. Peckover.

"Although you did not recognise your assistant, Mr. Peckover, you may have observed whether it was a Chinese boy or not!"

Mr. Peckover shook his head.  
 "I caught only a glimpse of him in the dark," he answered, "and I was dazed with the struggle. I cannot say. The boy might have been white or yellow, or a Red Indian, for anything I know to the contrary."

Miss Meadows compressed her lips.  
 "It is most unfortunate," she said. "I think it would be better to investigate the matter a little. The false claimant must be punished."  
 "Most decidedly," said Mr. Peckover, with great approval.

"Todgers, what were you doing near Hillcrest School yesterday, after I had given orders that no Cedar Creek boy was to go there?" demanded the school-mistress.

"N-n-nothing, ma'am," stammered Todgers.

"You must have had some reason for going there, if you were there? Were you bent on a quarrel with Mr. Peckover's boys?"

"Oh, no—nope!"

"Then why—"

"I—I was just walking around!" stammered Chunky, realising that he was not well up in the details of the affair, in which he claimed to have played a leading part. "J-j-just walking around, Miss Meadows, and—and thinking! Hearing a scream for help—"

Chunky paused.

"Did you cry for help, Mr. Peckover?"

"I certainly shouted for help," said the Hillcrest master. "Several times, if I remember correctly. I did not scream."

"I—I meant shout," said Chunky Todgers hastily. "I don't know what made me say scream. Hearing a shout for help, I rushed up, and seized the villain—"

"You seized whom?"

"The—the villain, you know—the galoot who was tackling Mr. Peckover," said Chunky Todgers. "I felled him to the ground. Then I slid—"

"You what?"  
 "I—I mean, I vamoosed—"  
 "Todgers!"  
 "Got out!" gasped Chunky. "I mean I got out. I—I wanted to avoid thanks, you know. I—I—I'm so modest!"

"Stand aside for a moment, Todgers. Now, Yen Chin," said Miss Meadows, with a very worried look.

"Yes, Missy Meadee," murmured the little Celestial.

Mr. Peckover was looking on now, with a rather unpleasant expression on his face. His look seemed to imply that he was not at all surprised by this kind of happening at Cedar Creek; though it would never have happened at his own school. His assumption of superiority, subdued as it was, had a very irritating effect upon the Cedar Creek schoolmistress.

"Yen Chin, you were near Hillcrest School at nightfall yesterday?"

"Yes, Missy Meadee."

"What were you doing there?"

"Walking aloud, Missy Meadee."  
 "Tell me exactly what occurred?"

"Yes, missy. Healing a cly for help I—"

"What?"  
 "I lushed up, and seized the villain and—"

"Yen Chin!"  
 "I felled him to the ground—"

"Upon my word!"  
 "Then I slid!" said Yen Chin calmly.

"Dear me!"  
 "Is that all you have to say, Yen Chin?" gasped Miss Meadows.

"That is allee, missy."

"It does not seem possible to decide between these two boys," said Miss Meadows. "What is your opinion, Mr. Peckover?"

"I certainly could not undertake to decide," he answered. "I leave that to you, Miss Meadows. They are your boys."

Miss Meadows bit her lip.

"I—I—I say—" began Chunky.

"Well, Todgers?"

"I—I guess I'm willing to do the fair thing," exclaimed Todgers, whose eyes were following the fifty-dollar bill which Mr. Peckover was restoring to his pocket-book. "I—I say, suppose we go halves—"

"Halves!" repeated Miss Meadows blankly.

There was a yell from the Cedar Creek crowd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Miss Meadows angrily. "The next boy that laughs will be caned! Todgers, your suggestion makes me doubt whether you have any claim to be believed at all. The matter must remain undecided—for the present, at least. Go back to your places, both of you!"

"But, I say—"

"Missy Meadee—"

"Obey me at once!" snapped Miss Meadows.

And the rival heroes, with a mutual glare of contempt and defiance, returned to the class.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Heroes' Reward!

FRANK RICHARDS bestowed a glare upon Chunky as the latter passed him again. During the peculiar scene in the school-room Frank had been strongly tempted to step forward and state the facts of the case.

Chunky Todgers did not even notice his glare. He was feeling very wrathful and injured. His yarn had not been quite proved, perhaps, but it had not

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Lovell. "I'll jolly well mop up the dormitory with you to-night!"

"Bow-wow!" Lovell bestowed a terrific kick on the door, and marched on down the passage with a red and wrathful face.

"His chums were grinning. "The cheeky ass!" said Lovell, breathing hard, as they came into the junior Common-room. "I'll jolly well show him whether I'm any good as a fighting-man! I'll make a squashed tomato of his blessed nose. I'll mop up the dormitory with him!"

"Lovell!" "Oh, my hat!" It was the well-known and rather squeaky voice of Mr. Bootles in the doorway.

Lovell spun round in dismay. The little gentleman in the doorway blinked at him severely over his spectacles. "Lovell!" he repeated sternly.

"Ye-e-es, sir!" "You were uttering threats, Lovell. I have received a complaint from Grace—"

"Wha-a-at?" "It appears, Lovell, that you intend violence towards Grace after lights-out tonight. Is this the case?"

Lovell gasped. There was a murmur from the juniors in the Common-room.

"The—The awful sneak!" stuttered Lovell. "D-d-did Putty—I mean Grace—did he tell you so, sir?"

"I heard your own remark, Lovell. But certainly Grace has acquainted me with the fact that you intend to use violence towards him in the dormitory."

"The beastly sneak—"

"What? What?" "I told him I was going to punch his nose in the dormitory, sir!" mumbled Lovell.

"You are well aware, Lovell, that a disturbance in the dormitory after lights-out is distinctly contrary to the rules of the school."

"Ye-e-es, sir!" stammered Lovell.

"I fear, Lovell, that the punishment I have already administered to you to-day has not properly impressed you with a sense of due subordination."

"Oh!" The little Form master came into the room, taking a cane from under his arm. Jimmy Silver & Co. were grimly silent. They were amazed to hear that Putty had "sneaked" to Mr. Bootles, and inwardly they were resolving to visit condign punishment upon his head for that infraction of the unwritten laws of the Lower School.

"Lovell, I am afraid that you are incorrigible. It is my painful duty, Lovell, to administer further punishment to you."

Lovell grunted. "Hold out your hand, Lovell!" The juniors looked on in silence as Arthur Edward extended his hand for the cane.

Swish! "Now the other hand, Lovell!" Swish!

"I trust, Lovell, that this chastisement has brought you to a proper sense of discipline."

Lovell set his teeth. It hadn't—that was quite certain. Lovell's intentions towards Putty Grace at that moment were more Humnish than ever.

The little gentleman turned to Jimmy Silver:

"Silver!" "Yes, sir?" murmured Jimmy.

"I understand that you visited Grace's study, and were a party to assaulting him with a cricket-stump."

"Oh!" gasped Jimmy.

"Is this the case?" "Ye-e-es, sir!"

"Then hold out your hand, Silver!" Swish!

"Raby! Newcome! You we're parties—"

"Yes, sir!" mumbled the juniors. Swish! Swish!

The Fistical Four rubbed their hands and glowered. The little Form master blinked at them over his spectacles.

"I trust this lesson will not be lost on you," he said. "Now, Silver, there is one other matter I must refer to. It appears that you are planning to perform a comedy—"

"Ye-e-es, sir!" stammered Jimmy.

"You have agreed to allow Grace to take the principal part on a certain condition—"

"P-P-Putty hasn't told you, sir?" gasped Jimmy Silver, in amazement.

"I am aware of the whole circumstances, Silver. It appears that you have agreed with Grace that he is to take the principal

part in the comedy on condition that he succeeds in making himself up as myself to the extent of deceiving you as to his identity—"

"Ye-e-es, sir!" muttered Jimmy, utterly confused. "I—I—"

"Very good," said Mr. Bootles. "And as Grace has fulfilled his part of the contract, you will be called upon to fulfil yours, Silver. All the Form are witnesses."

"Wha-a-at? I—I—"

"Oh crumbs!" "My hat!"

There was a howl of amazement in the Common-room.

It was caused by Mr. Bootles. That gentleman had taken hold of his whiskers, and with a jerk removed them from his face.

With another jerk he removed his eyebrows, and then his moustache. Then he whisked off a wig and a cap.

And then, though the make-up was still on his face, it was possible to recognise Putty of the Fourth.

The Fistical Four stared at him blankly. "P-P-Putty!" stuttered Lovell.

"Tain't Bootles at all!"

"Putty, you spoofing villain—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mornington. "It's a fair catch! You took him for Bootles, and no mistake!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Jimmy Silver blinched.

There was no doubt that it was a fair catch. Even now Jimmy could hardly believe that it was indeed Putty of the Fourth who had walked into the Common-room, made up as the Form-master, and canded the Fistical Four one after another.

Putty grinned cheerfully.

"I think you'll have to admit that it's a catch—what—what?" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you spoofing rotter!" gasped Lovell. "You—you've taken us in, you—you—"

"Didn't I tell you I would?" chuckled Putty.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm holding you to the arrangement, dear boy," continued Putty genially. "The principal part in our comedy is going to be a Bootles character, and I'm going to play it—what—what?"

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"It's a go!" he said. "I said so, and I stick to it. And now bump him!"

"Here, I say, that's not in the programme! Oh, my hat!"

Putty of the Fourth had gained his point, but that was not all that he had gained. He had gained also a record ragging, and the Fistical Four collared him and bumped him, and rolled him on the floor till the hapless impersonator yelled for mercy. After which Jimmy Silver & Co. felt better.

THE END.

(There will be another Splendid Long Complete Story, dealing with the further adventures of Jimmy Silver & Co. and Putty Grace of Rookwood, entitled: "Mr. Bootles the Second!" by Owen Conquest, in next week's Bumper Number.)

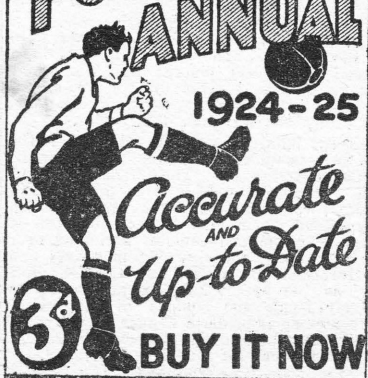
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(Continued from page 10.)

been disproved; and Chunky considered that he was entitled to belief. Indeed, he was feeling considerable indignation at his word being doubted.

Mr. Peckover put the fifty-dollar bill into his pocket-book, and restored the latter to his pocket.

The Hillcrest master spoke a few words in a low tone to Miss Meadows, and then took his departure.

That morning Cedar Creek was on its very best behaviour. Miss Meadows' usually sweet temper was a little tart.

Mr. Peckover was still keen to find out precisely who had been his rescuer, though his motives now were probably not all of kindness and gratitude.

When lessons were over, and the Cedar Creek crowd came out into the playground, the two claimants were surrounded at once by eager questioners, keen to hear the details of their respective yarns.

Frank Richards & Co. remained aside from the crowd. They were in a very perplexed mood.

"What on earth ought a chap to do about it?" Frank asked his chums. "I—I couldn't have stayed quiet while one of those young rogues bagged the money. But that part is all right. They haven't got the dollars; but—"

"No need to give yourself away old fellow," said Beauclerc. "You don't want the cash, and Miss Meadows would be wrathful if she knew you'd disobeyed her. Let's keep mum."

Frank Richards nodded. In fact, it was not easy to see what could be done, apart from letting the rival claimants "rip."

"I say, Richards"—Chunky Todgers came up—"look here, you galoots ought to stand by me. Some of the fellows don't believe that I rescued Peckover at all—"

"You fat fraud, you didn't!"

"If you doubt my word, Richards—" began Chunky, with a great deal of dignity.

"Your word! Oh, my hat!"

"Chunkee wordee no goodee!" chimed in Yen Chin. "Flanky knowee that me always speakee thuth."

"You rascally heathen!" growled Frank.

"Me, Yen Chin, good boy—"

"You lying heathen!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "I guess I'd have bagged that fifty but for you and your whoppers. Here, I say, Lawless, wharrer you at, you jay? Yaroooh!"

"Leggy goey!" yelled Yen Chin.

Bob Lawless had suddenly grasped the rival heroes of Cedar Creek in a powerful grasp.

Crack!

There was a loud concussion and two terrific yells as Bob brought their heads together.

Then Frank Richards & Co. walked away, leaving the rival heroes yelling and rubbing their heads, which was all the reward the heroic youths received, and certainly all they deserved.

THE END.

(Look out for next week's Gripping Long Story of the Chums of the Canadian Backwoods, entitled: "A Put-up Job!")

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