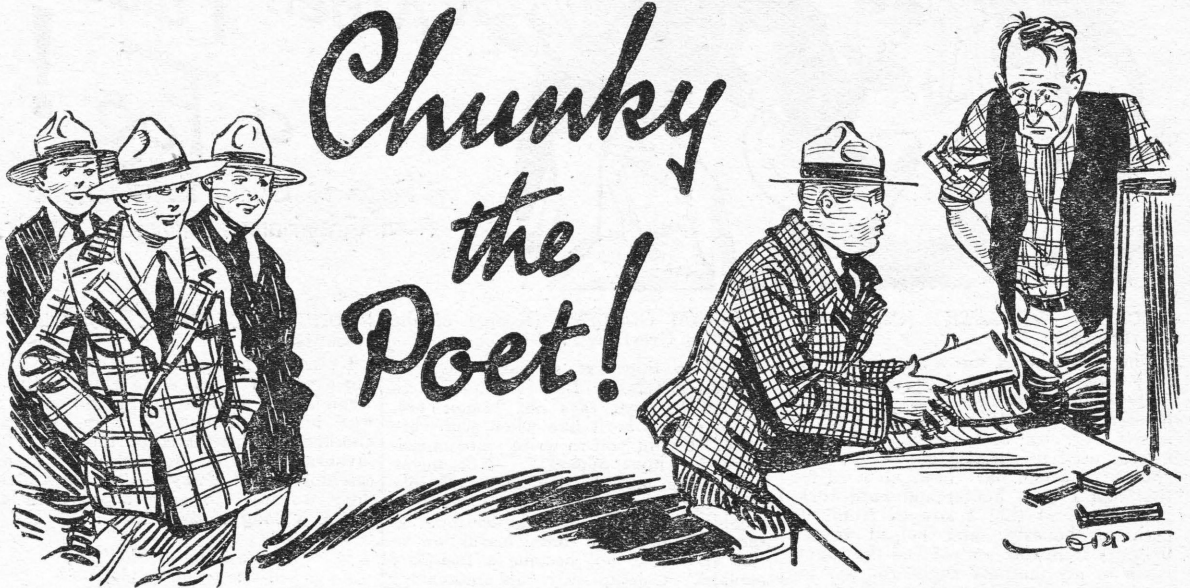


**A SCREAMINGLY FUNNY BACKWOODS TALE!**

*Chunky Todgers was born to provide fun for his schoolfellows. Unconsciously he is a great humorist. Chunky amused his chums for several weeks during his short literary career—his latest stunt proves even more funny. The fat junior seeks to conquer in the fields of the poet, and his adventures and misadventures provide one long laugh!*



**Another Topping Long Complete story of FRANK RICHARDS & CO., the chums of Cedar Creek, the lumber school of the Backwoods!**

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**

**Chunky Todgers Causes a Surprise!**

**W**AKE up, you ass!" Frank Richards whispered to Chunky Todgers in Miss Meadows' class at Cedar Creek, at the same time giving him a nudge in his fat ribs.

Chunky Todgers started. The fat youth of Cedar Creek had not been exactly asleep. He was seated with one podgy elbow resting on the desk before him and his podgy chin resting in the palm of a podgy hand. There was an expression of deep and intense reflection on his fat face. His eyes had quite a dreamy look.

Miss Meadows had possibly taken it for granted that Chunky Todgers' intense reflections were centred on the subject in hand, which happened to be early Canadian history. If so, she discovered her mistake when she addressed Master Todgers. For he did not even hear her voice, and certainly would not have made any reply but for that timely dig in the ribs from Frank Richards.

Chunky made a remark then, quite suddenly.

"Ow!" "You fat jay. Miss Meadows is speaking to you!" Bob Lawless whispered from the other side.

"Oh!" "Todgers!" "Yes, Miss Meadows?" gasped Chunky.

The fellows round him were grinning. Chunky Todgers often went off into day-dreams like, this, even in class. When his thoughts were not dwelling upon eatables—which was pretty often—he dwelt on the last romance he had borrowed from Gunten's Circulating Library, in Thompson. And at such times Chunky Todgers was far away from the common earth.

At such times, indeed, he was no longer a schoolboy at the school in the Backwoods. He was one of Cœur-de-

Lion's knights riding against the Saracens, or he was defending Lucknow against the sepoy, or he was facing the wild red man on the prairie with Kit Carson or Custer. Or perhaps he was discovering that he was the rightful heir to vast estates in the Old Country, or he was voyaging with Captain Cook in the South Seas, or he was marching northward with Franklin or Kane in thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice.

It was quite a shock to Chunky to wake up, as it were, and find that he was only a fat schoolboy after all, and lamentably backward with his lessons.

"Kindly give me your attention, Todgers!" said Miss Meadows, with severity. "Certainly, ma'am!" said Chunky brightly. "You need only mention that you want my attention—"

"What?" "You need but say the word, and I'm on like a bird!" said Chunky.

"Wha-a-at?" "My only hat!" murmured Frank Richards, gazing blankly at the fat youth on the form beside him.

Bob Lawless tapped his forehead. Some of the fellows chuckled. They supposed that this was some joke of Chunky's, though he was not by any means famous for his gift of humour.

Miss Meadows seemed petrified. Often and often she had received absent-minded or extraordinary answers from this hopeful pupil, but certainly he had never answered her before in a rhyming jingle.

"What do you mean, Todgers?" the Canadian schoolmistress stuttered, at last.

Chunky Todgers blinked at her, and reflected before he replied. It was evident to the astounded schoolmistress that the extraordinary youth was pausing to put his reply into metre or rhyme. The reply came out with a sudden rush, like a mountain freshet.

"My meaning is clear, if you deign but to hear," babbled Chunky.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Miss Meadows frowned, and stepped to her desk, where she picked up a pointer. Chunky Todgers eyed that pointer rather ruefully. He could guess what it was wanted for.

"Todgers!" "Ye-e-es?" "Come out before the class, 'Todgers!" "Wha-a-at for, Miss Meadows?" "I am going to cane you!"

"It will cause me much pain if you give me the cane!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the whole class. But Miss Meadows did not even smile. Apparently she saw nothing entertaining in this remarkable new stunt of the remarkable Todgers.

"Come here at once!" she snapped. "Silence in the class!"

Chunky Todgers stepped out before the class very reluctantly.

"Hold out your hand!" "I am yours to command, so I'll hold out my hand!" answered Chunky.

And he did. Swish! "Yarooooh!"

"Now go back to your place, Todgers, and do not play any more foolish tricks!" said Miss Meadows sternly.

"B-b-but I wasn't—" "Go!" "Ow! Wow!"

Chunky Todgers went back to the grinning class with a fat hand tucked under a fat arm.

"Now listen to me, 'Todgers!" "Ow-wow! I—I mean, yes, ma'am!" gasped Chunky.

"I asked you a question. Give me the names of the opposing generals in the Battle of Quebec."

Chunky Todgers reflected again, while he surreptitiously rubbed his aching palm. His reply almost electrified the class, and Miss Meadows, too, and Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Slimmey glanced round from their places. For Chunky's reply was:

"On that great and glorious day,  
In the battle's fierce array,  
General Wolfe did bravely quench  
The resistance of the French,  
While the Gallic host did fly,  
Montcalm laid him down to die."

"Silence!" shrieked Miss Meadows, as the whole class chortled. "Todgers, how dare you? Are you out of your senses, Todgers?"

"Nunno."

"Then what is the matter with you this morning?"

"I—I was only putting it poetically, ma'am. I—"

"Go and stand in the corner, Todgers, and remain there till lessons are over!" said Miss Meadows sternly.

"Oh gum!"

The hapless Chunky limped away to the corner.

There he stood with a crimson face, with smiling glances turned upon him from the three classes in the big school-room.

It was a painful ordeal to Chunky Todgers, and he was very glad, indeed, Montcalm laid him down to die."

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### THE SECOND CHAPTER. Some Poem!

"YOU ass!"

"You jay!"

"You fathead!"

Frank Richards & Co. made those remarks in unison, as they came out of the lumber schoolhouse with Chunky Todgers after lessons.

"What on earth did you mean by it?" demanded Vere Beauclerc.

Chunky Todgers gave a sniff.

"You galoots wouldn't understand, of course!" he said scornfully.

"Blessed if I think any galoot could understand you!" said Bob Lawless. "What the thunder were you checking Miss Meadows for?"

"I wasn't!" howled Chunky.

"Have you gone off your rocker, then?" asked Frank Richards.

"No, you jay!"

"Then what's the little game?"

Chunky Todgers gave another sniff. He looked at the three chums with lofty scorn.

"You fellows are Philistines," he explained.

"Which?"

"Philistines are people who don't comprehend the higher flights of the soul," further explained Chunky.

"Eh?"

"I've made a discovery," continued Chunky loftily. "I was reading a volume of Browning the other day. I had it from the circulating library. I suppose you chaps have heard of Browning?"

"I guess so," answered Bob Lawless. "Chap who invented a new kind of pistol."

"I don't mean that Browning, you chump! I mean the poet!" howled Chunky. "You're a Philistine, Bob Lawless. I was reading Browning—a poem called 'Sordello.' Well, it came into my mind like a flash that I could do it myself."

"You could do what?"

"Write poetry," said Chunky impressively, "as good as Browning. What do you think of that?"

Frank Richards & Co. did not tell Todgers what they thought of it. They yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chunky Todgers frowned at them. He did not seem to perceive any cause for this burst of merriment.

"What are you cackling at?" he demanded. "I tell you it's the frozen fact, I can write poetry. I've been thinking about it ever since. And it comes quite easily. I don't have to exert myself. It simply rolls out. Splendid poetry, too. Easy as winking. No burning the midnight oil for me! I can make it up as I trot to school in the morning. I was thinking it out in class. You heard what I said to Miss Meadows?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"Well, that came quite easily."

"I dare say it did!" gasped Bob. "I suppose any galoot could roll out silly rot like that, couldn't he? I guess I could do it myself. F'rinstance:

"There's lots of room for lodgers,  
In the brain-box of young Todgers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's rot!" said Chunky.

"Well, we're taking about rot, aren't we?"

"We're talking about poetry."

"Same thing!"

"I might have expected envy!" said Todgers bitterly. "I remember how Frank took it when I began to write better stories than he does—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But the fact is, my gift really isn't prose," said Chunky. "I'm a born poet. I've made that discovery. As I came along to school this morning, I was working on my epic."

"Your—your epic?" stuttered Frank Richards.

"My epic," said Chunky calmly.

"Something in the style of Homer or—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Lyrical, you know. But with some of the stateliness of Virgil or Homer or—"

"Oh erikey!"

"And a certain grandeur reminiscent of Milton," said Todgers.

"Phew!"

"What the thump do you know about Homer and Virgil?" inquired Bob Lawless. "You don't know Greek or Latin."

"I've read them in translations, of course. I don't mean to say that my epic will be exactly like Homer and Virgil and Milton—"

"Great Scott! I should guess not!"

"It will combine the qualities of all three—"

"Will it, by Jove?"

"Yes; with something over and above. That will be me—the Todgers touch, you know."

"The Todgers touch?" murmured Beauclerc.

"That's it. As a patriotic Canadian. I'm going to deal with the history of Canada—"

"As a patriotic Canadian, I guess I ought to squelch you before you get started!" said Bob.

"Oh, don't be a jay!" said Chunky Todgers peevishly. "You ought not to give way to these feelings of envy. It's mean. You ought to be proud of me!"

"Oh gum!"

"I'm jolly glad I've made this discovery," continued Chunky, in an exalted strain. "But for that I might have gone on with prose, writing poor stuff such as Frank Richards does for the 'Thompson Press'—"

"Ass!"

"Now I've found out where my gift really lies. I'm going to devote all my time to my epic now, and offer it to the 'Thompson Press' first. Then it will appear in volume form. It's not much good talking poetry to you fellows. You're a bit dense, if you don't mind my mentioning it. Still, I'll tell you

some of the epic. Browning begins like this: 'Who lists, may hear Sordello's story told.' That isn't bad, but not as I should do it."

"Very likely."

"I begin like this," said Todgers. "Just listen." And he began:

"Who lists may hear me tell my thrilling tale,  
How early emigrants in ships did sail:  
And braving both the battle and the breeze,  
Sped westward o'er the wild and stormy seas.  
Ye muses! who of old did oft inspire,  
The earlier singers with poetic fire:  
Lend me your aid! Inspire my humble verse,  
Which—which—"

"Which might be better, and could not be worse!" suggested Frank Richards.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shurrup!" snapped Todgers.

"Lend me your aid, inspire my humble verse,  
Which now fares forth for better or for worse.

Oh, who shall paint the glories of the day,  
When brave galoots, in battle's fierce array,  
Did face the savage red man in his lair,

Who strove with scalping-knife to raise their hair!  
Oh, who shall paint—"

"Hold on, you fellows! Where are you going?" shouted Chunky Todgers, breaking off his epic suddenly. "I haven't finished yet. Frank Richards! Bob! You silly jays! Yah!"

Frank Richards & Co. had fled. That sample of Chunky Todgers as an epic poet was enough for them. Chunky had discovered that he had the genuine poetic genius—the genuine divine afflatus. But his schoolfellows, seemingly, had failed to make the same discovery.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER. Genius in adversity!

CHUNKY TODGERS wore a frown in class that afternoon.

He felt that he was misunderstood and unappreciated.

It was not the first time that Todgers had felt himself wasted at Cedar Creek. All round him were Philistines, who did not comprehend him. He was, as he reflected bitterly and Byronically, with them, but not of them.

Although, hundreds of years hence, pilgrims were to visit Cedar Creek purely on Todgers' account, it was clear that, at the present day, Todgers was doomed to be misunderstood and under-valued by his contemporaries.

He found some comfort in the reflection that most great poets had had to struggle with adversity.

Shakespeare had held horses in the days before his dramatic genius was recognised. Spenser had had his ups and downs before he had finally delivered himself of the "Faerie Queen." Pope had struggled with ill-health, Chatterton with poverty, Milton with blindness; even Byron had a club-foot, and Scott a financial collapse. And why should a greater than all of these be without his little troubles?

Like other great poets, Todgers had to struggle with adversity, and rise superior to it.



Still, it was very irritating to have to worry over details of English grammar when his epic was simmering in his busy brain. It was distinctly exasperating to give valuable moments to long division when what he wanted was a rhyme for "gallant." And the smiles of the other fellows were not pleasing. The Cedar Creek fellows all knew by this time that Chunky Todgers was an epic poet, and they were singularly unimpressed thereby. They did not seem to care a Continental red cent about their school being made world-famous by Chunky Todgers' great epic poem "Canada." Indeed, Eben Hacke had asked him what the thunder he meant by calling Canada Canada, and only snorted when Chunky explained that it was a more poetic form.

But Todgers did not allow himself to be discouraged. He did not venture upon any more poetry in the school-room; the pointer was too painful. But he certainly gave more thought to his epic than to his lessons.

After school he confided to Frank Richards & Co. that he had "made up" fifty more lines during the afternoon, and had scribbled them down in his exercise-book. He offered to read them out, but the chums of Cedar Creek appeared to be in a hurry to get home. So did every other fellow to whom Chunky offered to read his verses.

Whereupon Chunky Todgers snorted and clambered upon his fat pony, and trotted homeward himself, "making up" more and more verses as he trotted. By the time he reached the Todgers' homestead he had fifty more lines waiting to be written down.

But there, even at home, fresh trials awaited the epic poet of Cedar Creek. Instead of getting to pen and ink at once, his father required him to chop wood. Chunky Todgers did not venture to explain that he had an epic poem on hand, and had no time to chop wood. Mr. Todgers was too hefty with the family cowhide for such explanations. Chunky chopped the wood morosely, comparing himself mentally to Prometheus bound. By the time Prometheus was unbound supper was ready, which banished all poetic considerations from Chunky's mind.

But the next day Chunky was as poetical as ever, much to the detriment of early Canadian history, English grammar, and long division.

Chunky's new stunt had excited much merriment at Cedar Creek, and it continued to do so. Chunky's satisfaction with the hopeless doggerel he was turning out moved his schoolfellows to great mirth, and Chunky was subjected to more "chipping" than, probably, than any other great poet had ever been called upon to bear.

But Chunky went on his way regardless.

While Cedar Creek chuckled the epic poem was growing in Chunky's powerful brain.

Every day fresh verses were committed to paper, and Chunky read them over and over in great delight.

By taking Homer, Virgil, and Milton for his models, and avoiding the failings of those earlier singers, he was satisfied that he was turning out something that would put all three into the deep shade.

And Chunky had not boasted in vain of the facility with which he turned out verses. He wrote with the greatest ease. His poem grew and grew like a snowball rolling downhill, till in a marvelously short space of time the last verse was written.

Five or six exercise-books had been used up, which Chunky had to pay for  
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himself, but he felt that they could not be squandered in a nobler cause.

After lessons one day Chunky remained in the school-room by the fire, giving "Canada" the final touches.

He came out of the lumber school-house with a bundle under his arm.

Frank Richards & Co. had stayed to split logs for Miss Meadows, and Chunky found them going for their horses. He called to them at once.

"You fellows like to come?"  
"Whither bound?" inquired Frank Richards.

"I'm going to see my publisher," answered Todgers carelessly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm offering this poem to Mr. Penrose, for publication in the 'Thompson Press,'" explained Chunky. "I felt that it was up to me to let the locality have the honour of—"

"The what?"  
"The honour of its first publication. I sha'n't argue with Penrose about terms. Poets," said Chunky loftily, "are above such petty considerations. I shall accept whatever he chooses to offer."

"You won't need a buggy to carry it home in," remarked Bob Lawless.

Chunky Todgers did not deign to notice that remark.

"In fact, I shall allow him to publish it for nothing, if he is mean about it," he said. "I shall make plenty of money on it when it appears in volume form."

"Oh!"

"You see, its appearance will cause a regular stir in the Valley. Folks will be no end pleased at discovering an epic poet in their midst."

"Will they?"

"Naturally. It will bring fame on the whole Valley. Just think of it—the first great poem produced in Canada! Later, I shall send a copy to Ottawa, to be presented to the House of Parliament."

"Phew!"

"Bound in vellum, with gilt edges. It will be regarded with veneration by future generations," said Chunky calmly. "When this poem appears in the local paper, and causes a sensation, I've no doubt that the citizens of Thompson will rally round and see me through, so far as mere money is concerned. Perhaps a syndicate will be formed for the publication of my works."

"Oh!"

"You fellows coming along?" asked Chunky.

"Oh, we'll come!" grinned Bob Lawless. "I want to see Mr. Penrose's face when you spring that poem on him."

And the chums of Cedar Creek rode up the tail to Thompson, with Chunky Todgers, in a merry mood.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### A Slight Misunderstanding!

MR. PENROSE was in his office when the schoolboys arrived. He was setting type, being engaged just then upon one of Frank Richards' contributions to his paper. The editor, printer, and proprietor of the "Thompson Press" gave his callers a genial nod without stopping his occupation. He was anxious to get "through," in order to pay his usual evening visit to the bar-room of the Occidental.

He stared a little when Chunky Todgers bumped down his bundle on the bench.

"Hallo! What's that?" inquired Mr. Penrose.

"Something for you, Mr. Penrose!" answered Chunky cheerfully.

"Advertisements?"

Chunky snorted.

"I guess not!"

"Then it can't go in this number, whatever it is!" answered Mr. Penrose.

"And if it's some more of your pesky fiction, young Todgers, you can take it out into the yard and bury it!"

"It's a poem!"

"Must be a pesky long one, to judge by the size of the parcel!" said Mr. Penrose, grinning, and still busily setting type.

"It's an epic poem."

"Oh, great gophers!"

"Called 'Canada'!"

"I guess you can call your poem what you like," said Mr. Penrose genially. "Call it any old thing, and take it away!"

"I guess you're losing a big chance, Mr. Penrose," said Bob Lawless gravely.

"This epic poem is going to make the name of Todgers ring through the— What is it going to ring through, Chunky? I forget."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you cackling jays!" said Chunky crossly. "Look here, Mr. Penrose, I'm offering you this poem for publication in the paper."

"Usual terms, I suppose?" asked Mr. Penrose.

"Any terms you like," said Chunky loftily. "I'm a poet, not a pesky bargainer!"

"I guess the usual terms will go," answered Mr. Penrose. "If you agree to that the poem goes in."

Frank Richards & Co. stared a little. They had not supposed for a moment that Chunky's poem would be taken. And Mr. Penrose had not even seen it yet! It looked as if the editorial gentleman was buying a pig in a poke, with a vengeance!

Chunky's fat face brightened.

He was convinced, of course, of the high poetic value of his epic. But he had had a lingering doubt about whether he could convince a Philistine like Mr. Penrose of that high value.

Apparently the trick was done, however, without even any effort on his part.

Perhaps the editorial gentleman recognised the poetic fire in his eye, or possibly he was sensible of the divinity that doth edge a genius.

At all events, the matter seemed simple enough now.

"What are the terms, Mr. Penrose?" inquired Frank Richards, in great astonishment.

"Ten cents a line," answered Mr. Penrose laconically.

Chunky grinned with glee.

"That's a dollar for ten lines!" he ejaculated.

"Correct!"

"I—I say, this poem is long enough to fill two whole numbers of the 'Press'!" murmured Chunky.

"Can't go in all at once, then. Put it in serially—say, a page every week 'till it's used up."

"That's all right. Say, a canto each week," said Chunky Todgers. "It's in six cantos."

"Yep. I reckon I can manage that."

"I—I say, at a dollar for ten lines it will come to ten dollars a hundred lines."

"Sure!"

"That's a hundred dollars for a thousand lines—"

"I guess so."

"And there's ten thousand lines!" said Chunky breathlessly.

"Jerusalem! You've been going it, I guess," said Mr. Penrose, with a laugh.

"I guess that tots up to a thousand dollars. I don't mind, if you don't."

"Well, of course, it's worth nearer a million," said Chunky modestly. "But say a thousand. I don't mind."

Mr. Penrose gave him a very curious look.

"You're prepared to fix it at a thousand dollars the lot?" he asked.

"Quite."

"Then it goes in—when I've seen the colour of your money. I guess I don't quite see where a schoolboy is going to get a thousand dollars from."

"Eh?"

"But if you've got the rocks, in it goes," said Mr. Penrose.

Chunky Todgers blinked at him. Frank Richards & Co. suddenly understood, and they grinned. But the hopeful poet of Cedar Creek did not understand yet. He wondered whether Mr. Penrose had been drinking.

"Wha-a-at do you mean?" stammered Chunky.

"Exactly what I say, I guess."

"You're paying me a thousand dollars—"

"What?" ejaculated Mr. Penrose. "Paying your grandmother! I guess I'm not paying you anything. If I paid for poetry in this paper, I should have it landed here by the ton. Galoots would have to hire the post-wagon to deliver it, if it was paid for. I have trouble enough with poetry bunged into this office free of charge."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then what the thunder do you mean?" howled Chunky Todgers. "You said distinctly that the usual terms were ten cents a line."

"So it is."

"Well, then—"

"You don't seem to catch on," said Mr. Penrose. "Ten cents a line is the charge for insertion."

"Wha-a-at?"

"That's what you pay, you young donkey, for having it put into the paper—same as advertisements."

"Oh!" gasped Chunky.

"This paper publishes poetry at the same rate as ordinary advertisements. Only it's understood that when advertisements are plentiful the poetry may be crowded out. Business first, you know. Still, I've no doubt I can wedge in some every week, and I don't mind putting 'To be continued,' at the end of each chunk. The question is, whether you can pony up the usual charge. I suppose you're not asking me to give you a slice of my limited space for nothing?" said Mr. Penrose warmly.

"You—you—you Philistine!" spluttered Chunky Todgers. "I—I'm offering you a magnificent poem, and—and you—you ask me to pay for it as if it were a whisky advertisement!"

"Just the same," answered Mr. Penrose cheerfully. "Them's the usual terms of this publication, and you can take 'em or leave 'em. Poetry is a drug in the market. Nobody ever reads it, you see. Besides, you can't write poetry. Your stuff would be such trash that I really calculate I ought to charge you double."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But what I said goes. Ten cents a line, and ladle it out as long as you like. Usual terms—cash down."

Chunky Todgers picked up his bundle. There had been a slight misunderstanding, and now that it was made clear Chunky was not inclined to "trade."

"Not taking any?" inquired Mr. Penrose genially. "I guess I'll tell you what, young man. I've got half a column to fill, and, if you like, I'll put in some of your poetry at the reduced charge of two dollars for the chunk. It will save me spacing out McGahan's advert."



**THE RHYMING SCHOOLBOY!** Chunky Todgers stepped out before the class very reluctantly. "Hold out your hand!" snapped Miss Meadows. "I am yours to command, so I'll hold out my hand!" answered Chunky dramatically. And he did. (See Chapter 1.)

"Yah!"

With that vigorous though unpoetic reply Chunky Todgers marched out of the office with his fat nose high in the air. Mr. Penrose shrugged his shoulders, and went on setting type. Frank Richards & Co. followed Chunky out, grinning.

The Cedar Creek poet blinked at them with feelings almost too deep for words.

"On second thoughts I shall decline to have my epic published locally," he said. "I feel that it ought to appear in volume form, with a good publisher's name on the title-page. It will give it a better send-off. I'm going to hand it to a publisher at Kamloops. There's one there—chap who runs the paper there, and does Western guide-books and things. This poem may make his fortune."

"Lucky man!" murmured Bob.

"I shall send it to him by the post-wagon, with a letter, and make the offer. Then it will—"

"Come back by the next post-wagon?" inquired Bob innocently.

"Nope, you ass!" roared Chunky. "Then it will appear in proper form. I shall stipulate for a vellum binding and gilt edges. As for the terms, I shall not haggle. I may accept ten thousand dollars. I may take a royalty on sales. That is really a minor consideration. I don't see what you silly asses are grinning at. Yah!"

And Chunky Todgers rode homeward looking quite cross.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Alas!

**T**HE following day Chunky Todgers confided to his schoolfellows that the great poem was "off."

Chunky added, rather sorrowfully, that the cost of the parcel's transit was

a dollar, which he had had to pay in advance, which meant no maple-sugar for Chunky for a long time to come. But he thought of Shakespeare, Spenser, Chatterton, Byron & Co., and took comfort. They had had to face worse things than a temporary shortage of maple-sugar.

And the shortage, after all, was merely temporary. When a handsome cheque came along from Kamloops Chunky would be, as he said expressively, just rolling in it. He was looking forward to the handsome cheque or the rich royalties, as the case might be, and he was also looking forward to seeing Mr. Penrose's face when that gentleman was presented with a complimentary copy of "Canadia, an Epic," bound in vellum, with gilt edges. Penrose's face would be worth seeing at that moment, Chunky told the Co., and the Co. smilingly agreed that it would.

"But if the bundle costs a dollar to go, it will cost a dollar to come back," Frank Richards remarked. "Have you put in a dollar?"

Chunky Todgers gave a scornful sniff.

"I guess not! My poem isn't coming back! The Kamloops man isn't a howling idiot like old Penrose. Besides, I hadn't another dollar. If you think my poem is coming back, Frank Richards, you—"

"Well, it's barely possible!" suggested Frank.

"That's envy!"

"What?"

"Envy!" said Chunky Todgers. "A little mind carping at a great one!"

And the Cedar Creek poet walked away, leaving Frank Richards speechless.

(Continued on page 24.)



"Tell me the name of your school."

"Find out!" said Lovell.

The juniors walked away to the fence, and the man in black made a step in pursuit. Jimmy Silver & Co. turned round, ready for him, and he thought better of it—which was rather fortunate for him. He strode into the bungalow, and slammed the door behind him with a slam that made the flimsy building shake.

"Nice man!" yawned Lovell, as they pushed through the fence and gained the open health. "I suppose he was coming up to the school with a yarn about trespassing if he'd found out who we were."

"Plain enough!" said Jimmy. "I hope he won't find out! It would be awkward to explain to the Head—we don't want to give Smythe away."

"Oh, I don't suppose he'll find out!"

"There's something queer about that fellow," said Raby thoughtfully. "A man might be waxy at finding fellows in his garden, but there's no reason to fly into a rage like that. It's just as if he was frightened of being seen, or of something being found out—"

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"He's a queer fish!" he said. "I wonder whether Smythe & Co. fell foul of him?"

"They must have if they went there. We'll ask them."

"There they are!" said Newcome.

Ahead of the Fistical Four, as they followed the footpath through the wood, Smythe & Co. came in sight. The nuts of Rookwood were not looking so nutty as of old. They had a rather dishevelled appearance, and some of them bore marks of the malacca cane.

Smythe & Co. looked round as they heard footsteps, and grinned at the sight of the Fistical Four.

"Hallo! Where have you been?" chuckled Tracy.

"Been up against it, what?" grinned Adolphus Smythe.

"You've been to the bungalow?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"Yaas, we dropped in," smiled Adolphus. "We saw you goin' there, too, and hoped you'd have an agreeable time! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chorused the nuts.

"Why, you rotters!" exclaimed Lovell. "If you saw us going, why didn't you give us the tip that that wild beast was there—"

Jimmy Silver felt in his pocket for the wine bill.

"You dropped something in the gateway, this afternoon, Smythe," he said quietly. "It's rather lucky for you that I picked it up, and not a prefect or a master. What have you done with the champagne?"

"Champagne!" said Adolphus vaguely.

Jimmy Silver held out the wine bill without speaking.

The dandy of the Shell jumped as he saw it, and snatched it quickly from Jimmy Silver's hand.

"Oh gad!" he ejaculated.

"You awful ass to drop that about!" exclaimed Tracy aghast. "Suppose Bulkeley had picked it up and—"

"Oh gad!" repeated Adolphus faintly.

"Where's the champagne?" asked Jimmy Silver grimly.

"Smashed in the bungalow when that ruffian caught us there, if you want to know!" growled Smythe.

"Good! That's the best thing that could have happened to it! And now something's going to happen to you!" said Jimmy Silver.

"There's a limit, Smythe, even for a shady worm like you. And as you don't seem to know the limit, we'll try to impress it on your silly mind!"

The next moment the nuts of Rookwood were rolling in the bracken, and the Fistical Four rolled them and bumped them and hustled them till there was hardly an ounce of breath left in their nutty bodies. Smythe & Co. needed a lesson, and they got one—the second, in fact, that they had had that afternoon.

"That will do," said Jimmy Silver, at last. Leaving five breathless and dishevelled Giddy Goats gasping in the bracken, the Fistical Four walked on cheerily to Rookwood, feeling that their duty was done. But as they went they were wondering—not wholly without uneasiness—whether they would hear anything further of the man in black.

THE END.

(There will be another Topping Long Complete Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., entitled: "A Shock for Lovell!" in next Tuesday's issue.)

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(Continued from page 19.)

The next time Frank came upon the fat poet he was greatly inclined to collar him and roll him in the snow. But he forbore. He felt that Chunky was going to get a shock when he heard from Kamloops.

On one point Chunky was right, doubtless—the poem would not come back. The Kamloops man would not pay a dollar out of his own pocket to return it.

Two days later Chunky Todgers begged leave from Miss Meadows, to depart early, to waylay the post-wagon on its way back from the railway. He was eager for the reply from "his publisher."

Frank Richards & Co. smiled at the fat youth rolled out of the school-room, leaving the rest of Cedar Creek still at lessons.

They did not expect to see Chunky again that day; but when Cedar Creek was dismissed, they found Master Todgers in the playground. He was not looking so bright as of late.

"Hallo! Didn't you hold up the post-wagon?" asked Bob Lawless.

Chunky Todgers nodded glumly.

"And wasn't there a letter?"

"Yep!"

"And you've come back to tell us?" smiled Beauclerc. "That's kind of you, Chunky! Congratulations!"

"I—I guess it's a rather queer letter," mumbled Todgers. "I—I wanted to show you chaps, and—and ask your advice. You can read it if you like. The Kamloops man accepts the poem—"

"What?"

"He says he's prepared to publish it in volume form—"

"My only hat!"

"He can't do vellum covers or gilt edges, but he can do a nice little artistic volume, he says—"

"Great gophers! But—"

"But—but—but he says his charge will be seventy dollars!" said Chunky Todgers dismally. "He—he—he—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He—he seems to expect me to pay the expense of publishing it. He seems to be as big an idiot as Penrose—"

"You'll find 'em all just as big idiots as Penrose, I guess!" chuckled Bob.

"Poor old Chunky!"

"But it's worth it, after all!" said Chunky eagerly. "Think of the sensation it will make! A second edition will be called for immediately; and, of course, the Kamloops man will be glad to print that. Third and fourth editions will be wanted, and then—then there's the American rights—"

"The American rights?" said Frank Richards dazedly.

"Yes. And then the European rights!" said Chunky, quite brightly. "No end of money; though, of course, I don't care much for that—real poets don't! It all depends on a paltry seventy dollars to start! I was thinking that you fellows—"

"Eh?"

"Might raise the seventy dollars."

"What?"

"And lend it to me, and have it back out of the profits of the second edition— I say, where are you fellows going?"

Frank Richards & Co. did not stay to explain. Like the gentleman in Macbeth, they stood not upon the order of their going, but went at once. And the Cedar Creek poet was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

What happened to "Canadia: an Epic" was never definitely known. It was certain that Chunky Todgers never sent a dollar for its redemption. It was equally certain that it never appeared in a vellum-bound, gilt-edged volume, and that it never caused a sensation from ocean to ocean; that the American rights and the European rights never were competed for by eager publishers. The probability was that it found a place of repose in a wastepaper-basket or a stove; which was really hard luck on the Poet of Cedar Creek.

THE END.

(Look out for next week's Grand Long Complete Story of the Chums of the Canadian Lumber School, entitled: "The Recall of Algy!")

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