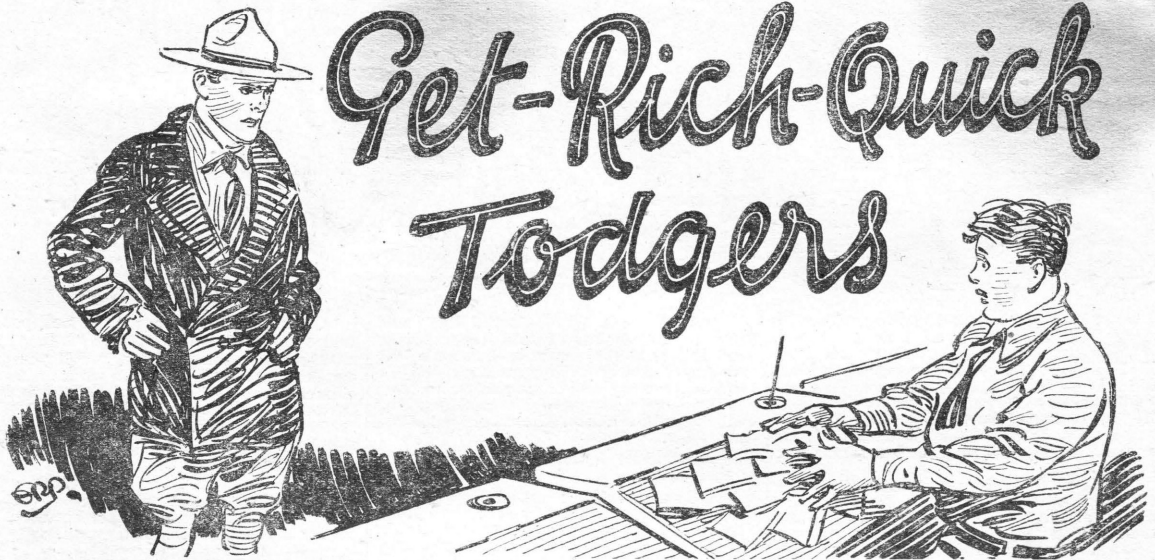


THE SCHOOLBOY SPECULATOR!

Chunky Todgers, of Cedar Creek, hits upon a new and weird scheme of rising to fame and fortune, and the outcome of his plotting provides much anxiety for Frank Richards & Co.

Chunky Todgers, of Cedar Creek, hits upon a new and weird scheme of rising to fame and fortune, and the outcome of his plotting provides much anxiety for Frank Richards & Co.



Another Thrilling, Long, Complete story of Frank Richards & Co., the chums of the School in the Backwoods!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Capital Required!

FRANKY, old scout!" Frank Richards grinned. When Chunky Todgers addressed him in that affectionate manner, it was pretty plain evidence that Master Todgers was "after" something.

"You're looking jolly well after your holiday, Franky."

"Thanks!"

"I thought a good bit about you while you were off to California," continued Chunky Todgers. "I'd have come with you and looked after you, and all that, only you forgot to ask me."

"D-d-did I?" murmured Frank, and Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc smiled.

It was not exactly due to forgetfulness that the fat Chunky had not been included in the holiday-party to Mount Shasta, over the "line." The plump youth would have been rather in the way on that perilous expedition.

"You did," said Chunky; "otherwise I'd have come, and seen you through. In that case, I suppose I should have had a whack in the nuggets you found, old chap."

"Oh!"

"I'm jolly glad you were successful," said Todgers cordially. "Never more pleased in my life, Franky."

"That's very good of you!" smiled Frank, feeling in his pocket. Fortune had been smiling on Frank Richards, and he was prepared to "stand" Chunky Todgers maple-sugar to a reasonable extent. "Will a dollar do?"

Chunky blinked at him reproachfully. "I haven't come along to borrow a dollar, Frank."

"Oh! My mistake!"

"The fact is—"

"He's going to make it ten dollars," murmured Bob Lawless. "Chunky believes in making hay, while the sun shines!"

Chunky Todgers did not heed.

THE POPULAR.—No. 298.

"You really found a lot of nuggets, Franky?" he said.

"Certainly!"

"And your share comes to hundreds of dollars, I've heard," said Chunky eagerly.

"More than that," said Frank, with a smile. "Five hundred pounds, in English."

"How much is that in real money?"

"In Canadian money, if you mean that, you ass, it's two thousand five hundred dollars, or thereabouts."

Chunky's eyes glistened.

"I say, Franky, that's an awful lot of money! I say, you'll never be able to spend it, you know. I'll tell you what! I'll help you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not joking!" persisted Chunky.

"I will, you know. What are you going to do with it, Franky?"

"I've handed it to my uncle—"

"Oh, you jay!"

"To take care of," explained Frank.

"It's in the bank now."

"But you're not going to leave it there? I say, it's an awful waste—leaving money in the bank."

"Not for ever," agreed Frank. "I've written to my father and sister to tell them about it."

"You seem to have forgotten your best pal, Franky!" said Chunky Todgers sorrowfully.

"Not at all! Bob and Beau have their own shares, you know."

"I wasn't speaking of those two grinning jays. I was speaking of myself," said Chunky Todgers warmly.

"Well, I've got ten dollars for you, Chunky, if you like," said Frank good-naturedly.

"I don't like!" snapped Chunky.

"All serene, then."

"I was thinking of a thousand dollars and—"

"Eh?"

"Merely as a loan," said Chunky Todgers nastily.

"Better think again!" suggested Frank Richards, laughing. "Make it

ten dollars, old chap, and there you are!"

Frank Richards held up a ten-dollar bill.

Chunky gave it a contemptuous glare and a sniff; but upon second thoughts he took it in his plump finger and thumb and stowed it away. But it was soon evident that Chunky looked upon the ten-dollar bill only as an instalment.

"Now, Franky, about that thousand dollars—"

"Nothing about that, Chunky."

"Time we got a move on," remarked Bob Lawless, detaching himself from the stack of logs he was seated on in the corner of the playground at Cedar Creek School. "The bell will be going soon."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "You can vamoose as soon as you like, Bob—and you, Cherub—but I want to speak to you, Franky. It's important!"

"My dear ass—"

"Look here, Frank, old scout—you galoots can clear, you know—"

Bob Lawless chuckled.

"I guess we're not going to clear and leave Franky to you, sonny," he answered. "Franky's too soft for you!"

"Fathead!" said Frank politely.

"I guess that's why Chunky's tackling you instead of me," chuckled Bob. "He knows how much chance he has of bagging a pile of dollars from me, don't you, Chunky?"

"I know you're mean, Bob—Leggo my ear, you silly jay!" howled Chunky Todgers. "I mean, I'm speaking to Frank because he's my old chum. Didn't I stand by him when he first came out here, a green tenderfoot? Wasn't I a—a father to him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wish you fellows would clear off while I'm talking to Franky," said Chunky Todgers crossly. "I say, old chap, listen to me a minute. I've had this stunt in my head a long time, only cash was short. Now there's plenty of money about there's a chance of getting on with it—see? I'm not asking you to hand me money for nothing. Simply a loan, and I'll hand it back to you

increased. See? You galoots know that I'm a fellow with ideas; but I've always been handicapped by want of ready cash."

"It all goes in maple-sugar, doesn't it?" said Bob sympathetically, and his chums chuckled.

"Oh, rats! Look here, Franky, how would you like to turn a thousand into ten thousand dollars—"

"Like a bird! How's it to be done?"

"Hand it to me—"

"That would only turn it into maple-sugar and plum-cakes, at Gunten's store."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you it's a business stunt—a dodge for getting rich quick!" howled Chunky Todgers. "Now there's plenty of money, I can try it on—see? You hand me a thousand dollars—"

"I don't think!"

"I turn it into ten thousand—"

"I guess not!"

"Then we share alike—five thousand each!" said Chunky Todgers. "I guess that's fair play!"

"Fair as a die!" grinned Bob Lawless. "Go it, Franky; you don't often get an offer like that!"

The chums of Cedar Creek chortled in chorus. Chunky Todgers eyed them with an exasperated expression. He did not see anything to chortle about.

"Hallo! There's the bell!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

"I say—"

But Frank Richards & Co. walked off towards the lumber school, and Chunky, with a snort, gave it up. Chunky's great "stunt" for getting rich quick had to be postponed, at least for the present.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

An Easy Way to Wealth!

FRANK RICHARDS received several reproachful glances in class that afternoon from Master Todgers.

Like the respected parent of Hamlet in the play, Chunky had a countenance more of sorrow than of anger.

Many and varied were the wonderful ideas that were hatched in the powerful brain of Joseph Todgers. Cedar Creek School had chortled many a time over his weird stunts. He had tried his fortune as an author, as a poet, and as several other things, and thereby added considerably to the gaiety of the school in the backwoods. Among other things, Chunky prided himself upon his abilities as a business man—if only he got a chance! Hitherto he had been handicapped by a shortage of cash—the most tremendous ability could scarcely get going, as it were, on an allowance of a quarter of a dollar a week. Even a Rockefeller, a Wanamaker, or a Marshall Field could hardly have started on the primrose path of money-making with so very limited a capital.

Now that difficulty had vanished, there was, as Chunky said, money about. It was Frank Richards' money, but that was a trifle to which Chunky attached no importance. It did not matter whose money it was, so long as Todgers had command of it. In his hands, it was going to increase like a snowball rolling down a snowy hillside—if all went well! It was really exasperating to be stopped at the outset of a career of fortune by some absurd objections on the part of the owner of the necessary money. That was how Chunky looked at it. Never had he so deeply sympathised with Brutus' view of those who "lock such rascal counters from their friends."

Chunky found lessons and Miss Meadows a bore that afternoon. He

was thinking of greater things—as he often was in lesson-time. Miss Meadows did not make due allowance for pupils who were thinking of greater things than lessons, and the pointer came into play once or twice, much to Chunky's indignation.

Chunky Todgers was very glad when lessons were over and school was dismissed.

He bore down on Frank Richards & Co. as they walked across the playground to the corral for their horses.

"Franky, old fellow—" he began.

Frank Richards waved his hand.

"Buzz off, Chunky! Nothing doing!" he said.

"But I tell you—"

"Scat!"

"I guess I'm offering to make you rich—"

"Rats!"

"Look here, give a galoot a chance!" pleaded Chunky. "Let me tell you the stunt, and you'll see for yourself."

"Let him chew the rag if he wants to," grinned Bob Lawless. "It won't do any harm. Give him five minutes."

"All serene!" said Frank, taking out his watch. "Five minutes, Chunky. Make the most of it."

"You silly jay—"

"Ten seconds gone!"

"Look here, you ass—"

"Fifteen seconds!"

Chunky Todgers breathed hard. The three chums waited, grinning. It was evident that they intended to give him only the five minutes, though Chunky was prepared with a scheme for getting rich quick and putting Rockefellers and Wanamakers into the shade.

"Half a minute!" said Frank Richards sententiously. "You're losing time, Chunky. Wag your chin while you've got a chance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, look here!" said Chunky hurriedly. "Just listen to me. Now we've got the necessary capital—"

"We!" ejaculated Frank.

"Well, you've got it, but it comes to the same thing if you hand it to me," explained Chunky.

"If!" murmured Frank Richards, and his chums chuckled. There was a bigger "if" in the matter than Master Todgers seemed to realise.

"The cash is in the bank at Thompson, isn't it?" pursued Chunky.

"Yes."

"Then all you've got to do is to give me a written draft on the bank, and they will hand it over."

"That's all!" chuckled Frank.

"Well, that isn't much trouble. I'll get you some ink and paper. You'll simply have to sign your name, and there you are!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't see anything to snigger at. With a draft for a thousand dollars, I mosey along to old Isaacs' office—you know old Isaacs in Thompson? He has an office in Kamloops, too, where they can send a wire along the railway to Montreal."

"A wire to Montreal?" ejaculated Frank Richards.

"Yep. That will be necessary, of course."

"Necessary for what?"

"To buy the shares," explained Chunky.

"To buy the shares?" repeated Frank Richards blankly.

"Of course. A stock operation, you know."

"My only hat!"

Frank Richards & Co. simply stared at the cheerful Chunky. He had succeeded in surprising them, at least.

"That's the stunt," said Chunky, pleased at having made an impression. "It's as easy as falling off a log to a galoot with brains like me."

"What do you know about stocks and shares, you fat chump?" howled Frank Richards.

"Lots! Father has a paper from Kamloops, you know, and they give the prices, from the Montreal Exchange, you know. I've often read down the prices and wished I had some dust to speculate with—"

"Speculate—you?" gasped Frank.

"You bet! Of course, it's a dangerous game for a chap who isn't all there," said Chunky. "That doesn't apply to me. With my cool head—"

"Cool cheek, you mean!"

"And sagacity, and so on, I'm just the galoot to pull it off. It's easy. That's how the American millionaires make their huge fortunes, you know. Small beginnings like this—bigger things later on. I shan't always be speculating with a miserable thousand dollars or so," said Chunky disdainfully. "That's only a start. Later on, there will be deals involving millions of dollars."

"Will there, by Jove?"

"Sure."

"And how do you get rich quick by buying shares on the Exchange at Montreal?" asked Bob.

"You buy them cheap, and sell them dear," explained Chunky patiently; "same as old Gunten did. He bought Honks' Elevator shares at two dollars, and sold them at ten dollars. I heard him telling father about it. He made no end of money. Ever since then I've kept my eye on the quotation of Honks' shares—watched 'em go up and down. And—just as if it were a stroke of luck specially for me—they're down to two dollars again."

"Oh!"

"I buy at two dollars," said Chunky eagerly. "I sell at ten dollars—see? Same as Mr. Gunten did. I get five hundred shares for a thousand dollars. When I sell them at ten dollars each, that's a clear profit of four thousand dollars. You have to deduct broker's fees; that's not very much. Of course, I shall stand you a whack in the huge profits, Franky, as you provide the capital."

"Oh crumbs! And suppose the shares don't rise?"

"Oh, they will! They did before. Don't I keep on telling you that Mr. Gunten bought at two and sold at ten."

"Probably Mr. Gunten knew more about the game than you do, fathead! If the shares sell at two dollars, they can't be worth ten, and it was some wangle that pushed them up to ten for selling. And they didn't stay at ten."

"Oh, you don't know anything about stock exchanges, old chap!" said Chunky patronisingly. "You leave the brain-work to me. That's my holt, you know. Just give me a draft on the Thompson bank for a thousand dollars, and I'll do the rest."

"You born idiot—"

"Eh?"

"You champion chump—"

"Look here—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I say, Franky, you're not going to be a mean jay!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "Here, I'm offering to make you rich—"

"Fathead!"

"It's the chance of a lifetime! Honks' shares may rise to ten dollars again any day. It may be too late next week even—"

"Or they may go down to ten cents!" chuckled Bob Lawless.

"Don't I keep on telling you you don't understand these matters?" snorted Chunky Todgers. "I do. I've read the City news in the Kamloops paper every day for months, ever since I heard old Gunten tell my father about his deal in Honks. I can tell you I've wished like anything that I had some capital—"

"Why doesn't old Gunten buy them again?" asked Beauclerc.

"P'raps he don't know—"

"Ha, ha! More likely he does know," grinned Bob. "And this time he doesn't know there's a dodge on to push the shares and plant them on jays at ten dollars each."

"That's all rot! Now, Franky—"

"Time's up!" said Frank Richards, putting back his watch. "You've had six minutes, Chunky, instead of five."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—"

"Good-bye!"

Frank Richards & Co. hurried on to the corral. They had heard enough of Chunky Todgers' wonderful stunt. Speculating on a stock exchange was likely to turn out more disastrously for Todgers than his essays as an author and a poet, if he had the capital! Fortunately, he hadn't the capital.

But Chunky was not to be shaken off easily. Frank Richards' good fortune was, as Chunky considered it, the chance of a lifetime. Never again would he have the chance of laying his fat hands on a sum of money sufficiently large for a stock operation. It was now or never!

The fat schoolboy rushed into the corral after the Co.

"Hold on! I say, Franky—"

"Bow-wow!"

The chums of Cedar Creek led out their horses for the homeward ride. Chunky Todgers dragged out his fat pony and followed.

"I say, Franky!" he bawled, as they reached the trail.

"Good-night!"

"Just listen to me!"

"Fathead!"

Frank Richards & Co. rode off, chuckling. Chunky Todgers glared after them in great exasperation. Then, with a moody brow, he turned his fat pony homeward. Fortune was knocking at his door, so to speak, and he could not open it and let the goddess in, because Frank Richards, like Cassius, persisted in "locking rascal counters from his friends." It really was exasperating.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Chunky is Mysterious!

DURING the following days Chunky Todgers kept up a persistent siege of Frank Richards & Co.

As this was the chance of a life-time, Chunky naturally did not want to let it pass.

At every moment out of school the chums were haunted by Todgers, eager to explain the wonderful advantages of buying shares in Honks' Elevator Co. at two dollars, and selling them later to an unsuspecting public at ten.

The Co. persisted in turning up their noses at that golden chance of fortune.

Chunky haunted them in vain.

After a few days the chums found their patience running out, and Bob Lawless introduced a heavy boot into the discussion.

That had a deterring effect on Chunky. He left the Co. alone, and looked for chances of catching Frank Richards by himself. Instinctively Chunky had fastened on the good-natured Frank as the most probable victim, but Frank's good nature did not extend to handing

over a slice of his little fortune to Chunky to speculate with. He would certainly not have done so, if he had supposed there was a chance of success; but he was too clear-headed to suppose that for a moment.

Frank had, in fact, asked his uncle, Mr. Lawless, a question or two on the subject of Honks' Elevator Co., and the rancher told him it was a worthless company, the shares in which were occasionally "run up" by astute riggers of the market, who had bought them cheap and desired to sell them dear.

Frank had guessed as much for himself, but he explained it to Chunky in vain.

Chunky was in possession of superior knowledge on the subject. At all events, he was satisfied that he was.

The following week he came to Frank with a determined expression on his face. Bob Lawless made a motion with his boot, and Chunky backed off.

"Don't you be a beast, Bob Lawless! I guess I've come to give you my last word on the subject," said Chunky darkly.

"Well, we'll be glad to hear that, at all events," remarked Vere Beauclerc, with a smile.

"Chuck it off your chest, and absquatulate!" said Bob.

Chunky fixed accusing eyes on Frank Richards.

"I've offered to make you rich!" he said.

"Declined with thanks, old chap!"

"Honks' shares are still quoted at two dollars—"

"Go hon!"

"They may move up any day."

"Let 'em!"

"Will you give me a draft on the Thompson bank for a thousand dollars?"

"No!"

"It's for your own sake more than mine," said Chunky Todgers plaintively.

"I'm placing my knowledge and my vast abilities at your service, really."

"Keep 'em for class!" suggested Bob Lawless. "Miss Meadows would like to see you put a little more ability into your arithmetic."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Chunky snorted.

"For the last time, Frank Richards!" he said.

"Ass!"

"Then it's your own look-out!" said Chunky darkly and mysteriously.

"What is?"

"Never mind! I'm going to make us both rich. You'll thank me afterwards."

"What are you driving at, you fat duffer?" asked Frank, puzzled.

"You'll know later."

With that mysterious reply, Chunky Todgers rolled away.

"What on earth has the young duffer got in his silly head now?" said Frank Richards.

"Goodness knows!" yawned Bob Lawless. "Perhaps he's going to write another stunning poem, and sell it for a thousand dollars—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whether Chunky Todgers was writing another poem or not he was very busy with his pen that day. After morning lessons he stayed in the school-room, busy at his desk. He came out to dinner with a smudge of ink on his fat little nose, and a bundle of papers in his pocket. After dinner, instead of going out into the playground, he returned to the school-room.

Frank Richards gave him a look-in just before afternoon lessons. He found Chunky scribbling away busily at his desk.

As Frank came up Chunky started, crimsoned, and hastily turned over the sheet he was scribbling on.

"Hallo! Is that a deadly secret?" asked Frank, smiling.

"N-n-no!"

"Another giddy poem?" grinned Frank.

"Nunno."

"What are you doing with this?" asked Frank, catching sight of his school geography on Todgers' desk.

The book was open at the title-page, on which Frank's name was written in his own hand.

"N-n-nothing!"

"Studying geography out of lesson-time!" said Frank, in wonder. "Well, go ahead, old chap. It's rather new for you, and may do you good."

And Frank strolled away, to Chunky's evident relief.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Limit!

AFTER lessons that day, Frank Richards & Co. stayed behind to split logs for the school, and Chunky Todgers stayed behind—

in the school-room. He was busy scribbling at his desk, as before. Miss Meadows, who observed him, supposed that her most backward pupil was making an effort to improve, and she gave him a kindly smile as she went out.

Whatever the fat youth was doing, he kept very hard at his task, with an industry that was very unusual with him.

When Frank Richards & Co. had finished the logs, and come in for their coats, they saw Chunky, through the school-room door, still "going it."

"My hat! There's Todgers!" ejaculated Frank. "He will be shut in if he hangs on much longer."

"Chunky!" bawled Bob.

Todgers looked up with a start.

"Hallo! Ain't you fellows gone?" he exclaimed.

"Just going! You'll be late."

"Late! The bank don't close early to-day."

"The bank!" repeated Frank Richards.

"What bank?"

Todgers crimsoned.

"I—I mean—I—I don't mean anything! It's all right."

"So you're going to the bank?" said Bob Lawless. "Has Franky given you that draft on the bank, then?"

"No fear!" grinned Frank.

"I—did I say bank?" stammered Chunky Todgers. "I—I mean Gunten's store—that's what I really meant to say. You galoots mosey off! You're bothering me!"

Bob Lawless eyed him very curiously.

Chunky's face was crimson, and his manner confused. He looked exactly like a fellow who had been caught in a guilty act. His desk was covered with scribbled paper, and as Bob Lawless stepped into the school-room, he gathered them hastily up and crumpled them.

"You—you keep away, you know!" he gasped.

"What are you up to, Chunky?"

"N-n-nothing!"

Chunky ran towards the log-fire, which was dying out, and threw the crumpled papers on it. Then he rolled out of the school-room, and cut across to the corral with unaccustomed haste.

"What on earth is the fat idiot up to?" exclaimed Bob, in amazement and some alarm. "Here's your geography on his desk, Frank—that's your name on it."

"He had it there before," said Frank—

"open at the same page, too."

"What has he been scribbling?"
 "Blessed if I know!"
 "He's jolly mysterious about it—and he's going to the bank, too. Sure it isn't possible that—that—"
 Bob strode towards the hearth. The crumpled sheets Chunky had pitched into the dying embers were stiff smouldering. Bob caught up a sheet of paper, browned but not burnt, and looked at it, and gave a howl.
 "Look!"
 "Good heavens!"
 Frank Richards & Co. gazed at the paper, aghast. For upon it was written, in a clumsy imitation of Frank's hand:

"Pay J. Todgers, Esq., the sum of one thousand dollars.
 "F. RICHARDS."

For a few moments the three school-boys were dumb. A vague suspicion had flashed into Bob's mind, but he was dumbfounded at seeing it confirmed in this way.

"The awful young rascal!" gasped Beauclerc at last.

"The mad young idiot!" exclaimed Frank. "He—he's going to the bank with a forged paper in my name! They wouldn't give him the money. This wouldn't impose on them.

"He thinks it would!" growled Bob. "He's more idiot than anything else. 'Tain't as if a sensible chap did it! But—you fellows run out and stop him, while I get rid of this rubbish!"

Bob Lawless stirred the papers into flame, while his comrades ran out of the school-room. He was after them in a minute, and he found them shouting to Chunky Todgers, who had just ridden out of the gates of Cedar Creek on the Thompson trail.

"Chunky!"
 "Todgers!"
 "Stop!"

Instead of stopping Chunky urged on his fat pony, and galloped away in the direction of Thompson Town.

"The hosses!" shouted Bob.

The chums dashed to the corral and dragged out their horses. In less than a minute they were mounted and riding after Chunky Todgers at full gallop.

Clatter, clatter, clatter!
 Chunky Todgers glanced over his shoulder, at the ringing of hoof-beats on the trail behind him.

His fat face paled a little. In the looks of Frank Richards & Co. he could read what they knew.

"Stop, you fat villain!" roared Bob Lawless, brandishing his riding-whip.

"Chunky, stop!" shouted Frank. Todgers urged his pony desperately. "I guess we'll run him down!" panted Bob Lawless.

The chums rode their hardest. Chunky Todgers drove on his fat little pony desperately, but the horses gained fast at every stride.

Before the fat youth was half-way to Thompson Frank Richards & Co. were riding round him.

Frank caught at his rein.

"Todgers—"

"Leggo!" howled Chunky.

"Stop, you born idiot!"

"I—I won't— Yaroooh!"

Bob Lawless had Chunky by the collar, and he stopped—bumping off his pony into the grass of the trail.

The chums dismounted and surrounded him. Chunky Todgers sat in the grass and roared.

"Now, you rascal—" panted Bob.

"Yaroooh!"

"Going to the bank, are you?" exclaimed Bob wrathfully. "You're going to the sheriff, my pippin, and you'll sleep in the calaboose to-night!"

"Ow!"



STOPPING THE SCHOOLBOY SPECULATOR! Before Todgers was half-way to Thompson, Frank Richards & Co., were riding round him. Frank caught his rein. "Stop, you born idiot!" he shouted. (See Chapter 4.)

"You've got a paper about you, Chunky, that you've written in my name," said Frank Richards quietly. "Give it to me at once."

"I—I— Yaroooh!"

Bob Lawless' riding-whip came across Chunky's fat shoulders; and then he handed over the paper in a great hurry.

"You fat idiot!" said Frank. "They wouldn't have paid out any money on this. You would have been detained, and the sheriff sent for!"

"It's all your fault!" gasped Chunky. "Don't you yowl at me, Bob; I was only doing it for Frank's sake. I wouldn't let him stand in his own light, I'm too generous—"

"Why, you—you—"

"Keep that paper, Franky," said Bob Lawless. "That's to go to the sheriff with Todgers. We'll take them together!"

Chunky Todgers uttered a howl.

"Yow-ow! I—I'm not going to the sheriff!"

"You jolly well are!"

"He—he would think I'd committed forgery if he saw that paper!" howled Chunky, in alarm.

"Well, what have you done, you rascal?"

"I—I was doing it for Frank's sake, you know—just using his name to do him a good turn—" gasped Chunky.

"You can go to the sheriff, or you can have a jolly good hiding!" said Bob Lawless grimly. "Take your choice. You'll have to learn not to do people these good turns, you young villain!"

"I—I say—"

"Which is it to be?" roared Bob, brandishing his whip.

"I—I'd rather have the hiding, but I I—"

"Roll him over!"

"Whack, whack, whack, whack!"

"Yaroooh! Yoop! Whooop!"

Chunky Todgers' wild yells rang through the timber as Bob Lawless laid on the riding-whip with a vigorous hand. It was true that the hapless Chunky was too stupid to realise the wrong he had done; but Bob felt that a severe lesson was needed, as undoubtedly it was; and his chums agreed with him. For his own good, Chunky Todgers had to go through it; and he went through it, rather than go before the sheriff.

"There!" gasped Bob, when his arm was fatigued. "I guess that will do for you, Chunky!"

"Yaroooh!"

"It's for your own good, you know," said Frank.

"Yow-ow-ow!" Chunky sat up and roared. "I won't make you rich now, Frank Richards— Yooop! Yah! I won't—yaroooh!—make you a millionaire! Yow-ow-ow! Wow!"

And Chunky Todgers shook a fat fist at Frank Richards ere he clambered on his fat pony and rode away.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
 Just as Well!

THE next day Chunky Todgers was very morose.

As he had suffered for his sin the chums of Cedar Creek were inclined to let the matter pass and be kind to the hapless youth; but Chunky, to their astonishment, seemed to regard himself as the injured party.

He was morose and he was reproachful. He gave Frank Richards accusing looks and declined even to speak to him. That was not really a great loss, and Frank bore it with much fortitude.

But a day later Chunky came round. He was still reproachful, but it was with a gentler and more mournful reproach.

(Continued on page 24.)

was remarking, with enthusiasm. "All I do is to put old Linton under the 'fluence, command him to instruct Tom Merry to put me in the team to play to-morrow, and there you are! The match is assured! Tom Merry cannot help himself; he daren't refuse."

"Don't be an ass!" answered Wilkins. "Of course he dare! Even if you could work such a silly, fat-headed wheeze, what right has Linton to interfere in footer? He's no authority whatever over such matters. Tom Merry would simply refuse to obey such an order."

"Rot!" snapped Grundy. "Utter rot!" "It isn't rot!" exclaimed Gunn warmly. "You raving chump, Grundy! If you start that silly nonsense on Linton, you'll get scalped. Don't do it!"

"Rot!" repeated Grundy, with a snort. "Don't be an ass, Gunn! I know what I'm doing. Now, you chaps will have to wait outside the study. But I'll leave the door open a little, so that you can see me do it. I expect I shall have to be pretty smart, y'know. Must get the 'fluence on him before he starts asking questions. And now, come on! Follow me!"

"But look here—"

"Dry up!"

And with that emphatic remark Grundy started towards Mr. Linton's study. Wilkins looked at Gunn. And then they started along the passage, too—but in the opposite direction.

Apparently they did not wish to see Grundy do it.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. Not a Success!

BUT other fellows did, if they did not. Along the passage, treading lightly, came Blake & Co. And with Blake & Co. were the Terrible Three and several other fellows. Very plainly, the news of Grundy's proposed stunt had got about. At any rate, all were grinning in anticipation as they followed the great George Alfred, apparently to see him do it.

Grundy did not look round—not then. Perhaps the very possibility of his loyal henchmen daring to desert him never entered his head, or possibly he heard the sound of footsteps behind, and was satisfied.

At the Shell master's study door he stopped, and knocked boldly and confidently. "Come in!"

From within the room came the deep voice of Mr. Linton. Grundy turned the knob, and was about to enter, when, happening to glance round, he discovered, to his astonishment, that Wilkins and Gunn had vanished. He gave an indignant snort. Then his eyes fell upon the group of grinning fellows, who had wisely stopped a few yards along the passage. He frowned wrathfully.

"Go it, Grundy!" hissed Blake, in a tense whisper.

"On the ball, Grundy!" whispered Lowther encouragingly.

A chorus of soft chuckles floated down the passage, and Grundy paused irresolutely. But it was too late then. From within the study came a second impatient "Come in!" And Grundy, only stopping to shake an angry fist at the grinning juniors, pushed open the door and marched in.

Cautiously and noiselessly the juniors approached the study door. Grundy had obligingly left it open a little, and it was quite possible to see and hear what happened within the study.

Through the aperture could be seen the figure of Mr. Linton, seated at his desk. Facing him, with legs set far apart, and arms folded in an Ajax-defying-the-lightning attitude, stood George Alfred Grundy.

The master of the Shell was speaking. "Did you hear me, Grundy?" he was saying, somewhat testily. "Kindly state what you wished to see me about, instead of standing staring at me in that impudent manner, boy!"

The juniors in the passage gasped. "Oh, my only hat!" murmured Blake softly. "He's started putting the 'fluence on already. Oh crumbs! What a nerve!"

Evidently Grundy had, for he did not answer the master. He still stood in the same attitude, his eyes fixed in a concentrated gaze on the Shell master's face.

But apparently Mr. Linton did not appear conscious of the 'fluence. He rose to his feet, his brow darkening thunderously. "Are you mad, Grundy?" he rapped out angrily. "Answer me at— Good gracious!

THE POPULAR.—No. 293.

How dare you stand and make such ridiculous faces at me, boy? Have you taken leave of your senses, Grundy?"

But again Grundy did not reply. His commanding eye did not appear to be sending Mr. Linton off somehow. But Grundy did not despair. He persevered with his frowning and glaring, cheerfully and silently. Mr. Linton stared at him as if he could scarcely believe his own eyes.

Only for about sixty seconds, though. Then, with a snort of anger, Mr. Linton reached for his cane.

"Grundy, enough of this nonsense!" he thundered. "If you are not insane or ill, boy, answer me at once. What do you mean by this astounding insolence?"

Grundy gave it up. He fell back, eyeing the wrathful master in dismay. It was plain even to Grundy then that Mr. Linton was not going "off." Something evidently had gone wrong with the 'fluence. Or was it possible Mr. Linton was, after all, like his previous subjects, too weak-minded to make a suitable subject for hypnotic experiments?

"It's all right, sir," he said uneasily. "I see I can't put the 'fluence on you!"

"F-'fluence?" repeated the dazed Form-master.

"Yes. You are too strong for me at present. But, mind you, sir, I'm going to get the right stuff soon!"

"What—what are you talking about, boy?"

"I see you don't understand, sir," remarked Grundy pleasantly. "The fact is, sir, that having discovered I possess the power of hypnotism to an exceptional degree, I deter—"

"Grundy!"

George Alfred fairly jumped as Mr. Linton thundered out his name.

"Yes, sir!"

"Enough of this foolery, boy!" said Mr. Linton, in a grinding tone. "I will give you three minutes, Grundy. Unless you have explained briefly and clearly why you came in here, I shall take you to Dr. Holmes immediately. Now!"

There was a gleam in Mr. Linton's eyes that Grundy did not like. And—well, Grundy had explained well within the three minutes. And when he had finished, the Shell-master was eyeing him in wonder.

"Bless my soul! You—you utterly absurd boy!" he exclaimed, in astonishment. "Ah, I see!" Light seemed to dawn suddenly upon Mr. Linton, and his brow grew thunderous. "Is it possible," he asked, in a terrible voice, "that just now you were attempting to hypnotise me—that you had the astounding impudence to attempt to play absurd hypnotic tricks on me, your Form-master, Grundy?"

"Ahem!" gasped Grundy.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Linton. "Is this, then, the explanation of your remarkable behaviour, Grundy? Answer me, sir—! Does this mean that you had the audacity—that you were actually trying your childish, absurd tricks upon me, Grundy?"

"Nunno! Certainly not, sir!" gasped the unhappy reformer. "I—It wasn't a trick at all. I—I was merely going to hypnotise you for—for the good of the School House, sir!"

"What?"

"I was going to force you, whilst under the power of my will," explained Grundy, somewhat warmly, "to order Tom Merry to put me in the team for Saturday's match, sir. So that we should win. See? It was not a trick! Certainly not!"

"You—you—dare to admit it, then?" gasped Mr. Linton. "Then—then I will endeavour to instruct you, Grundy, for your own good and the good of the School House, that your Form-master is not a suitable person for such ridiculous experiments, boy! Hold out your hand!"

"But—but, I say, sir! What—Yaroooogh!"

The exasperated Form master had not waited to hear what Grundy had to say—nor for that astonished youth to hold out his hand. His left hand grasped the reformer's collar, and his right wielded the cane—with terrific vim!

"Whack, whack, whack!"

"Yaroooogh! Yaroooogh!"

Grundy's booming voice echoed far and wide. It was a record licking, even for Grundy, and it—nearly doubled up that luckless youth.

"There!" gasped Mr. Linton, pausing at last, breathless. "Perhaps that will drive some sense of the fitness of things into your obtuse brain, and also, I trust, will teach

you not to meddle with things you don't understand! And now go to your Form-room at once!"

There was the sound of flying footsteps in the passage as Mr. Linton strode to the door and pulled it open. But fortunately the master did not hear. He bundled the groaning and writhing Grundy into the passage and slammed the door.

At the end of the passage quite a crowd of fellows were waiting. And once again kind inquiries concerning hypnotism were put to Grundy—inquiries that were really superfluous, considering the inquirers themselves had seen and heard practically all that had taken place in Mr. Linton's study.

At all events, Grundy, as he limped past the chortling crowd, writhing and groaning dismally, did not reply to them. And he certainly did not attempt any more hypnotism upon Mr. Linton that afternoon. It was only too clear to Grundy that Mr. Linton was not a suitable subject, after all.

In fact, that was the last St. Jim's heard of Grundy the Hypnotist. He had had enough!

THE END.

(You must not miss reading "Cardew's Pluck!" next week's dramatic long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's School.)

Get-Rich-Quick Todgers!

(Continued from page 19.)

"See what you've done, you know!" he said.

"Well, what have I done?" asked Frank.

"Lost a fortune—"

"I sha'n't miss it!" grinned Frank Richards.

"And lost one for me, too. Just because I signed your name—"

"Do you want some more of my riding-whip?" asked Bob Lawless, in a sulphurous tone.

"Nunno!"

"I guess you're going the right way to get it!"

Chunky Todgers snorted.

"Oh, you're a jay, and Frank's a jay!" he said. "I sha'n't worry any more about making you rich, I can tell you! Yah!"

And Chunky sniffed contemptuously and walked off.

But he could not let the topic drop. Every day he referred to it in mournful tones; and at last he announced that Honks' Elevator shares were quoted two dollars and a quarter in the paper.

"Going up!" said Chunky. "Now you'll see what you've lost."

"Rats!"

"There's a Montreal paper at Gunten's store on Saturday," said Todgers. "The latest price will be in that. You'll see! Serve you right, too!"

On Saturday Frank Richards & Co. were in Thompson, and they dropped into Gunten's store, and there, sure enough, they found Chunky Todgers, with a chunk of maple-sugar in one hand the Montreal paper in the other.

"Well, how are they to-day?" grinned Bob. "Honks, you know, and—"

"They—they—they're not marked," murmured Chunky. "There—there's a paragraph about them. They—they—they've gone into liquidation, and—and the company's expected to—to—to pay the shareholders about ten cents back on the five-dollar share, and—and—"

Chunky Todgers grinned feebly. "P-p-perhaps it's just as well I—I didn't put a thousand dollars into it!" he murmured.

And Frank Richards & Co. agreed that it was.

THE END.

(Look out for next week's thrilling, long complete story of Frank Richards & Co., the Chums of the School in the Backwoods.)