

IN THE HANDS OF THE SAVAGES!

the trail to the Indian village is their last trail. The search for adventure has led them into the valley of the shadow!

It seems to the Lumber School Chums that

SAVED FROM THE STAKE!



Another topping long complete story, dealing with the thrilling adventures of Frank Richards & Co., of Cedar Creek, on the plains of the Wild West!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Troopers On the Trail!

GUESS that's the show!"

Sergeant Lasalle raised his riding-whip and pointed as he spoke.

Against the sky of black velvet, in the distance, a red glow danced and wavered and vanished and appeared again.

Vere Beauclerc watched it eagerly.

It was the reflection of a fire in the distance—evidently a huge bonfire to cast so wide a reflection.

Beauclerc and the sergeant were following a wild track in the hills, leading their horses, the footing being too uncertain for riding in the darkness of the night. Behind them came the five Canadian Mounted Police troopers, leading their steeds in single file.

Since leaving the camp of the liquor smugglers, the sergeant had lost the trail in the darkness, the traces left in the rocky soil being few and faint. He was seeking the Indian village, for which he was assured that the smugglers had headed. Beauclerc knew the direction in which it lay, but not its exact whereabouts; but the glow that suddenly danced in the sky was a sure guide.

"I guess they've got a big fire going," the sergeant remarked. "It's a jamboree, I reckon; and that shows pretty plainly that the fire-water has arrived. That's the Kootenay village yonder, my boy, and I guess the bootleggers are already there."

"It looks like it," said Beauclerc. "That's too big for a trapper's camp fire. If the bootleggers are there, Bob Lawless and Frank Richards are there, too."

"I guess so. Don't you worry, souny," said the sergeant kindly. "I guess we shall find them all right. They're prisoners, that's sure; but I reckon we'll get there in time."

He paused.

The red glow in the sky was wider and more constant. Evidently the great fire in the Indian village was burning high. The jamboree was probably already in progress, and if the fire-water was flowing there was terrible danger for the white prisoners, though the Indians, when sober, would not have been likely to harm them. Under the influence of fire-water there was likely to be bloodshed among the Redskins themselves, and at such a time white prisoners would scarcely escape unburnt.

Vere Beauclerc realized that clearly, as well as the sergeant, and his anxiety for his chums deepened.

Sergeant Lasalle turned to his men and rapped out a brief word of command, and the troopers looked to their carbines.

It was very probable that the weapons would be needed if they arrived when the Redskins were in a state of intoxicated madness.

The little party rushed on.

They were threading their way over a rocky and precipitous hillside, descending into a valley where the Indian village lay.

In spite of their haste to get to the Kootenay village, it was impossible to proceed at more than a walk. But from the trackless rocks they came out at last into a beaten trail which ran almost directly towards the glow in the distance.

"Mount!" said the sergeant.

It was possible to ride now. This track was evidently the Indians' accustomed path to the village.

The party pushed on at a trot.

Redder and brighter grew the glow in the sky, and the sergeant's quick ears even detected the sound of distant yelling. It was plain that the Indian jamboree was in progress.

"Halt!" said Sergeant Lasalle suddenly.

The troopers stopped.

"I guess there's horsemen ahead of us on this trail," said the sergeant.

"Quiet! Dismount, and take cover!"

Vere Beauclerc's heart throbbed with impatience.

He was thinking of his two chums, prisoners in the lodges of the Redskins, at the mercy of the maddened savages.

"Sergeant Lasalle—" he muttered.

"Silence!"

Beauclerc was silent. He could hear no sound on the trail ahead, but it was evident that the quicker ears of the sergeant had warned him.

The troopers drew their horses aside from the trail, and tethered them in a clump of stunted pines.

Then, carbine in hand, they waited.

By that time Beauclerc and the rest could hear what the sergeant had heard—the sound of hoofs on the hard soil, and the jingling of stirrups and bridles.

In silence, finger on trigger, the Canadian troopers waited for the unseen horsemen to come up.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Indian Jamboree!

"FRANK, old chap!"

Bob Lawless rolled over and wriggled into a sitting posture, with his back to the lodge-pole.

After their desperate attempt to escape, dragged back into the village by the Redskins, Frank Richards and Bob Lawless had been thrown into the lodge. They were bound hand and foot with raw-hide thongs so securely that they could hardly move a limb. Their captors were taking no further risks with them.

Outside, the big fire was blazing, and the squaws were busy cooking buffalo-meat and other meats in preparation for the feast.

The cargo of fire-water, brought to the village by Hiram Hook and his gang, had been transferred to the lodge of the chief, Thunder Cloud.

Half a dozen armed braves stood guard over that lodge to keep the fire-water from pilfering hands.

Frank Richards could see the scene from where he lay in the lodge. He was no longer thinking of escape. The raw-hide thongs that cut cruelly into his flesh made that impossible.

The chums of Cedar Creek could but await their fate, whatever it was—and they feared the worst.

In any case, they would, hardly have escaped with their lives when the Redskins became intoxicated, and their attempt had exasperated the savages.

"I guess it looks pretty bad for us, Frank," went on Bob Lawless. "I wonder where the old Churnub is now!"

"Poor old Beauclerc!" said Frank. "I'm glad he went back and didn't get landed with us, anyhow!"

"There's a chance yet," said Bob hopefully. "I'm sure that the sheriff of Thompson will clip in the minute Beauclerc tells him about the bootleg gang."

"It's no good thinking of that, Bob," said Frank Richards quietly. "He couldn't possibly get here before to-morrow, if at all."

Bob was silent.

Neither of the chums knew that Vere Beauclerc had fallen in with a party of Canadian Mounted Police in search of the bootleggers, and had not gone to Thompson at all. Had they only known it, it would have cheered them and given them hope.

"That villain Hook will set the Redskins

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on us, if he can," said Frank. "We hurt him in trying to get away—"

"The pesky rascal!" said Bob bitterly. "I guess I almost wish I had finished him."

"Here he comes."

The buffalo-robe at the opening of the lodge was dragged aside, and the leader of the bootleggers looked in.

Hiram Hook's bearded face was pallid, and he stood a little unsteadily.

In the struggle, before the chums of Cedar Creek had made their attempt at escape, the ruffian had been struck down, and although his wound was not very serious, it was painful. His shoulder was thickly bandaged under his coat.

His eyes glittered down at the bound schoolboys under his thick, beetling brows.

"I guess you won't get loose agin," he said. "I guess you'll be sorry you tried to stick me, young Lawless!"

"I'm sorry it's turned out no worse," answered Bob Lawless. "But you'll get hanged some day, that's one comfort!"

Hiram Hook scowled and strode into the lodge and dealt the rancher's son a heavy kick.

"I guess that will stop your tongue," he remarked.

Bob's eyes gleamed at him, but he made no answer.

Hook waved his hand towards the blazing fire and the throng of Redskins gathered round it.

"They're beginning," he said. "I reckon they'll soon be through the feast, and then the whisky will begin to flow. Do you know what's going to happen then?"

No answer.

"I was goin' to leave you hyer to take your chance," continued the bootlegger. "I guess it would have been a mighty poor chance when the Reds got mad. But I've fixed it up for you now; I've bargained with old Thunder Cloud to fix you when I'm gone. Understand that?"

"I know you're not rich enough for anything!" said Frank Richards.

"I guess you're going to pay for this," said Hiram Hook, touching his wounded shoulder. "You'll pay for it arter I'm gone; I'm having no hand in it. I'm getting out now. I'm finished my trade with the Injuns, and I guess this hyer village won't be healthy for white men when the Injuns get the pi'son aboard. I reckon they'd murder me as soon as you when they're drunk. I'm lighting out—and arter I'm gone you two aire going to have front place in the jamboree. The Injuns ain't had enough to fetch you yet; but jest you wait till they're full of tanglefoot!"

With that the ruffian turned and strode out of the lodge.

Bob Lawless was tugging at his raw-hide bonds, but he tugged in vain.

"By gum!" he muttered. "I guess I'd have liked to get my hands on that scallywag, Frank!"

"I suppose he means what he says, Bob," said Frank Richards. "He's brute enough for anything. But, anyhow, the Indians wouldn't have let us alone when they were drunk."

"I guess not."

The chums of Cedar Creek continued to watch the scene without, through the opening of the lodge.

The Redskins were gathered about the great fire, and the feast was already going on.

Hiram Hook and his followers, the three half-breeds, were making their preparations for departure.

But for the wound Hiram Hook received in his struggle with the schoolboys, the bootleggers would have been gone already.

Now they were in a hurry to get clear.

Hiram Hook and Black Henri examined the packs on the mules, and then mounted their horses. The other two half-breeds had joined the Indian feast, but Hook called them away, with oaths and threats; and the four rascals mounted at last and started.

The bootleggers rode away into the night, and vanished from the sight of the prisoners in the lodge.

"They're gone!" muttered Bob Lawless. "It's rotten to think of those rascals getting clear, Frank, after the harm they've done."

The chums continued to watch.

They observed that some of the squaws had collected up all the weapons of the braves and taken them away, a proceeding that rather puzzled Frank Richards at first.

But Bob Lawless, who knew more of the customs of the Redskins, explained it.

"That's always a preliminary to a fire-

water jamboree," said Bob. "As soon as they're full they'll begin to quarrel and fight, and if they had knives and tomahawks at hand half the village would be wiped out before the morning. They know what's coming, you see, and they always have the weapons put in a safe place before they start drinking. As it is, I guess two or three will get killed by midnight."

Frank shuddered.

"And that villain brings that stuff to them for a rotten profit, knowing the harm it does!" he muttered. "It's as bad as murder!"

"I guess it's quite as bad. Hallo! There they come with the fire-water."

The weapons having been taken away, and doubtless concealed in a safe place out of reach of the braves, some of the squaws were bearing the whisky jars from the chief's lodge to the feasters.

The jars were set down, and then the squaws turned from the scene—probably to seek safety for themselves in the wild scene that was to follow.

The jars passed among the Indians, in solemn silence at first, but as the fiery liquid was poured down the throats, the silence and gravity of the Redskins speedily disappeared.

A babel of voices arose, guttural shouting and singing soon mingled with threats and angry looks.

Some of the Redskins started a wild dance round the fire, several of them snatching flaming brands from the fire, which they waved in the air as they danced.

The jamboree was growing fast and furious now.

Frank Richards and his comrade watched, with throbbing hearts. At present they seemed to have been utterly forgotten, but at any minute, they knew, the Redskins might remember them. And then—

"Hallo, they're going it!" muttered Bob.

The first quarrel was in progress.

Two braves, with flaming eyes, were gesticulating furiously at one another, with a stream of words, taunts, and abuse, in the Kootenay dialect.

Some of the Redskins gathered round them, urging them on; others continued to drink or dance, without regarding them.

The two disputants soon proceeded from words to blows.

They closed and struggled, and each groped at his belt for the knife that, fortunately, was no longer there. But for the general disarming the Redskins two dead men would have fallen in a minute more. As it was, they fought with hands and feet and teeth, like a couple of wild cats, rolling on the ground and yelling with fury.

The schoolboys watched the scene, spell-bound.

One of the combatants tore himself loose and snatched a half-burnt log from the fire. He dealt his adversary a stinging blow with that weapon, stretching him senseless on the ground.

Then he turned to the nearest whisky jar.

There was a sudden howl among the Redskins, and two or three of them left the rest and started towards the white prisoners.

Frank Richards' eyes met Bob's.

"They're coming, old chap!" muttered Bob huskily.

The howling Redskins burst into the lodge, and the next moment the two prisoners were seized and dragged out.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Roped In!

"HALT!" Sergeant Lasalle rapped out the word.

Hiram Hook gave a violent start, and an oath left his lips.

The four bootleggers, with the pack cases, had ridden down the track from the Indian village, intending to be a good many miles away in the mountains before morning.

Not for a moment had Hiram Hook suspected that there was danger for him. He did not even believe Bob Lawless' statement that his chum had gone to Thompson for the sheriff; but, even if that were true, Hook knew that help from Thompson could not possibly reach the Indian village before morning. He was utterly taken by surprise when a sharp voice ordered him to halt, and six sturdy figures in scarlet coats loomed up round the party in the dim starlight.

The carbines were levelled, and the bootleggers were covered before they knew that foes were at hand.

"Hands up!"

Promptly enough, up went the hands of Black Henri and the other two half-breeds.

Even in the gloom they knew the scarlet coats of the Canadian North West Mounted Police, and they knew better than to offer resistance to those doughty paladins of the frontier.

But Hiram Hook was made of sterner stuff. Capture meant a long term of imprisonment. That was one of the risks of his peculiar profession.

After the first instant of surprise the bootlegger drove his spurs into his horse's flanks.

To abandon his packs, which represented all the profits of his rascally expedition, was a heavy blow. But he was only thinking of his liberty, which was more precious than even his profits.

He dashed on savagely, in the hope of bursting through the ambush and escaping in the darkness.

But it was not to be.

Crack!

A single shot rang out, and Hiram Hook's horse pitched forward on its knees and rolled over.

The bootlegger was thrown from the saddle and sprawled, half stunned, on the rocks.

Before he could collect his scattered senses a trooper had him by the back of the neck, and a revolver was pressed to his temple.

"I guess this is where you pass, pardner," drawled the Canadian trooper.

Hiram Hook "guessed" so, too.

"Let up!" he gasped.

"Hands—sharp!" said the trooper, and, as Hook was slow to obey, he gave him a playful tap with the barrel of the revolver.

The bootlegger sullenly put his hands together, and the handcuffs closed on his wrists and clicked.

He sat up dazedly, handcuffed and helpless. Black Henri and the others had dismounted obediently, and were handcuffed also.

The capture was complete.

"I guess it's a clean round-up," said Sergeant Lasalle. "Now we'll see who these beauties are, though I reckon there isn't much doubt. Show a light on this rascal. He seems the only white man here."

A lantern gleamed on Hook's savage face. The sergeant eyed him keenly.

"Look hyer! What does this hyer mean?" demanded Hiram Hook. He had a faint hope yet of getting through by bluster. "Who are you, anyhow?"

"Don't you know our uniforms?" smiled the sergeant. "You ought to know the North-West M.P. when you see them."

"I guess so, now I look at you," said Hook. "You couldn't expect me to see in the dark, like a cat, sergeant. What have you stopped me for?"

"Bootlegging," answered the sergeant crisply.

"I guess I don't know anything about it, and I'll tell you this—I'll let you hear of this again at Kamloops," said Hook blusteringly. "You can't ambush a peaceful trader like this hyer, sergeant, and shoot his critter. Somebody's got to pay for that boss!"

"Why didn't you stop when called on, then?" demanded the sergeant.

"I guess I reckoned you was rustlers holding me up," answered Hiram Hook. "I can't see in the dark."

"Your pards seem to know us pretty well,"



FRANK RICHARDS OF CEDAR CREEK.

answered the sergeant dryly. "What's in those packs?"

"Pelts—bought from the Injuns for ready money," answered Hiram Hook. "I guess you won't find nothing else."

"Not bought for smuggled fire-water?"

"Nope!"

"If you can prove that, all the better for you," said Sergeant Lasalle. "You're not the party that dropped a couple of whisky-jars on the prairie and left them behind at night?"

"I guess not."

"We shall see. You haven't seen anything of two schoolboys in these hills to-day?"

Hiram Hook started.

"Schoolboys!" he repeated. "I guess I shouldn't be looking for schoolboys in this quarter, sergeant. You're dreaming, sure!"

"He's lying, sergeant!" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc. "Here are the horses."

"What?"

"My friends' horses are here," said Beauclerc. "I know them well enough. This is Frank Richards' horse, and that's Bob Lawless'. How does he come to have their horses with him? Ask him that."

Beauclerc had looked at once at the two led horses, guessing to whom they belonged, and he had recognised Frank's and Bob's steeds immediately.

The sergeant gave a grim laugh.

"You're sure of the horses, kid?" he asked.

"I know them as well as I know my own," answered Beauclerc.

"How did you come by those horses, my friend?" asked the sergeant, fixing his eyes on the bootlegger.

"I guess we bought them off the Injuns, too. They had some hosses to sell; and if they're stolen hosses, I guess that ain't my funeral. I bought 'em fair and square."

"Well, you've only got to prove that, and you'll be all O. K.," said the sergeant sarcastically. "There's plenty of law in Canada—more than you'll want, I reckon. If you're not the party of bootleggers I've been looking for for three or four days I'll eat my Stetson—and I reckon I sha'n't have to do that!"

"Where are my friends?" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc, coming to the handcuffed bootlegger.

"What have you done with them?"

"No good asking me; I ain't seed hide nor hair of them," said the bootlegger. "I bought them hosses fair and square, and that's all I know about it."

"Are they still living?" asked the sergeant sternly.

"Ask me another, sergeant. Don't I keep on telling you I don't know nothing about them?"

"We'll get nothing out of him," said the sergeant. "Bind the lot of them to these trees, my lads, and we'll get on."

"I guess I'll have the law on you for this, sergeant!" blustered Hiram Hook.

"You're welcome to!" answered the sergeant dryly.

The four rascals were tied to the trees with their own trail-ropes, to keep them secure while the troopers pushed on. The horses were tethered close at hand.

Then the troopers remounted their own steeds, and rode on towards the Indian village.

Hiram Hook gazed after them, with bitter rage in his heart.

He had a savage hope that the two prisoners in the Kootenay village had already been placed beyond the power of telling the facts; though, even so, he had little chance of avoiding his just punishment. For whether Frank Richards and Bob Lawless were found or not, there was plenty of evidence in the village that a cargo of contraband liquor had arrived there that night, and the proof against the bootleggers was clear enough.

In fact, Hiram Hook realised that his bootlegging career had come to a sudden and complete termination, and that the prospect before him was one of hard labour within stone walls; and the fact that he richly deserved it was no comfort to him. As the Canadian troopers rode away the ruffian spat out impotent curses into the night.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Saved from the Flames!

FRANK RICHARDS and his comrade gave themselves up for lost as the Redskins dragged them from the lodge.

The scene in the Indian village was almost indescribable now.



JUST IN TIME! Right through the yelling Redskins to the fire Beauclerc rode his horse, and sprang down before it had stopped. In a second he was springing towards his chums, knife in hand. (See Chapter 4.)

Some of the Redskins had drunk themselves senseless, and lay on the ground, breathing stertorously. Others were staggering to and fro; others, again, still helping themselves from the whisky-jars. In two or three places infuriated braves were fighting with one another amid a hurricane of yells and shrieks.

A crowd of the liquor-maddened ruffians gathered round the two prisoners as they were dragged forth. In the midst of a howling mob, the chums of Cedar Creek were swept towards the fire.

Thunder Cloud, the chief, was sitting on a log, drinking from a horn goblet, with some of his stately dignity still in his manner. He lifted his head and looked at the prisoners as they were dragged past him. And Bob Lawless shouted to him:

"Chief! Stop them!"

Thunder Cloud shook his head with drunken gravity.

Sober, he would never have allowed the two schoolboys to be done to death in his village, having too well-founded a respect for the white man's Government and the red-coated police of the North-West Frontier. But he was not sober now. Thunder Cloud was as intoxicated as any of the howling savages round him. All fear of the possible consequences—indeed, all power of considering the consequences at all—had left him.

"Paleface dog!" he answered. "You shall die! Your scalps shall hang on the pole of my wigwam!"

He addressed the braves in their own tongue, evidently giving an order.

There was a howl of approval from the excited savages.

Some of the braves rushed away, and returned with two lodge-poles, which were jammed in the ground and set up near the fire.

Held by half a dozen of the Redskins, Bob and Frank watched the preparations, with sickness in their hearts.

All hope had left them now.

They knew what the lodge-poles were being set up for; they were to serve as torture-stakes, where the prisoners were to perish in the flames, according to the ancient custom of the "noble savage" before the white man came to the country.

As soon as the poles were set up the two schoolboys were bound to them in an upright position with raw-hide thongs.

They were only six feet apart, and the two chums looked at one another, with white faces.

Brushwood and faggots were stacked round them, and an Indian caught a flaming branch from the fire to set light to the pyres.

"Good-bye, Frank, old man!" muttered Bob Lawless hoarsely.

Thunder Cloud stepped forward, staggering a little, and waved back the Indian with the flaming brand.

He put his hand to his belt for a scalping-knife, but there was no knife there. In his drunken stupidity, the chief did not seem to remember the disarmament that had taken place, though it was an invariable Indian custom. He groped and groped for a knife, blinking round owlishly for it in a way that would have been comic under less fearful circumstances.

The old ruffian evidently intended to "raise the hair" of the prisoners before they were sacrificed, and add the ghastly trophies to those already adorning his lodge-pole.

In the pause in the proceedings a sound came from the silence of the night surrounding the Indian village—a sound that struck upon the hearts of the prisoners.

It was the staccato beat of hoofs upon a hard soil.

Gallop, gallop, gallop!

Frank Richards and Bob Lawless stared in the direction of the sound—the sound of galloping horses.

Was it possible—

Was it, perhaps, the bootleggers returning, or a new party of Redskins arriving for the feast, or—the wild hope thrilled in their hearts—was it help that was coming?

The Redskins did not seem to observe—or, at least, to heed—the sound in their savage excitement.

All eyes in the ferocious throng were fastened upon the prisoners bound to the stakes, and on the savage old ruffian groping for the knife that he could not find.

Thunder Cloud's dizzy brain seemed to grasp the fact at last that he had no knife,

and he stepped back and signed to the man with the brand to set fire to the piles.

The Indian came forward, having relighted the branch in the fire.

Gallop! Gallop!

The horsemen were nearer now.

The burning brand came closer to Frank Richards; he was to be the first victim.

The light had almost touched the pile of brushwood, when a rifle-shot rang out, and the Indian gave a fierce howl and toppled over.

The brand dropped on the ground, a foot or less from the pile to which it had been about to be set.

It flamed and smoked there, while the man who had dropped it rolled and howled helplessly, his leg broken by the bullet that had struck him.

The shot and the sudden fall of the Indian had a startling effect on the Redskins. They spun round and stared in the direction whence the shot had come blankly, evidently utterly astonished.

Gallop! Gallop!

The horses' hoofs were thundering now, and the riders were clear in the light from the great fire—six scarlet-coated horsemen and a schoolboy, riding at frantic speed.

Sergeant Lasalle was ahead, with a smoking carbine in his hand. It was evidently the sergeant who had fired the timely shot that saved Frank Richards.

Vere Beauclerc caught sight of the two figures bound to the stakes, and waved his hand, and urged on his black horse to frantic speed. He passed the sergeant, and dashed on into the midst of the Indians with utter recklessness.

There were yells and howls as the black horse dashed the Redskins aside, knocking down four or five of them, and dashing across them, ere the startled crowd cleared back out of the way of the rush.

Right up to the fire Beauclerc dashed, and he sprang from his horse before it had stopped.

In a second he was springing towards his chums, knife in hand.

He hardly seemed to note the presence of the Redskins at all, but it was fortunate for him that the six Mounted Police were there.

A howl of rage and defiance rose from some of the Redskins, and had they been armed it is probable that a desperate affray would have taken place. Fortunately for them, as well as for the troopers, they were without weapons.

Some of the bolder braves sprang at the horsemen as they dashed up, and were knocked away with the butts of carbines and stretched on the ground. But the greater part of the Redskins scattered before the charge of the troopers, fleeing among the lodges to escape the horses' hoofs.

Sergeant Lasalle had warned his men not to fire unless it was strictly necessary, and it was not needed.

While the troopers were scattering the crowd of Indians, Vere Beauclerc dragged away the brushwood piles, and slashed through the raw hide that bound his chums.

One Redskin made a spring at him with clutching hands, and Sergeant Lasalle dealt the wretch a blow on the jaw that sent him spinning, and laid him on his back.

In a few minutes Frank Richards and Bob Lawless were free. The Redskins, with loud howls, were scattering on all sides, driven headlong by the riding-whips of the troopers.

"It's the Cherub!" gasped Bob Lawless, hardly realising whether he was awake or dreaming. "Beauclerc, old chap—"

"Bean, old man!" panted Frank Richards. He grasped one of Beauclerc's hands and Bob the other.

"Thank Heaven we arrived in time!" breathed Beauclerc. "Oh! When—when I saw you—and that villain going to set fire to the wood—"

He broke off, panting, almost overcome by his emotion.

Sergeant Lasalle came towards the two rescued schoolboys, and shook hands with them.

"Safe and sound—eh?" he asked genially. "We didn't get here any too soon, I guess."

"Just in time to save our lives, sergeant," answered Bob Lawless. "I guess I've never been so glad to see a red coat before."

"Same here," said Frank Richards. "But how the thump did you get the Mounted Police here, Beauclerc?"

"I fell in with them riding to Thompson. They were coming up the Thompson Valley, looking for the bootleggers," explained Beauclerc. "They came on at once with me."

"Jolly lucky for us they did!" said Frank Richards. "But the bootleggers are gone, sergeant. They've been gone a good hour."

The sergeant laughed.

"Don't you worry about the bootleggers, sonny," he said. "We've got them. They walked right into our hands."

"And we found your horses with them," explained Beauclerc. "They wouldn't tell us anything, but we knew you must be here."

"You've got Hiram Hook?" exclaimed Bob Lawless joyfully. "You've roped in that bulldozer?"

"If his name's Hook we've got him," answered the sergeant. "I guess this means ten years for him. You boys can swear to his bringing the liquor here, eh?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Thank goodness that rascal hasn't got away!" said Frank Richards. "He's the cause of the trouble here. The Indians would never have harmed us but for the fire-water. Bob, old chap, we shall see Cedar Creek again, after all."

"I guess I never reckoned I should ten minutes ago," said Bob Lawless. "Hurrah!"

That night—or the remainder of it—Frank Richards and Bob spent in the lodge where they had lain as prisoners. Vere Beauclerc shared the lodge with them, and the sergeant and the troopers camped by the fire. There was not much sleep for any of them, but they rested well on their guard. Two troopers were sent to bring in Hiram Hook

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FISH THAT SHOCK YOU!

By N. TOURNEUR.

"FISH shock me? No, not likely, at all, at all!" is the reply usually given to this question. Yet there are fish that can, and do, shock you in more ways than one. More than one of them can make you jump, and one in particular can sting sharper than any gnat or bee or wasp—sting like a red-hot iron.

The "Balloon Fish," or "Tetradon," found among the rocks of the Comoro Islands, gives you a shock of electricity that makes you drop it into the water again, where it immediately takes the shape of a balloon, and scuttles off at a tremendous speed. It is not so savage, though, as the stinging ray, which lives off the coast of South America, and is so deadly that it has been known to kill a man. It has a black-looking, flat body, that is not only ugly to look at, but contains a whole battery of lances ready to attack. These lances or spines run along the length of the body, which sometimes is as much as fifteen feet broad. When the fish is attacked, it bends itself round so that the tip of its nose almost touches the end of its tail, then it lashes out, and gives terrible wounds with its spines. Luckily, the stinging ray keeps at the bottom of the sea as a rule.

In the Mediterranean is a fish much dreaded by the fishermen and sailors of Greece and Italy and Spain. Many a strange yet true story do they tell about it. The "Torpedo Fish," named thus because of the shape of its body, that resembles a torpedo flattened out, is charged with electricity. When you are fishing in the Mediterranean, you may get so strong a shock from it touching your line that your arm and shoulders are made rigid as steel.

Yet a weak thing is the "Torpedo Fish" in comparison with the "Electric Eel," that gives most powerful shocks. The machine Nature has given it to produce the electricity is most curious. It is made up of a number of tubes, and it is rather like a piece of honeycomb. These tubes take up the entire length of the body between the upper and under surface of it, and thick, sticky stuff is found in them. As can be imagined, the "Electric Eel" is very much dreaded by its neighbours.

In South America this fish not only gives you a violent electric shock, but often prevents travellers from passing over a river or a lagoon unless a boat or canoe is at hand. The "Gymnotus electricus" it is called, and it is found in various regions of that wonderful continent. Long before the Portuguese and Spaniards came to South America the Indians made use of this electrical fish to tame their wild buffaloes and other animals. They would take the most unruly beast and drive it into a lagoon, or pond, or shallow river where it was known the fish was in great numbers, and under the influence of the shocks it got it would come out tamed and very easy to be managed.

So, after all, there are fish which can make you jump.

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"Yes, sir!" gasped the dazed prefect. "You hear what Bulkeley says. If your statement is correct— You still assure me that it is correct?"

"Certainly! I'm certain—quite certain!" stuttered Carthew.

"Then all the boys present are cleared!" said the Head. "Amazing as it seems, the assault was plainly committed from someone from outside—someone who does not belong to Rookwood School at all! I am glad of it. I am very glad indeed that it has been proved that no Rookwood boy was guilty of this act of hoodliganism."

"B-b-but, sir—" gasped Carthew.

"Well?"

"I'm certain it was a Rookwooder! I—"

"You are certainly mistaken on that point, Carthew, from your own evidence." Dr. Chisholm raised his hand. "The school is dismissed!"

And the Rookwooders crowded out of Big Hall.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. In the Dead of Night!

M IDNIGHT!
Carthew of the Sixth sat up in bed suddenly.

Perhaps it was the twelve heavy strokes from the clock-tower that had awakened him. Or was it—

He felt safe enough, even from the Rookwood Secret Society. He had taken care to turn the key in his lock before going to bed.

And yet—
"Wake!"

It was a deep voice in the darkness of his room.

Carthew trembled.
Well enough he knew the bass voice assumed by the Grand Master of the Rookwood Secret Society.

A glitter of light shone through the gloom as an electric torch was turned suddenly on. The light blazed in Carthew's face, dazzling him.

"One cry, and your nose is pinched!" said the deep voice.

Carthew blinked dazedly.
There were six figures—not four this time—by his bedside; six figures, fully dressed, whose faces were covered by cardboard masks.

One of them held a pair of pincers. Carthew's glance passed them wildly to the door. It was closed, and he had left it locked. How had they entered through a locked door? Somehow, the lock had been forced from the outside. Carthew did not cry out. The six intruders were ready to leap on him, as he could see, and the pincers were ready for his unhappy nose. He sat and blinked at them.

"Get out of bed—in silence!"

"I—I—"

"Obey!"

Carthew obeyed.
"Seize him!"

The grasp of the six was laid on Carthew. In the daytime the proceedings might have seemed absurd and cinematographic; but at midnight's solemn hour the effect was quite different. Carthew was trembling.

He did not resist as the six seized him; he did not cry out. He knew that even if he awakened the house the intruders would have ample time to deal with him before help could come. And he shuddered at the thought of the iron grip of the pincers on his nose.

"You know who we are!" said the deep voice.

"N-n-no!" stammered Carthew.

"We are the Secret Society of Rookwood! We have come here to deal with you! You have been guilty of bullying again since your last punishment!"

"You—you young villain!" breathed Carthew.

"Gag him!"

Carthew opened his mouth, but the pincers were too close. He shut it again—silently—on the gag that was thrust between his teeth. One of the masked intruders wound a length of twine round his head, knotting it securely to keep the gag in place.

"Sit down!"

Carthew was hustled towards his armchair.

He made a movement as if to resist as a cord was looped round his legs. But pincers tapped his nose, and he desisted. His legs were tied to the legs of the chair, his wrists to its arms. His apprehensive nose was already aware of the smell of paint. But he was mistaken,

his apprehensive nose had deceived him. It was a bottle of marking-ink that the Grand Master produced from his pocket. Carthew could see the label on the bottle—"Indelible." He wriggled spasmodically.

The Grand Master removed the cork, and dipped a brush into the bottle. Then quietly, methodically, mercilessly, he proceeded to paint zebra-like stripes on Carthew's face, from the forehead downwards. One of the masked intruders held the electric torch turned on, while the Grand Master painted. The work was done in silence—a terrifying silence.

In five minutes the bottle was empty, and Carthew's aspect had become startlingly original. Through his stripes he glared at the masked avengers.

"Caitiff!" said the Grand Master, when he had finished. "Sallywag! This ink is indelible—warranted not to wash out! You are marked—marked as a victim of the R.S.S. Brothers, the deed is dood—I mean, done!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shush!"

The Grand Master jerked the blankets from the bed, and draped them round Carthew. He did not want the hapless victim of the R.S.S. to catch cold, apparently. Then the light was turned off. With straining ears, Carthew heard the masked intruders stealing softly from the study, and he heard the door close gently after them. Then silence.

And the bully of Rookwood waited for dawn!

THE END.

(Look out for another topping long story of Jimmy Silver & Co., the chums of Rookwood, next Tuesday.)

"SAVED FROM THE STAKE!"

(Continued from page 6.)

and the other prisoners, and the bootleggers passed the dark hours in handcuffs. The Kootenays had almost cleared off, but squaws and papooses peered at the red-coated troopers from among the lodges.

In the early dawn Sergeant Lasalle prepared to take the trail.

A sobered and very repentant and apprehensive Thunder Cloud came up to the sergeant at dawn, full of apologies and excuses. It was, as the hapless chief pointed out with many gestures, the fire-water that had caused the trouble. But for the fire-water his young men would never have lifted a finger to harm the little white chiefs.

The sergeants talked to the old chieftain in stern tones for about ten minutes, and Thunder Cloud cringed away when he had finished. All that remained of the fire-water was carefully collected and poured away, and the jars broken.

Then the troopers mounted, with the chums of Cedar Creek and the prisoners, and rode out of the village.

They left a very dejected tribe behind them. Thunder Cloud and his braves had a bad headache all round, added to an apprehension of what might happen to them later.

Glad enough were Frank Richards & Co. to turn their backs on the Indian village, where they had passed through such terrible peril. Glad, too, were the chums to see Hiram Hook riding, tied to his horse, en route for trial and prison. The bootlegger gave them savage looks during the day's ride without detracting from their satisfaction.

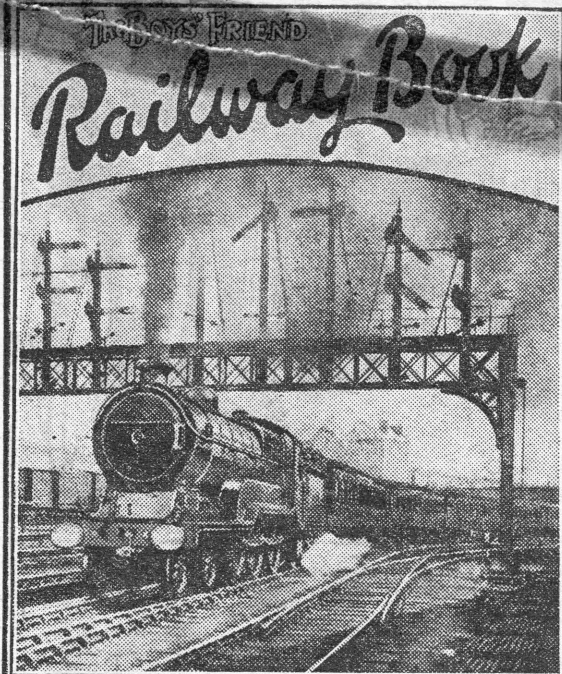
Late in the afternoon the chums parted with the Mounted Police, who rode on to Thompson with their prisoners, while Frank Richards & Co. headed for home. Needless to say, their reappearance gave great relief and joy. And now that they were safe out of the perils that had fallen upon them so thick and fast, the chums were not sorry for their adventure. They had gone through a terrible experience, but they had the satisfaction of knowing that they had very materially assisted the Canadian troopers in rounding up the bootleggers.

THE END.

(Don't miss reading "Standing by Hopkins!"—next week's long dramatic story of the chums of the Canadian Lumber School.)

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