

WOULD YOU LIKE A SPEED-BOAT, LOCO., OR AEROPLANE ?

WONDERFUL MODELS OFFERED INSIDE!

The POPULAR

2d



Wenger
Brooklyn

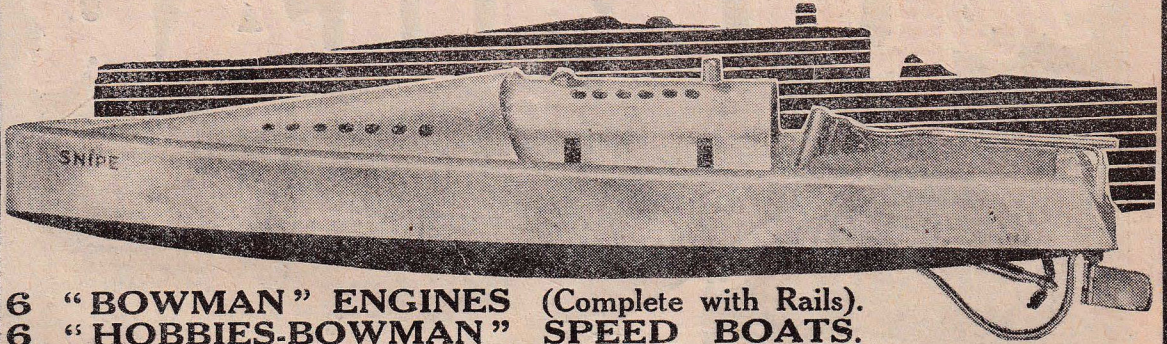
LOCOS.,
SPEED-BOATS
AND PLANES
MUST BE WON!

Come on, Boys! It's Easy and FREE!

DANDY
PRIZES

MUST BE WON!

In this Simple Competition—"FAMOUS AIR PILOTS!"



6 "BOWMAN" ENGINES (Complete with Rails).
6 "HOBBIES-BOWMAN" SPEED BOATS.
50 WARNEFORD "DEMON" PLANES.

THIS is the second week of our stunning new competition in which we offer you these very swell prizes! Now all you have to do to win one, is to solve a few simple and attractive puzzle-pictures representing the names of famous Air Pilots. If you missed the opening set, last week, you can join in now by ordering a copy of last week's POPULAR from your newsagent.

You have below the Second Set of Puzzles. They are all quite easy, but so as to give every boy the same opportunity of winning a prize, we give with this set, a short list of names, which includes the answer to every one of this week's puzzles. In the same way, each of the other two sets will be accompanied by a similar short list containing the solutions for you to find.

Now that really makes it very simple for you, because you have only to fit the right name to each picture. As you find the answers, write them IN INK in the spaces provided underneath. Then cut out this set and keep it by you, together with last week's set, until next week, when we shall give you the Third Set of puzzles to solve.

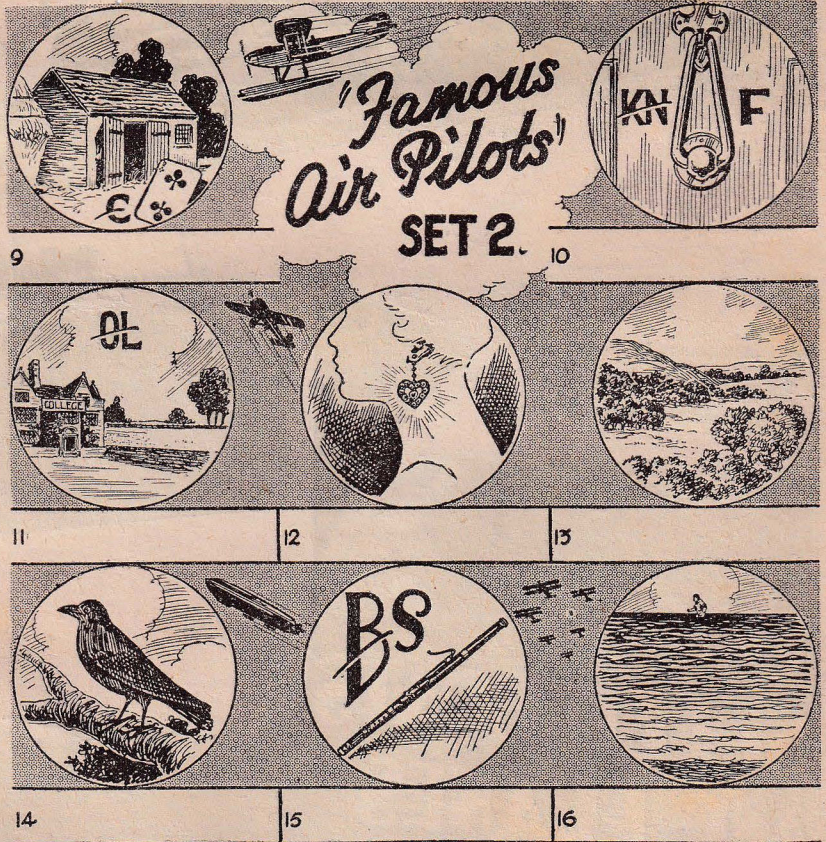
The contest will last for only four weeks in all, and with the final set, we shall give you full instructions for the sending in of your entries. Remember, there is absolutely Nothing at all To Pay, and all the prizes Must Be Won!

LOOK!

The Answers
are here.

Note.—This list is for use
with Set-2 puzzles only.

ATCHERLEY
BARNARD
BYRD
COCKERELL
EARHART
FARMAN
FOKKER
GREY
GUIDON
HARDING
HART
HAVILLAND
JAMES
JONES
MOIR
NOEL
OLLEY
OWEN
PAGE
PARK
PAYNE
ROE
ROOK
SASSOON
SCHOFIELD
SCOTT
TENNANT
WADE
WOODLAND
WOODS

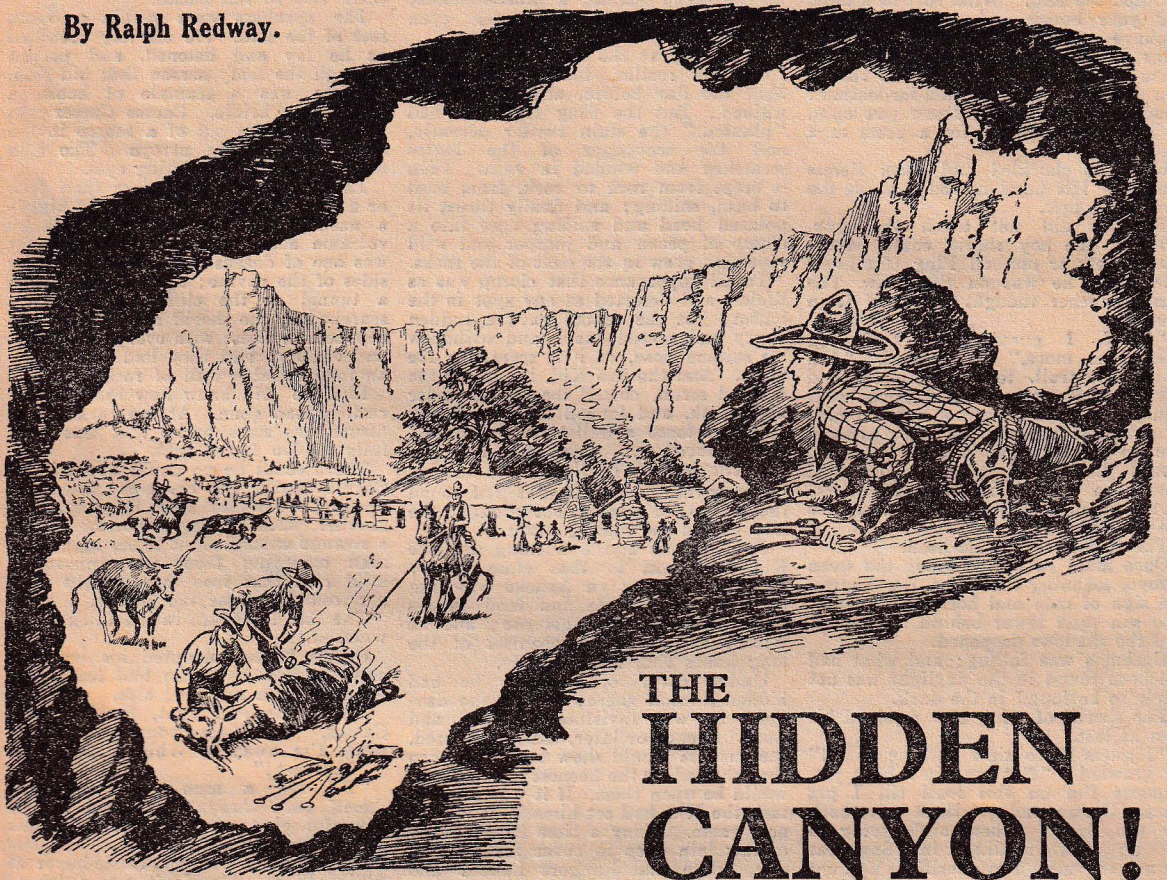


The Six Bowman Model Locos will be awarded to the six readers whose solutions of the four sets of "Famous Air Pilots" puzzles are correct or most nearly correct, and the other prizes will follow in order of merit.

In the event of ties, the Editor reserves the right to divide the value of the prizes as he thinks fit, but no competitor may receive more than one prize or share of a prize. The Editor's decision will be final and legally binding. You may send in as many attempts as you like, but only complete attempts made out IN INK on the "Famous Air Pilots" puzzle-sets Nos. 1-4, inclusive, for each attempt, will be considered. Only one name may be written under each picture. Entries mutilated or bearing alterations or alternative solutions will be disqualified. No correspondence will be allowed. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery, and no responsibility can be taken for entries lost or mislaid or delayed in the post or otherwise. Employees of the proprietors of POPULAR and of "Modern Boy," whose readers are also taking part in this contest, must not compete.

ANOTHER WESTERN THRILLER.

By Ralph Redway.



THE HIDDEN CANYON!

Baffled!

"DOG-GONE it!" growled the Rio Kid.

The Kid hated to be beaten. But it looked, this time, as if Cactus Carter and his crowd had beaten him to it.

The Kid stared round him, in the lonely, rocky arroyo in the heart of the buttes, with exasperated eyes.

The shadows were lengthening in the sunset; in the golden west the sun was sinking behind the buttes. For long, long, hot hours the Kid and the Plug Hat outfit had searched up and down the rocky ravine for the rustlers they sought.

But Cactus Carter and his crowd had vanished—vanished as completely as if the rocks had swallowed them up. And the secret way of escape from the arroyo was so secret that even the Kid's eyes could not penetrate it.

Yet it was there! Only the day before five hundred cows had been driven off the Bar-2 ranch, and the trail of the herd was clearly written in the gulches and up the narrow ravine.

There they had vanished as if into the air. And the rustlers, whom the Kid and his outfit had exchanged shots with in the arroyo, had vanished also, leaving no clue behind. It got the Kid's goat, and it got it sorely. He had led his posse from Plug Hat to

recover the stolen cattle and round-up the rustlers; and at the very moment when he had looked for success he had been beaten to it. It was enough to get the Kid's goat.

"I guess that guy Cactus has got his eye-teeth cut," he said, to Colorado Bill. "He knows these buttes like a book. I guess he knew where to hide them cows when he rustled them off the Bar-2!"

"You've said it, sheriff!" grunted Colorado. "I sure did calculate we'd got that crowd, when we got near enough for burning powder. But they done give us the slip."

"They ain't fur away!" grunted the Kid.

A Hole in the Mountain-Side

Leads the Boy Sheriff to an amazing discovery.

"Nope! But—" Colorado stared round at the rocks and the patches of scrub, and shook his head. "I guess I'm beat to a frazzle!"

Buck Peters, the Bar-2 puncher, lounged over to the Kid, as he stood talking to his chief deputy. There was a mocking grin on Buck's face.

"Say, Mister Sheriff Texas Brown!" he drawled.

The Kid gave him a look.

"I guess they say in Plug Hat that

you're a whole heap of a sheriff," said the Bar-2 puncher. "They surely allow that you're a whole team, and a cross-dog under the wagon." But you ain't cinched them cows yet."

"Not yet," allowed the Kid.

"You figure that you're going to?" asked Buck.

"Sure!"

"Search me!" said the puncher, shrugging his shoulders. "It don't look like it to me. I guess you'll still be foolin' around when Mohave Dave gets here with the Texas Rangers!"

The Kid knitted his brows.

"I guess Mohave has hit Blue Grass afore this," went on Buck, "and I allow that Mule-Kick Hall won't let a lot of grass grow under his feet afore he hits these buttes with his Rangers. He surely is the man to put paid to Cactus Carter!"

The Kid made no answer.

For reasons of his own—which would have surprised the Plug Hat posse had they known them—he was extremely unwilling for the Texas Rangers to come on the scene. For Mule-Kick Hall would have needed only one glance at the Sheriff of Plug Hat to recognise him as the Rio Kid, the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande.

"Say," went on Buck, grinning at the Kid's clouded face, "I guess you want to slide out, and leave a man's job to growed-up men, feller! This here job is some sizes too large for you!"

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"You durned, pesky bonehead!" growled the Kid. "What sort of a hand did your bunch make of it? Didn't Mohave run his bunch right under the guns of the rustlers and get half of them wiped out, and didn't the rest of you hit the horizon, hell-for-leather? You was riding, when I saw you agin, as if you was riding for a prize in a rodeo."

Colorado chuckled and Buck Peters scowled. His hand moved towards the gun in his belt.

But he did not touch the gun. Whether the boy sheriff could handle the rustlers or not, all Plug Hat knew how swift he was on the draw. The Bar-2 puncher thought better of it in time.

"Waal, I guess I ain't fooling around no more," he grunted. "I'm hittin' the trail, to meet Mohave and bring the Rangers here. I guess we'll find you moseying around like a bunch of rubes—if the rustlers ain't chewed you up afore we get here!"

And the Bar-2 puncher tramped down the arroyo, mounted his horse in the gulch below, and rode away for the prairie.

The Kid gave him no heed.

Once more he moved along the steep arroyo, scanning the rocks, the fissures, the sign of men and horses and cattle. The sun sank lower behind the buttes, and the shadows deepened.

Darkness was falling; and what had not been found in the daylight was not likely to be found in the dark.

The sheriff of Plug Hat rejoined his men at last.

"I guess there ain't nothing to it!" he growled. "But we ain't beat yet. I guess I'm on this trail till I get Cactus Carter and get them cows back for the Bar-2! There ain't going to be no cattle-rustling in Sassafras county so long's I'm sheriff! You'uns are going to ride back to town."

"And you—"

"I ain't quitting," said the Kid. "I guess I'm bedding down in these buttes till I hit the trail of Cactus Carter. Mebbe the guys will show up agin when they figure that the coast is clear. I'm going to keep doggo, and watch out; and when I want you I guess I'll get you word. Take my cayuse with you, and hit the trail. So long as there's a crowd hyer you can bet them rustlers will lie as close as fleas in a Mexican dog!"

Ten minutes later the Rio Kid was alone in the darkness that was now thick in the arroyo.

At the bottom of the ravine there was a trampling of hoofs, a jingling of spur and bridle, as the Plug Hat posse mounted and rode away, taking the Kid's mustang with them.

The clatter and the jingle died into the night, and silence fell on the lonely buttes.

Hands Up!

MORNING dawned on the buttes, and a long, sunny day drew towards its close.

In that wilderness of rock and stone and stunted scrub and cactus there was no sign of life, save the lizards that crawled on the rocks, and sometimes a gaunt, hungry coyote that crept and whined.

The lonely arroyo lay silent, lifeless, baking with heat as the sun rose higher in the blue sky, passed the zenith, and sank to the west.

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From the gulch below a coyote crept up the rocky ravine; a wolfish-looking beast, with flaming, greenish eyes, sniffing.

It stopped at the spot where Yellow Dick, the rustler, had fallen in the fight the day before, and sniffed and whined. But the Plug Hat men had "planted" the slain rustler decently, and the scavenger of the buttes scratched and whined in vain. Then it crept from rock to rock, from bush to bush, sniffing; and finally thrust its pointed head and sniffing nose into a clump of pecan and juniper and wild vine that grew in the cleft of the rocks.

To all appearance that clump was as lifeless and deserted as any spot in the buttes; but the coyote gave a sudden angry and scared snarl, and withdrew his sniffing nose, as if it scented a foe there. And the Rio Kid, hidden in the tangled scrub, cursed the coyote under his breath, and longed to draw a six-gun and loose a bullet on the brute; but he dared not. For the Kid's game was silence and caution.

The coyote snarled and sniffed round the clump. Fluently, but silently, the Kid cursed the sniffing brute.

For a night and a burning day the Kid had lain in that close cover; silent, patient as an Apache watching for an enemy. He had food in his wallet and water in his can; and he waited and watched, heedless of the long hours that rolled slowly.

Under cover of darkness he had hidden himself there; and in the daylight he was invisible—watchful and wary. Sooner or later, the Kid figured, the rustlers would show up; and when they showed up the keenest eye in Texas would be upon them. If it was a weary task the Kid had set himself, it was no new game. Many a time had the boy outlaw lain deep in cover for a whole day, while the Rangers hunted and passed within a few paces of him. And now that he was a sheriff he had not forgotten his old patience and cunning.

But the coyote sniffed and sniffed, and whined, lurking round the clump where the Kid lay in cover. A shot, even a shout, would have sent the hungry brute scuttling away in fear; but the Kid could not venture to utter a sound, for he knew that at any moment there might be ears to hear. And he cursed the sniffing brute whose hungry curiosity brought him danger of discovery.

Suddenly from the sniffing animal came a shrieking howl. The Kid started. The next second the report of a revolver echoed through the arroyo.

The Kid caught his breath.

Through the interstices of the clump of thicket he could see the coyote rolling over on the rocks.

"Search me!" murmured the Kid and his eyes glinted.

He was no longer alone in the arroyo. Someone had seen the coyote, and shot the brute down. In a few moments the wolfish brute stretched out, still and silent. There was a sound of footsteps and voices. The Kid lay close, watching, listening.

"Say, what's that, Sandy?" called out a voice the Kid knew—the voice of Cactus Carter, once the king-pin of Plug Hat, now the cattle-lifter of the buttes. "Say, what you burning powder for, you jay?"

"I guess it's a coyote, Cactus."

"You durned bonehead, guess you gave me the jumps!" growled Cactus, with an oath.

"Aw, forget it!" said Sandy Tutt. "The coast's clear, you mutt; the Plug Hat bunch was home in town afore

dawn. There ain't hide nor hair of them left in the buttes."

The speakers were within a dozen feet of the Kid. He scarcely breathed as he lay and listened, and peered through the leafy screen that hid him.

There was a trample of hoofs, a jingle of a bridle. Cactus Carter was leading a horse out of a fissure in the rocky side of the arroyo. The Kid watched him with glinting eyes.

The fissure was not more than four or five feet wide, seven or eight high—a natural split in the rock, left by volcanic action from distant ages. It was one of dozens that rived the rocky sides of the ravine; and it opened like a tunnel in the cliff. It had been searched by the sheriff and his men the day before, along with every other nook and cranny; and they had found only an impenetrable wall of rock within.

But the Kid knew now the way the rustlers had gone. At the back of the fissure was some outlet that was carefully hidden from sight.

There could be no doubt about it, as Cactus Carter led his horse from the opening. Another man followed, and another, each leading a horse. It was a strange enough sight to see man after man emerging from the apparently solid cliff that rose to a height of a hundred feet over the fissure.

The Kid lay silent in the thicket and watched.

Cactus Carter mounted his broncho, and the two men who had led horses out after him mounted also.

"Keep the rock shut, Sandy," said Cactus, "and keep your eyes peeled while I'm away to White Pine."

"You bet!"

"I'll tell a man that dog-goned sheriff ain't through yet, and I'll be powerful glad when we get the cows off our hands!" said Cactus. "I guess I can fix it up with the cattle-buyer at White Pine. He don't ask a lot of questions about cows when he can buy them cheap. And I guess when they're turned into beef the Bar-2 boys can hunt for them all they want."

"You've said it!" chuckled Sandy.

Cactus Carter and his two companions rode down the arroyo, with a clatter of hoofs and a jingle of spurs. Sandy Tutt stood looking after them, lighting a cigarette as he watched the horsemen disappear down the ravine.

He threw away the match, blew out a cloud of smoke, and turned back into the fissure from which the rustlers had emerged; and as he did so the Rio Kid drew himself, softly and silently, from his cover.

Silent as he was, Sandy Tutt perhaps heard some faint rustle, for he turned round, his hand, from habitual caution, falling on a gun. And he gave a convulsive start as he found himself looking into the barrel of a levelled six-gun.

"Hands up," said the Rio Kid quietly, "and jest you give one yaup, Mister Sandy Tutt, and it's the last yaup you'll give this side of Jordan! Hands up, you geck, and keep your bully-beef trap shut!"

The Rustlers' Secret.

SANDY TUTT stared blankly, almost unbelievably, at the sheriff of Plug Hat. The ghost of the Rio Kid could not have startled him more.

For an instant his hand closed convulsively on the butt of a gun. The

Kid's eyes, over his levelled Colt, glinted.

"Don't!" he said softly.

And Tutt did not draw the gun. There was death in the grim, levelled tube only three or four feet from him; death in the clear, steady eyes that glinted over it.

Had the gun left his holster the red-haired rustler would have fallen a dead man before he could lift it, and Sandy Tutt knew it. Slowly, his eyes burning with rage, he relinquished the gun and lifted his hands above his head.

"That's hoss-sense!" said the Kid approvingly.

"Dog-gone you!" muttered the rustler, his voice thick with rage. "Dog-gone your hide, you pesky lobo-wolf! What you doing here?"

The Kid smiled.

"I guess I'm holding up a gol-darned bush-whacker!" he answered. "And I guess I'm sure going to give him his ticket for soup if he speaks above a whisper! You give one yaup, you pesky gink, and it's you for the coyotes and the buzzards!"

The rustler panted with rage; but he kept his hands above his head, and he did not venture to call out. His life hung on a thread, and well the rustler was aware of it.

The clattering hoof-beats of the riders had died away in the distance. Little dreaming of what was happening in the arroyo, Cactus Carter and his companions were riding by lonely gulches and mountain paths, for the distant camp of White Pine. But how close at hand the rest of the gang might be, the Kid did not know—all he knew was the fissure under the cliff led into the secret den of the rustlers.

He drew nearer to Sandy Tutt, keeping him covered, and jerked the revolver and knife from his belt, and dropped them into a deep crevice of the rocks. Tutt did not venture to resist, though his eyes burned at the Kid.

"I guess you're better without your hardware, feller," said the Kid amiably. "Keep them paws in the air. I ain't honing to spill your juice; but if you got a kick coming you're a dead lobo-wolf, and you don't want to forget it!"

The Kid jerked off the rustler's neck-scarf.

"Now turn round, you geek, and put your paws behind you!" he said.

"I guess—"

"I'm waiting!" said the Kid, and he made a significant gesture with the Colt. "If you'd rather be left here cold meat you only got to kick. I ain't pertickler; I guess I'd blow your roof off as soon as not!"

Cursing under his breath, Sandy Tutt turned his hands behind him, and the Kid bound his wrists securely together with the scarf. The rustler was a helpless prisoner now, and the Kid holstered his gun.

"You sure are a good little man, and know how to do as you're told," said

the Kid amiably. "I reckon you'll live to be hanged yet, if you keep on being careful! Now I guess you're going on a leetle pasear with this baby."

Tutt faced him again, gritting his teeth.

"You figure you're getting me to Plug Hat?" he hissed.

"Not in your lifetime, old-timer! I ain't taking you anywhere—you're taking me!"

"I guess I don't savvy!" muttered Tutt.

The Kid laughed.

"We're going into the locked canyon, feller," he answered; "the shebang that you and Cactus was talking of.

tently as he moved along the rugged fissure, holding the rustler by the arm. Whether the retreat of the rustlers was near at hand, or at a distance, he did not know; but he was ready for a foe at every step.

He peered about him in the gloom, with a grip on the rustler's arm. He felt a quiver run through Sandy Tutt, and knew that he was thinking of tearing loose and making a sudden break in the darkness. And suddenly Tutt felt a sharp point pressed to his ribs. It was the point of the Kid's bowie-knife.

"You want to be good, feller!" murmured the Kid.



The Kid bound up the rustler, and then gagged him with strips of his own clothing. "I guess this'll keep you from yapping and giving the alarm!" grinned the young sheriff.

And I guess this is the way to the front door!" added the Kid, with a nod towards the fissure in the cliff.

"You're missing your guess!" muttered Tutt. "I shore don't know a thing about any locked canyon—"

"Why, you pesky gink," said the Kid, "ain't I wise to it that you've got a secret way out of this arroyo, and ain't I been watching from cover ever since I sent the boys home to Plug Hat last night? I guess I'd have found it without your help now that I know where to look; but I reckon it will save time if you guide me. Get a move on!"

"I'll tell a man—"

"Quit chewing the rag and get a move on, feller!"

The Kid grasped the rustler's arm and moved him on into the fissure. At the opening there was a glimmer of light from the sunshine that streamed down into the arroyo; but, farther on, the fissure was gloomy and shadowy. When the Kid had searched it the day before, he had found only solid rock at the end of it, as in a score of other fissures that rived the rugged sides of the arroyo. But the Kid knew now that there must be a way through.

The Kid watched and listened in-

Tutt shuddered.

"I guess it's your say-so, sheriff!" he muttered hoarsely.

"Keep chewing on that!" advised the Kid.

The Kid's eyes gradually became accustomed to the dim twilight that reigned in the rocky fissure under the cliff. He moved on slowly with the rustler in the gloom.

When the Kid had explored the fissure the previous day it had extended about fifteen feet into the cliff, and there ended, to all appearance, in solid rock. But now, when the Kid had paced that distance the way ahead was no longer closed.

The fissure narrowed more and more, till there was scarce space for a horse to be led through, or a cow driven. Then it suddenly widened into a cavern hollowed in the heart of the mountain. Far in the distance the Kid caught a glimmer of daylight, where the great cavern evidently had another outlet.

"Say, this sure is cute!" said the Kid.

Sandy Tutt grunted savagely.

"I sure guessed you might have left the door open, as you was going back,"

smiled the Kid. "That's sure why I jumped on you sudden, feller. I guess you've saved me the trouble of hunting it."

Where the fissure ran into the cavern a great rock had barred the way; but it was now rolled aside.

The Kid examined it curiously.

It was a huge mass, far beyond the strength of one man to move. A couple of stout pine saplings stood leaning on it, and the Kid guessed that they were used as levers for shifting the big rock.

"I'll say this is cute!" said the Kid admiringly. "I guess a galoot might hunt around for a week and never get wise to it that that rock would shift! I allow that Cactus Carter has got his eye-teeth out, feller."

A muttered curse answered him.

The secret of the rustlers' retreat was plain to the Kid now. Evidently Cactus Carter had hit on the fissure leading into the cavern, and had figured that it would make the safest hiding-place in the buttes, with a rock to close it against pursuit. And when the rock was closed it made an immovable barrier.

"I guess," said the Kid, "that I'd have had to blast that rock with giant powder if I'd found it shut, feller. But I guess I'd have done it, once I knowed this was the way into your den. But you sure have saved me a heap of trouble."

"You goin' on?" muttered Tutt.

"Sure!"

The Kid caught the glitter in the rustler's eyes, and laughed softly.

"I'm sure goin' on," he said; "but I guess your pards ain't going to shoot me up, Sandy; not if this baby knows it. Say, when Cactus comes back I guess he gives a signal to be let in. That rock can't be moved from outside. If it could, I'd sure have found it out yesterday. Say, what's the signal?"

"Three taps on the rock with the butt of a gun!" grunted Sandy Tutt.

The Kid looked round. The farther opening of the cavern, where the daylight gleamed, was at least three hundred yards away.

"Then I guess you keep a man on guard here," he said. "A tap wouldn't be heard from the canyon yonder."

"You've said it," grunted Tutt. "There's always a man on guard in the cavern; we done take it in turns to keep watch here, when any of the bunch are out of the shebang."

"There ain't a guy here now, I reckon, only you. I figure you was going to keep watch?"

"Yep!"

"Waal, I guess I'm leaving you here, and you can keep watch all you want," said the Kid cheerily. "I'll leave the rock open, because I might want to quit sudden; but I reckon the guys yonder won't know; they'll sure figure you're keeping tabs here. You're going to take a rest, hombre."

Sandy Tutt cursed, softly but luridly, as the Kid, with strips of the rustler's own clothing, bound his legs, and laid him down on the rocky floor of the cavern. But his cursing ceased as the Kid gagged him, carefully and scientifically.

Leaving the rustler lying on the rocky floor, the Kid, gun in hand, went forward through the great cavern, heading for the gleam of daylight far ahead.

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A Surprise for the Kid!

"SHOT!" murmured the Kid.

He had reached the opening of the cavern and, keeping in cover, looked out at what lay beyond.

What the Kid saw was a "locked" canyon; that is, a canyon surrounded entirely by high cliffs, shut in by inaccessible rocks. It was, perhaps, a dozen acres in extent; and the cliffs rose round it almost like walls.

Down one cliff came leaping a stream from the uplands high above, in a mist of spray, forming a pool where it fell, and flowing away across the canyon. Along it grew trees, pecan, and cottonwood, and over almost the whole extent of the locked canyon the grass was thick and rich. It was one of those fertile spots, of which there were many, hidden away in the remote recesses of the arid buttes.

The Kid watched the scene before him with keen, interested eyes. There were cattle feeding in the hidden canyon, or lying at rest in the grass—hundreds of them; and some of the cows were near enough for the Kid to discern the brand of the Bar-2 on them. He was looking at the herd that had been run off from the Bar-2 ranch a couple of days ago.

"Sho!" repeated the Kid.

At a short distance from the cavern's mouth was a group of huts, under the wide-spreading branches of a huge cottonwood-tree, evidently the quarters of the rustlers.

Three or four men were in sight, sitting on a log, playing poker with a deck of greasy cards. Another could be seen among the horses in a roughly-built corral. Others, doubtless, were in the huts. From one of these—probably used as a cook-house—smoke was rising. The Kid's eye followed the thin spiral of smoke as it rose.

Before it reached the height of the towering cliffs that surrounded the canyon it was dispersed by the wind; there was no danger of the smoke betraying the hidden den of the rustlers.

"I'll say Cactus knows his business, from A to izzard!" the Rio Kid murmured to himself.

Lying at the mouth of the cavern, from which the ground sloped gently down into the canyon, the Kid watched, unseen. His eyes ran over the herds that fed or lolled in the grass.

Five hundred cows had been driven off the Bar-2; but there were at least a thousand head of cattle in the canyon. The Kid's keen eyes picked out several brands—the White Star, the Lazy Nine, the Flying-O, and several others, as well as the Bar-2.

There had been many raids on the ranches in Sassafras county, and the stolen cattle had disappeared without leaving a trace behind. The sheriff of Plug Hat knew now how and why.

But the cows, the Kid figured, did not remain long there—there was not feed enough for a large herd for a long time. He figured that the brands were blotted, and the cows driven away by secret paths through the buttes, to be disposed of at a distance to dealers who bought cheap and asked no questions.

A fire was burning near the huts, and occasionally one of the rustlers threw a handful of fuel on it. A cowman like the Kid was not perplexed to know why a fire was burning on a sultry afternoon. Presently, while he watched, a man came out of one of the huts, with a running-iron in his hand. He

glanced towards the group of poker players, and called, and his voice came clearly to the Kid from the distance.

"Say, you'uns, you get your ropes."

He stooped, and thrust the iron into the red heart of the fire.

"Aw, can it, Missouri!" answered one of the poker-players. "There sure ain't no durned hurry!"

"I guess if them cows ain't ready when Cactus comes back to-morrow there will be trouble!" said Missouri. "Quit that game, you geeks, and get in the cows! We got a lot to brand yet, and there ain't a lot of daylight left."

Unwillingly, the ruffians left their cards. Several more men came out of the huts and joined them. There were more than a dozen of the rustlers in the Kid's sight now, and probably more out of his sight. He lay still and watched.

He had seen brand-blotting done before, and it was nothing new to him. A cow was lassoed, and dragged, struggling and bellowing, to the fire, where it was thrown down and held.

Missouri drew the hot iron from the fire, and proceeded to alter the brand on the thick hide, to an accompaniment of frantic bellowing from the cow.

It was a Bar-2 cow, and across the horizontal bar of the brand Missouri marked an upright, turning it into a cross. After the "2" he branded a round "O." The Kid watched with a grim interest. The brand-blotter was slick at his work, and evidently an old hand.

In a few minutes the Bar-2 cow was branded Cross-20, and allowed to run loose on the grass again; and Mohave Dave himself, had he seen it, could not have said that it was a Bar-2 animal now.

Another cow took its place, roped in, and held for the running-iron. This was a White Star cow; and the running-iron drew a circle round the star, changing the brand to Circle Star. Cow after cow passed under the running-iron, keeping the rustlers busy, while the sun sank lower over the buttes and shadows lengthened in the locked canyon.

The Kid was thinking as he watched.

He knew the secret of the rustlers' den now. For a night and a long day he had remained in cover in the arroyo, and his patience had been rewarded. Now he had to get out and hit Plug Hat, and bring the posse back to round up the rustlers.

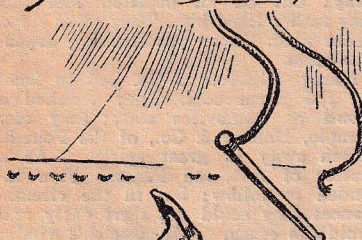
It was four hours, at least, on foot to the cow town; but the ride back would be swift. Night was falling, and he would be back with his men soon after midnight. But in the interval he reckoned that the guard would be changed, it was likely, at the moving rock—which meant giving the alarm to the rustlers. And the Kid, thinking it out, waited.

The brand-blotting ceased at last, as the shadows deepened. The fire died down, and lights gleamed from some of the huts. The stars came out overhead, and in their glimmer the Kid watched the rustlers gather to a meal outside the cookhouse.

And then came what he was waiting for—one of the gang left the rest, and came tramping up the sloping ground towards the cavern. And the Kid drew back into the darkness. It was the man whom the others had called Missouri who was coming; and the Kid figured that he was to relieve Sandy Tutt at the entrance.

(Continued on page 28.)

The CIRCUS STAR!



Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, are involved in a dramatic circus adventure!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

Wharton & Co. were detained that afternoon for having ragged Hobson's study. But it was no comfort to the Famous Five to learn that their misfortunes were shared by others.

"Hobson detained, is he?" asked Bob Cherry. "My hat! We're detained for ragging his study. I suppose he's not detained for having his study ragged, is he?"

"He, he, he! No, he isn't detained at all, but he can't go to the circus, all the same!" said Bunter.

"What rot!"

"His pater won't let him," explained Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at Bunter. That statement was so astounding that they were arrested, in spite of themselves.

As Sir James Hobson, the father of Hobson of the Shell, lived at a great distance from Greyfriars, and had not been anywhere near the school of late, it was not to be supposed that he knew anything about Zorro's Circus, or cared anything if he knew; neither was it probable that he troubled his mind about whether his son went to the circus or not.

"What on earth are you driving at?" said Bob. "Hobby's pater can't know anything about the circus."

"He jolly well does."

"How can he have told Hobby not to go, you ass, when he hasn't been here, and the circus has only just happened along?"



Detained.

"NEVER mind!"
"Fathead!"
"But, I say, you fellows, I—"

"Rats!"
"Hobby's in the same boat! He's detained!" said Bunter encouragingly.
Doubtless Billy Bunter meant to be comforting, for he knew that Harry

"He has, all the same," said Bunter.

"Jolly mysterious, ain't it?"

"Mysterious, if true, fathead!" said Wharton. "What the thump have you got into your silly head now?"

"Honest Injun!" said Bunter. "It surprised me, you know, and I know it's making Hobby jolly bad-tempered. He wants to go to the circus like other fellows, of course—Hoskins and Stewart are going, and they're his pals. But Hobby can't go; his pater won't let him!"

"What rot!"

"It's 'ruet!" howled Bunter. "Old Hobson—I mean, Sir James Hobson—couldn't have known that Zorro's Circus was coming to Friardale, I suppose. But he knew that it was travelling in Kent."

"A giddy baronet and M.P. is likely to worry a lot about a travelling circus show, I don't think!"

"He does, all the same, because he wrote to Hobson to tell him that if Zorro's Spanish Circus came anywhere near Greyfriars he was not to go to it."

"Bosh!"

"He jolly well did!" exclaimed Bunter. "I say, you fellows, what does it mean, you know? I think it's jolly queer!"

"Queer enough, if there was anything in it," said Harry.

"The queerfulness would be terrific, but the truthfulness is a boot on the other leg!" remarked Hurree Singh in his weird English.

"Did Hobby show you his pater's letter?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"That's it—just that!" said Bunter, nodding. "I'm rather pally with Hobson of the Shell, you know—"

"Oh, my hat! And he was kicking you yesterday. Is that how he shows his friendship?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you I've read the letter!" howled Bunter. "The old baronet says Hobby's to be very careful not to go to Zorro's Circus, if it comes this way."

"Rubbish!"

"I remember Hobby was reading a letter when we dropped in on him yesterday, and looking rather cross," said Johnny Bull. "But, of course, what Bunter says is all piffle."

"Of course."

"I say, you fellows, I tell you—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Hobson!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "All hands repel boarders!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

James Hobson, of the Shell, bore down on the Famous Five in the quad-rangle.

The ragers had not heard from him since they had ragged his study the previous day. They had been expecting to hear from him on that subject; and now apparently their expectations were to be realised. Hobson was frowning darkly as he came up; but he came alone, and the Famous Five grinned at the idea of the Shell fellow seeking to tackle them on his lonesome own. They were prepared to roll Hobson in the quad till he was satisfied that he could not handle five Removites at once.

"Look here, you kids—" began Hobson angrily.

"Collar him!"

"No larks!" exclaimed the captain of the Shell, backing away. "I want to ask you something."

"Oh, all right—pax, dear man!" said Bob Cherry. "What do you want to ask us? Some tip on the Latin language?"

"Eh?"

"We don't mind helping backward fellows in an upper Form," said Bob. "If you've got any doubts about the word 'lacryma,' for instance, we're the very fellows you want to see. We've got it pat."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't rot!" said Hobson. "It's about my letter."

"What letter?"

"I was reading it when you came ragging in my study yesterday, and I dropped it in the scrap," said Hobson. "I forgot it afterwards; but now I've been looking for it, and I can't find it."

"Look again, old bean!"

"It's not in my study!" snapped Hobson.

The smiling faces of the Famous Five became serious.

"Look here, you rotter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry hotly. "We ragged you and ragged your study; but do you think we'd touch a private letter? If you do you're a rotten outsider, so there!"

Hobson flushed.

"Well, I don't think you would," he said. "But the letter's gone, all the same, and it disappeared at that time."

"Well, we know nothing about it!" said Harry Wharton curtly.

"Hold on, though!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What about Bunter? He's just been telling us—"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Hobson. "Bunter, of course! My cake was gone after I got back to my study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We found him finishing a cake," said Hobson. "But I want my father's letter. If that fat cad's read it—"

Harry Wharton looked round. Billy Bunter had rolled away quite quickly as Hobson came up. He was at a distance now, making for the cloisters.

"I fancy it was Bunter," said Harry. "He was spinning us some yarn a minute ago about your father telling you not to go to Zorro's Circus if it came this way. All rot, of course!"

Hobson's flush deepened.

"The fat brute! He's read the letter, then—he couldn't know that unless he'd read it! I'll jolly well scalp him!"

Hobson of the Shell rushed away in the direction of Bunter. The fat junior blinked round over his shoulder and took to his heels. He vanished into the cloisters, with Hobson in hot pursuit. A minute or two later wild yells were heard proceeding from the cloisters.

"Sounds as if Bunter's going through it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Serve him jolly well right!" exclaimed Wharton, with a darkening brow. "The fat rotter must have bagged Hobby's letter and read it. I've a jolly good mind to go and lend Hobby a hand."

"He doesn't seem to need it!" chuckled Nugent.

The wild yells from the cloisters seemed to indicate that Hobson was dealing very efficiently with William George Bunter.

"I say, though, it's jolly queer, isn't it?" said Johnny Bull. "It seems to be true that Hobby's pater has told him not to go to Zorro's Circus. The Head lets us go—so why?"

"Goodness knows!" said Bob. "It's queer. Perhaps he's a stiff old johnny, and doesn't approve of fellows going to shows. He looked a bit of a tough old card, I remember, when I saw him last time he came down to see Hobby."

"Well, if the Head lets fellows go to the circus it isn't for a fellow's pater to butt in," said Harry. "I suppose the old boy knows that the Head knows the right thing to do?"

"It's queer."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Bunter!"

Billy Bunter shot out of the cloisters

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and came streaking across the quad like an arrow. Gasping for breath, and steaming with perspiration, the Owl of the Remove fled for the House and vanished.

Hobson followed him more slowly from the cloisters. He had a frown on his face and a letter in his hand. Evidently he had succeeded in recovering his property.

"Got it all right?" called out Bob Cherry.

Hobson nodded.

"Yes. Bunter had it. I've jolly well walloped him, too!"

"He looked in rather a hurry when he passed us," said Bob.

"You fellows are detained this afternoon, I hear, and can't go to the Spanish circus?" asked the Shell fellow.

"Yes—just for ragging a Shell study!" said Bob. "As if a Shell study matters a rap—what?"

"Well, I'm sorry," said Hobson. "I'm going to make you sit up for ragging my study—but I'm sorry you're detained. I did my best for you when Hacker came to the study."

"You did, old bean! You're a white man!"

"I'm in the same boat, as it happens," said Hobson. "I'm not detained, but my pater's written to me not to go to Zorro's Circus if it comes anywhere near Greyfriars. Blessed if I know why—but a fellow has to play up, I suppose."

"What on earth has he got against the circus?"

"Goodness knows! The Head thinks it's all right."

And Hobson tramped away, still frowning, evidently very much annoyed by his pater's peculiar prohibition.

"Well, Hobby's bound to play up, if his pater tells him to give the circus the go-by!" said Bob. "Chap mustn't disregard his pater. But we're not bound to play up to Quelch. Luckily he's not our pater. If we break detention we chance a licking, and it's fair on both sides—what?"

"Quite! Are we chancing it?" asked Harry, looking round at his chums.

There was a general nodding of heads.

"We are!" said Bob.

"We is!" said Johnny Bull emphatically.

And so it was settled.

Good Old Hobby!

"I SAY, you fellows, you're out of it! He, he, he!"

Thus William George Bunter, as he started for the circus after dinner, and the Famous Five started for the Remove Form-room.

Bunter grinned cheerily at the chums of the Remove, and quickened his pace a little as Bob Cherry made a motion with his boot.

Quite a little army of Greyfriars fellows were going down to the gates. The Head had given permission for all the fellows—not under detention, of course—to visit Zorro's Spanish Circus; that attractive show was within bounds for all but the Famous Five. The great men of the Sixth were not keen on it— or affected not to be; but there was a general exodus of fellows belonging to less high and mighty Forms. Coker of the Fifth marched off with Potter and Greene to bag the most expensive seats in the circus for himself and friends; and Fitzgerald and Hilton of the Fifth

joined Coker, and two or three more Fifth-Form fellows. As a rule, these fellows were not keen on Coker's company; but on an occasion like this they rather liked him. They could stand Coker when Coker was standing expensive seats.

Harry Wharton & Co. had to head for the Form-room. They watched a crowd of Removees start; they saw Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, march away in great spirits. As a matter of fact, the Famous Five intended to follow; but in the circumstances they could not start early and avoid the crush. Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye was on them at present. They watched the others go, and went to the Form-room.

Hobson of the Shell was lounging rather dismally about the passage, and he gave them a glum look.

For different reasons, Hobson also was staying behind. Hoskins and Stewart, his particular cronies, had gone with a crowd of the Shell; but Hobby could not go. His father's inexplicable prohibition held him back.

With his friends gone out, and no football on, Hobby was not looking forward to enjoying his afternoon. But he did not think of disobeying his father's injunction. Whatever might be Sir James' reason—or lack of reason—it was bad form for a fellow to disregard his pater's wishes, and Hobby played up, though glumly.

"Rotten, isn't it, you fellows?" said Hobby dismally, forgetting for the moment that he was on fighting terms with the fellows who had ragged his study.

"The rottenfulness is terrific, my esteemed Hobby!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Blessed if I wouldn't cut if I were you!" said Hobson. "It's only a blessed Form master keeping you in!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"We're going to!" he said. "When Quelch's gone, we're going—if—"

Mr. Quelch appeared in the passage, and the juniors went into the Form-room. The Form master followed them in.

Mr. Quelch had kindly prepared a detention task for the juniors. It dealt with deponent verbs.

But verbs, deponent or other, did not interest the chums of the Remove that afternoon. They were thinking of the circus and the galloping horses in the tan, and Pedrillo the Boy Acrobat, and the other attractions offered to the public by Senor Zorro.

Mr. Quelch handed them their papers, and left them to it.

Five minutes later, from a window, they beheld Mr. Quelch, in coat and hat, walking down to the gates.

"Gone!" said Bob. "I—I suppose Quelch isn't going to the circus, you fellows. Wouldn't do to run into him there."

"Ha, ha! Not likely!"

"I think it's his afternoon for chess with the vicar," said Frank Nugent. "We're clear of him for the afternoon."

"I jolly well wish Loder would go and play chess with the vicar, too!" groaned Bob.

"Do you?" said an unpleasant voice in the doorway.

The juniors stepped down from the window. Loder of the Sixth had come into the Form-room.

"Getting busy?" he asked.

"Just going to begin," said Harry.

"Don't slack about! Mind, I'm keeping an eye on this Form-room," said

the prefect. "I shall give you a look-in later."

"Thanks so much!" said Bob. "It's so nice to see you, Loder. It won't really seem like detention if you look in every now and then in your pretty way."

Loder frowned, and tramped out, slamming the door after him.

The five juniors sat down at their desks.

"A quarter of an hour for the coast to clear!" said Wharton. "Put in as much work as you can—we must have something to show Quelchy."

"Oh dear!"

"May as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb!" said Bob. "Loder's bound to report us to Mr. Quelch."

"The boundfulness is terrific."

Wharton shook his head.

"Better have something to show. Besides, I'm going to lock the door, and Loder mayn't know we're gone. And if he gets deep in banker in his study he may forget all about us."

"Not likely! But go it!" agreed Bob.

Wharton crossed to the door and turned the key.

Then the detained juniors began to deal with deponent verbs.

Five pens crawled over five papers, five dismal faces were bent over five dismal desks.

A quarter of an hour elapsed.

Then there was a footstep in the passage, and the handle of the door turned. Then the juniors heard an exclamation:

"Bolted, by gum, already!"

The Famous Five grinned.

It was Loder, and evidently the bully of the Sixth supposed, from the Form-room door being locked, that the detained juniors had bolted. Loder rapped on the door to make sure.

"Are you there, you young rotters?"

"Here we are, you old rotter!" answered Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, I thought you'd cut!" said Loder. "Unlock this door at once!"

No answer.

"Do you hear me?" roared Loder. Silence.

"I'm keeping an eye on you, you young rascals!"

And with that Gerald Loder tramped away.

Harry Wharton & Co. waited till his footsteps had died away, and then Harry unlocked the door and peered out into the passage. The bully of the Sixth was out of sight. Hobson of the Shell was lounging idly by the window, and he nodded and grinned to the juniors.

"Loder's gone back to his study," he said. "Hook it while you've got a chance!"

"What-ho!" grinned Bob.

"Hold on!" said Hobson, as Wharton was placing the key in the outside of the Form-room lock. "Give me the key, kid!"

"Eh! What for?"

"I'll lock the door on the inside," said Hobson, with a grin. "I've got nothing to do this afternoon; I'll stick in your Form-room and shuffle my feet when that Sixth Form cad comes along, and make him think you're still there."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, Hobby, you're a Trojan!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I'm jolly sorry we ragged your study yesterday, old bean!"

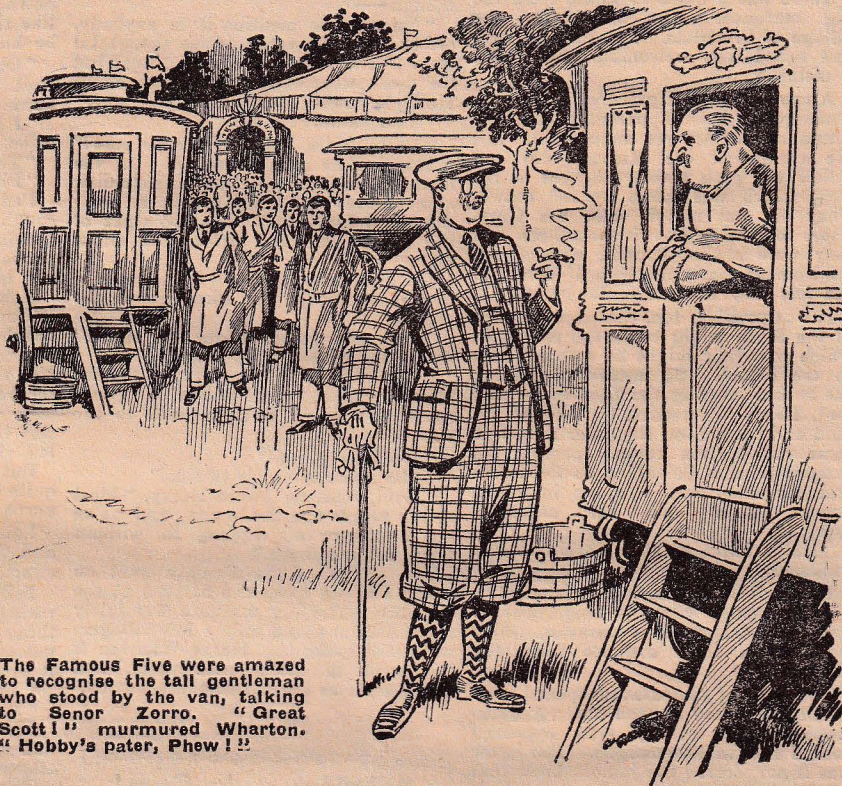
"The sorrowfulness is terrific!"

There was no answer from the Remove-room, but there was a sound of shuffling feet and of a book falling to the floor.

Those sounds were enough for Loder; they proved that the room was tenanted. It was not likely to occur to him that a Shell fellow had taken the place of the detained juniors.

From the Shell-room, Harry Wharton & Co. watched the prefect curiously.

"I know your game!" called out



The Famous Five were amazed to recognise the tall gentleman who stood by the van, talking to Senor Zorro. "Great Scott!" murmured Wharton. "Hobby's pater, Phew!"

"No offence, you know—we'd just saved you up for a rainy day, that was all," explained Bob.

Hobson grinned.

"All serene! I'm going to make you sit up for that some time; but I don't mind lending you a hand now. I've got to cut the circus, but I'd like any other chap to get there. Give me the key!"

"Thanks, old man!"

Hobson of the Shell took the key, and went into the Remove-room and closed the door. The key turned on the inside.

"Good old Hobby!" murmured Bob.

"Cave!" breathed Wharton, as there was a sound of footsteps in the distance.

The Famous Five backed into the Shell Form-room, which was near at hand. Keeping the door an inch or so ajar, they watched the passage.

Loder of the Sixth came striding back.

Apparently he had suspected that the juniors might dodge out of the Form-room as soon as his back was turned. He had been away scarcely five minutes.

He stopped at the Remove door, and turned the handle. Then he thumped on the locked door.

"Still there, you cheeky young cads?" he shouted.

Loder. "You're going to go out as soon as my back is turned, what?"

No reply.

"Well, you won't find it easy!" said Loder. "I'm going to sit here and read, see?"

Loder walked along the passage to the window-recess, where there was a chair. He carried the chair along to the Remove-room, and plumped it down loudly.

Then he walked away on tiptoe, and vanished.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, in the Shell-room, with grinning faces.

Had they been still in the Remove-room they would have been taken in by Loder's trick, and would have supposed that he was sitting outside the Remove door, reading.

"Deep—what?" murmured Bob Cherry. "Loder's getting quite downy in his old age! But we're a little downier!"

"Ha, ha! Let's cut!"

"Let's!"

And the Famous Five emerged from the Shell-room, and departed—also on tiptoe.

Ten minutes later, by devious ways, they had emerged from Greyfriars,

and were following the road to Friardale at a trot.

A Surprising Encounter!

"THERE'S the giddy tent!"
"Not started yet," said Harry.
"Good!"

There was a blare of music from the big marquee, in a field near the village of Friardale. The Famous Five had heard that welcoming blare from a distance.

A crowd was still gathered before the tent, going in. Apparently the performance had not yet commenced. But the chums of the Remove did not follow the path across the field to the tent, which was taken by the crowd. They did not mingle with the Greyfriars fellows, in the circumstances. As they were out of bounds, with severe punishment awaiting them if detected, the less they were seen the better.

It was possible, too, that some prefect of the Sixth might be in the crowd, in which case they might be ordered back to the school. So instead of joining the swarm crossing the field to the big tent, Harry Wharton & Co. skirted the field and entered on the other side, and came round from behind, passing the camped vehicles belonging to the circus and the tents and caravans in which Senor Zorro and his assistants travelled.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob suddenly.

He stopped, in sheer astonishment.

The juniors were passing near a large, rather handsome caravan, which stood at a little distance from the circus tent.

The door of the caravan opened, and a tall gentleman stepped out. A dark-faced, foreign-looking man appeared behind him as he emerged. The latter was Senor Zorro; the juniors knew him from his pictures that had appeared on the circus posters. But they were amazed to recognise the tall gentleman who had stepped out of the van.

"Great Scott!" murmured Wharton.

"Hobby's pater!"

"Phew!"

The juniors simply could not help staring at the tall gentleman, in their blank amazement.

It really was amazing.

What connection could possibly exist between the rather grim and severe baronet and the swarthy, greasy-complexioned Spanish showman, was a deep mystery.

Certainly it did not concern the chums of the Remove and they were not given to interesting themselves in matters that did not concern them. But they could not help being astonished.

On the swarthy face of the circus proprietor there was a lurking, half-smiling grin. But as the baronet, after passing down the steps of the van, turned to speak to him, the Spaniard's face became grave and serious and his manner respectful.

In their astonishment at seeing Sir James Hobson there, Harry Wharton & Co. had stopped; and now they hurried on. Strange as the incident was, they had no desire to seem to be spying on the baronet and his affairs.

Sir James did not glance in their

direction; he was speaking to the circus proprietor in a low voice, and evidently intent on what he was saying.

A minute more, and the bulk of the big marquee hid the juniors from his sight if he had looked round.

"Well, that beats it, doesn't it?" murmured Johnny Bull. "What, on earth is Hobby's pater doing here?"

"Beats me!" said Bob. "He won't let Hobby go to the circus, and yet he seems on visiting terms with the circus Johnny himself. No bizney of ours, though—"

"No need to mention it to anybody, either," said Wharton, in his thoughtful way. "The fact is, it's jolly queer; but we don't want to start any talk about Hobby's people. Hobby is a good sort."

"Yes, rather!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he goes!"

The juniors glanced round. In the distance Sir James Hobson was striding away across the field, taking a route that kept him away from the sight of the people gathered before the circus tent.

He disappeared beyond a hedge in a few moments, in the direction of the village.

"He's not going to see the show?" said Bob, with a faint grin.

"Nor going to Greyfriars to see Hobby, either," said Harry. "Looks as if he's going straight back to the station."

"It's jolly queer!"

"The queerfulness is terrific."

"Well, come on!" said Harry. "Most of the people are inside now, and we've got a chance of slipping in without being noticed much."

The chums of the Remove went on round the big tent, and arrived at the entrance. The big marquee was fairly well-filled now, and only a few villagers were still going in. Harry Wharton & Co. went in along with them, and found seats as the performance started.

An Accident at the Circus!

"PEDRILLO!"
"That's the name—the giddy acrobat!"

"Looks quite a kid!" said Bob, gazing at the performer.

"It's a Spanish name, but he doesn't look much like a foreigner," said Harry, glancing with interest at the handsome, lithe figure that had entered the arena.

The performance was half-through; and, so far, though entertaining enough to the audience, there had been nothing specially striking about Senor Zorro's Spanish Circus.

But the boy acrobat was a special turn; pictures of him in various perilous positions had covered the walls of Friardale and the neighbourhood for days past.

All eyes were fixed on him as he swarmed up a rope to the trapeze that swung from the roof of the big marquee.

Judging by appearances, he was not more than fifteen or sixteen years old, and though his name certainly was Spanish, neither his features nor his complexion seemed to indicate an Iberian origin. His face was sunburnt, but quite unlike the swarthy face of Senor Zorro in complexion.

"That wants some nerve!" remarked Bob Cherry, as the acrobat threw him-

self on the bar of the trapeze, and swung high in the air.

"Yes, rather!"

But Pedrillo was only beginning.

He proceeded to go through a performance that held the packed tent breathless.

The trapeze swung at a dizzy height, with the acrobat holding on by a single foot.

Harry Wharton & Co. watched him, spellbound.

"Dash it all, I wish he'd come down!" muttered Bob. "Blessed if I like this sort of show. That chap would be killed if he dropped."

"Oh, he won't drop!" said Johnny Bull. "He does this every day, you know."

"I know but he might do it once too often," said Bob uneasily.

"There he goes!"

"Phew!"

Pedrillo flew through the air, and caught lightly at the second trapeze, turning a somersault as he flew, far above the head of Senor Zorro, standing in the sawdust below.

Bob Cherry looked at his programme.

The next item was an American roughrider, and Bob was rather anxious to get on with the next item. Not that he was specially interested in the roughrider; but Pedrillo's performance was a dangerous one, and there was little pleasure in watching a mere lad risk life and limb.

But the boy acrobat was evidently quite at home on the trapeze, and his nerve was of iron.

Loud applause rang through the tent, and there was a satisfied smirk on the swarthy face of Senor Zorro.

Pedrillo's turn was the "piece de resistance" of the show, and the best thing that the senor had to offer to his patrons. And there was no doubt that it thrilled the audience.

"There he goes again!"

"Ripping!"

The acrobat flew, turning as he flew, and caught at the bar of the swinging trapeze.

The next moment there was a gasp from the audience, a cry of horror.

Wharton sprang to his feet, his face white.

"Good heavens!"

"He's falling!"

"The rope's broken!"

"Oh!"

A spangled figure shot through the air. There was a thud in the tan. From all sides came scared cries and exclamations.

Senor Zorro stood rooted to the tan, staring blankly at the still figure that lay there. The boy acrobat, a moment before so lithe and active, lay motionless in the sawdust.

Harry Wharton leaped over the barrier, the first to recover from the spell of horror.

In a moment he was on his knees beside the still figure.

He raised the unconscious head. The eyes of the boy acrobat were closed. He was insensible.

"A doctor!" shouted Wharton.

Senor Zorro hurried up.

"Carambo!" Wharton heard him mutter savagely.

The circus proprietor seemed more enraged than horrified by the accident.

A few seconds more, and the arena was invaded by an excited crowd.

Wharton's chums had joined him, and they gathered round the unconscious boy, keeping back the excited swarm.

"Fetch a doctor, somebody!" shouted Harry.

Bob Cherry plunged through the crowd and raced out of the tent. The crowded marquee was plunged into the wildest confusion. Senor Zorro was swearing in Spanish, while Wharton supported the unconscious head of Pedrillo upon his knee.

Bob dashed out of the tent and down to the road. A car was coming along from the village, and Bob jumped into the road in front of it and waved his hand.

"Stop!" he shouted.

The chauffeur jammed on the brakes just in time. A surprised face under a silk hat looked out of the car.

"What—why—Cherry!"

"Dr. Locke!"

It was the Head of Greyfriars.

"What does this mean, Cherry?" exclaimed Dr. Locke sharply. "What do—"

Bob ran to him.

"There's an accident in the circus, sir—an acrobat fallen. He's badly hurt. Will you let your car take him to the doctor's sir?"

"Bless my soul!"

"He may be dying, sir—"

"The doctor is here!" said the Head.

"My dear Pilbury, how fortunate that you were coming to dine with me!"

"Oh, what luck!" gasped Bob, as the school doctor stepped quickly from the car. "This way, sir!"

Bob ran back to the tent, the little stout gentleman hurrying after him.

"Make way!" shouted Bob. "Here's the doctor!"

"Oh, good!" gasped Wharton.

Dr. Pilbury waved back the surging crowd, and knelt beside the insensible acrobat. Wharton was only too glad to leave him in the medical gentleman's hands.

"It was a stroke of luck!" said Bob breathlessly. "I stopped a car to take him to the doctor's, and the jolly old Head was in it with Dr. Pilbury. I've never been glad to see the doctor before, but I could jolly well have hugged him this time. I—I wonder if he can do anything for that poor kid?"

"Wharton!" called out Dr. Pilbury.

"Yes, sir!"

The captain of the Remove hurried forward.

"Dr. Locke's car is waiting—this unfortunate lad must be carried to it at once. You and your friends—"

"At once, sir!"

The Famous Five lifted the insensible figure gently from the ground. As they carried Pedrillo away, and Dr. Pilbury was following, the circus proprietor caught the doctor by the arm.

Dr. Pilbury shook off his hands impatiently.

"Don't delay me, please!" he snapped.

"But the nino—the boy!" exclaimed Senor Zorro, mixing Spanish and English in his agitation. "Pedrillo, mi muchache—goes he to die?"

"I think not, but I fear concussion. He must be taken to hospital at once," said Dr. Pilbury. "There is no time to lose! Is the boy in your employment?"

"Si, senor, si!"

"If you wish to accompany him—"

"Carambo! No, senor. I have my business here. But if he goes to die—"

The senor turned away, muttering to himself in Spanish.

Dr. Pilbury hurried after the juniors.

Evidently Senor Zorro was not concerning himself very much about Pedrillo for the boy's own sake. It was the loss of the acrobat's services that was worrying him.

The lad, still unconscious, was lifted into the car. Dr. Locke gave a pitying look.

"Is his state serious, my dear Pilbury?" he asked.

"Very. So much so that I am going to ask you to let him be placed in the sanatorium at Greyfriars, sir, to save the long journey to the hospital at Lantham.

"Certainly, certainly!" said the kind-hearted old Head at once, and the car was immediately set in motion.

"Good old Head!" said the kind-hearted old Head at once, and the car was immediately set in motion.

"Good old Head!" said the kind-hearted old Head at once, and the car was immediately set in motion.

"I hope that kid will pull round," said Harry. "What a rotten end to a show!"

"Rotten! They've stopped the show," said Bob, with a glance towards the big marquee, from which the people were pouring in a crowd. "Anyhow, I shouldn't care for any more after what's happened."

"No fear!"

"Let's get back to Greyfriars," said Harry.

And the Famous Five, in a serious and thoughtful mood, walked back to the school.

Hobson of the Shell had played his part well; certainly Loder of the Sixth had never guessed that the Famous Five were miles away from the Form-room. And Harry Wharton & Co., having thanked Hobson for his services, went in to tea.

Not Nice for Loder!

WHARTON!"

"Yes, Wingate!"

"Nugent!"

"Yes?"

"You're wanted."

"Oh!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were sitting down to prep, when the captain of Greyfriars looked into Study No. 1.

The chums of No. 1 were feeling very merry and bright.

They had escaped—so they supposed, at least—the extremely serious consequences of having broken detention. They had been, in spite of everything, to the circus—and though the accident to the acrobat had spoiled the entertainment for them, they had had the satisfaction of making themselves very useful to the injured Pedrillo.

Dr. Pilbury, who had dined with the Head, had made it known that Pedrillo's injuries were less serious than had been feared, and that the circus lad was in no danger, and was progressing as favourably as could be expected—a great relief to the juniors. So it seemed to the chums of the Remove that everything was in a satisfactory state, and they were pleased with themselves and with things generally.

But the cheery smiles faded from their faces as they received that summons from the head prefect of Greyfriars. They rose to their feet with very serious looks.

"Anything up, Wingate?" asked Harry.

"Yes. Wait till I've called the others."

Wingate went along the Remove passage, and Wharton and Nugent waited for him at the door of No. 1.

He came back, accompanied by Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Follow me!" said Wingate.

"Is it the Head?" asked Bob.

"No your Form master!"

The juniors followed Wingate down the staircase. He led them to Mr. Quelch's study.

"Here are the juniors, sir."

"Thank you, Wingate!"

The Greyfriars captain retired, leaving the Famous Five in the presence of their Form master.

They stood in a guilty row, looking as meek as they could. There was no further doubts in their minds that Mr. Quelch knew of their escapade; and they waited anxiously for him to speak. Never had his eyes seemed so much like gimlets as they seemed now.

"Dr. Locke has acquainted me with the fact that a lad injured in an accident, at a circus in Friardale, has been brought to the sanatorium here," said Mr. Quelch.

"Indeed, sir!" murmured Wharton.

"He has acquainted me with the fact that, when the accident happened, several Greyfriars boys made themselves very useful—one of them stopped his car, and was, therefore, the cause of the injured lad receiving prompt medical attention."

"Oh!"

"As the boys in question belong to my Form, the Head naturally supposed that I should be very gratified to hear about it," said Mr. Quelch.

"H'm!"

"But what was my surprise," continued Mr. Quelch, "what was my astonishment, when Dr. Locke acquainted me with the names of the boys in question."

"Ah!"

"In a word," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "you five juniors, who were under detention, and whom I believed to be in the Remove Form-room, had the audacity to leave the school, in spite of my strict orders, and to go to the circus."

Silence!

"You have been guilty of a very serious infraction of discipline. Yet it appears that the prompt assistance you rendered to an injured boy was of inestimable service to him—and may even have saved his life. In these circumstances, it is impossible for me to regret that you were on the scene when the accident happened."

The five juniors looked a little brighter.

"I shall not, therefore, punish you," said Mr. Quelch. "I shall take the view that you have atoned for your disobedience by the service you rendered to the victim of the accident."

The Famous Five looked quite cheery.

"You may go!" said Mr. Quelch.

And Harry Wharton & Co. went, little dreaming then of the tangle of circumstance and intrigue that was to spring from their escapade of the afternoon, which had resulted in Pedrillo, the circus star, being brought to Greyfriars.

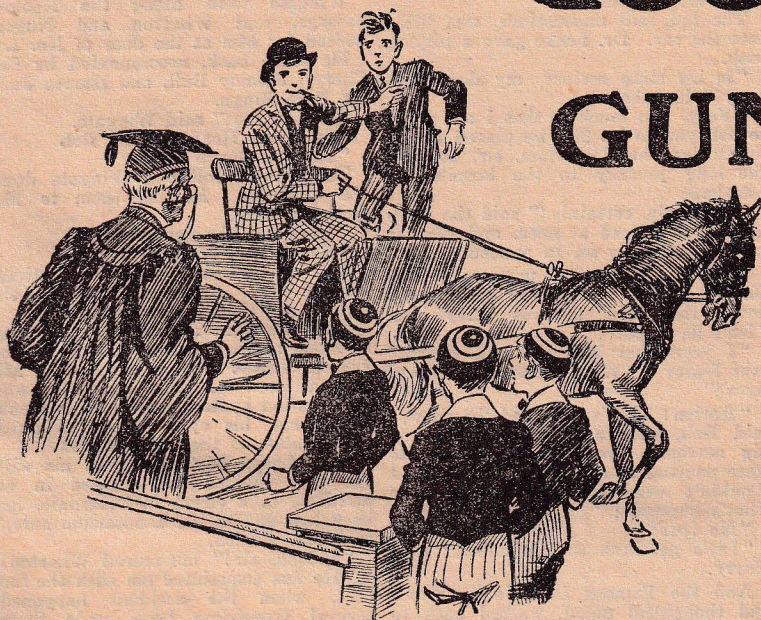
THE END.

(FROM CIRCUS TO GREY-FRIARS!" is the title of next week's rousing tale of Harry Wharton & Co.)

THE POPULAR—No. 606.

ROOKWOOD SAYS:—

GOOD-BYE TO GUNTER!



You'll all enjoy the Topping Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood.

By Owen Conquest.

Jimmy Silver knocked at Tommy Dodd's study door and opened it.

"My hat!" ejaculated Tommy Dodd, as his visitors appeared. "Those Classical duffers! Hand me the treacle!"

"Hold on!" roared Jimmy Silver. "It's pax!"

"Oh!" Tommy Dodd put down the treacle-jar. "That'll save the treacle, anyway. It's a waste of good treacle to mop it on Classical fatheads!"

"Oh, let's get off!" grunted Lovell. "These Modern cads wouldn't be game enough, anyway!"

"Game for anything you're game for, anyway!" sniffed Tommy Dodd. "What's on?"

"We're going for Gunter," said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, that was my idea, said Tommy Dodd. "I suggested—"

"Well, it's my idea, too," said Jimmy, manfully forbearing to start another argument. "He's disgracing the school, and his uncle—our respected Head—and he says plainly that's what he's here for. He will be run in by the police some day, with his blackguardly goings-on, and then think of the disgrace! I believe that's his little game, as a matter of fact. He'd do anything to get even with Rookwood for kicking him out. We're going to shift him out of Coombe!"

"How?" demanded the three Moderns with one voice.

"Go for him, and rag him, and make hay of him till he clears off," said Jimmy Silver

unhesitatingly.

"Oh, scissors!"

"If you're game you can help us," said Jimmy. "If you're not, you can go and eat coke!"

"We're game enough," said Tommy Dodd. "But if it came out that we'd been in the Bird-in-Hand for any reason it would mean trouble."

"We've got to risk that," said Raby. "I suppose you Modern bounders can risk it if we can?"

"I should jolly well say so!" said Tommy Dodd. "You won't find the top side of Rookwood backing out—"

"Top side! Why, you Modern ass, we—"

"You Classical duffer—"

"Order!" yelled Jimmy Silver. "You can jaw some other time. Is it a go? Are we going for Gunter?"

The Only Way!

JIMMY SILVER wore a thoughtful look. There was the question of Gunter.

Gunter, the Head's nephew, had been expelled from Rookwood. He had been an arrant blackguard while he was there, and he seemed to have become still worse since he had left.

Dr. Chisholm had made arrangements to send him back to America, where his people lived. Gunter had taken himself off and disappeared for a time. Then he had turned up in the village of Coombe, near Rookwood.

He cherished a bitter animosity against the Head for having "sacked" him, and against the Rookwood fellows, who had all been glad to see him go. And his intention—which he had plainly stated to Jimmy Silver—was to hang about the neighbourhood of the school and bring as much shame as he could upon the school and upon the Head.

Only a thorough rascal could have thought of such a scheme; but Gunter was the biggest rascal it had ever been Jimmy Silver's fortune to encounter.

And the rascal was keeping up his connection with fellows at Rookwood who had vicious inclinations, such as Smythe & Co. He delighted in leading them into reckless escapades—deeper into the mire than their own inclinations would have led them, slackers and "rotters" as they were.

Jimmy Silver had a shrewd suspicion that Gunter's object was not so much to enjoy their society as to bring them to his own fate. He could not hurt the Head of the school more than by necessitating a series of expulsions, which would make the name of Rookwood unpleasantly notorious.

Jimmy Silver had come to a resolu-

tion, in which his chums fully concurred. Gunter had to be got rid of.

True, Jimmy Silver had no right to dictate to Gunter whether he should live at Coombe or not. But Jimmy Silver felt that on certain occasions high-handedness was justified, and he had made up his mind that Gunter had to go.

After lessons that day Jimmy was still looking very thoughtful, as he came out with Lovell and Raby and Newcome. It was up to Jimmy Silver, as leader of the Co., to think out a plan for dealing with Gunter, and Jimmy had thought it out.

It had given him a good deal of mental exercise, but he had come to a decision at last.

"Well?" said Lovell and Raby and

A Mystery That's Been Puzzling

The Fistical Four is Cleared Up!

Newcome in chorus, as Jimmy Silver halted in the quad.

"Well," said Jimmy, "it's settled. We'll speak to those Modern bounders; they can back us up."

"Oh, the Moderns are no good!" said Lovell, with a sniff. "Better keep it in our own hands."

Jimmy Silver shook his head.

"We're going to let Gunter see that all Rookwood's against him," he explained. "Moderns and Classicals shoulder to shoulder, you know. Besides, he may have a gang of his precious sporting friends with him, and Tommy Dodd is useful in a scrap. Come on!"

"Oh, all right!"

Jimmy led the way at a sedate pace towards the Modern side, and they entered Mr. Manders' House, not on the warpath.

"It's a go!" said the three Tommies at once.

"Done, then!"

"Now we'll have tea," said Tommy Dodd. "Stay and feed with us, dear boys. Pax till after we've routed the enemy!"

"Right-ho!"

And the Classics and Moderns sat down to tea together quite amicably. Civil war was suspended till the common enemy had been disposed of.

Rookwood on the Warpath!

SEVEN juniors marched out of the gates of Rookwood after tea with very determined looks. The rivals of Rookwood were on the warpath—not against one another, for once.

They were serious enough about it. Gunter, the sacked blackguard of the Fourth, was a denizen of the Bird-in-Hand, a low public-house on the outskirts of the village. That house was strictly out of bounds for all Rookwood fellows.

Under any other circumstances Jimmy Silver & Co. would never have dreamed of entering such a place. They knew, too, that the penalty would be severe if the Head learned of it. Their excellent intentions would not save them from condign punishment.

But they were running the risk. For the sake of the school's good name they were going to get rid of Gunter. There was only one way—the drastic method of ragging the young rascal till he cleared off. The Head might be angry if he learned of their proceedings, but there was no doubt that he would be glad to hear that his ungrateful and rascally nephew was gone. Jimmy Silver & Co. were, in fact, observing the injunction to do good by stealth.

Of the "scrap" that was probably before them they thought little. Gunter would put up a fight, and his associates would probably help him; but the heroes of the Fourth were prepared for any amount of scrapping.

"Better go round by way of the towing-path," Tommy Dodd observed, as the party drew near the village. "We don't want to be spotted going in. If Knowles or Bulkeley should be about we—"

"Good idea!" assented Jimmy Silver. The juniors cut down to the towing-path, which gave access to the long inn garden.

There was a gate in the hedge, and the juniors paused to survey the enemy's territory before invading it.

Jimmy Silver uttered a suppressed exclamation.

"There he is!"

"Gunter, by Jove!"

"The rotten cad!" growled Lovell, in disgust.

Gunter was there, in full view, and his aspect was not edifying. There was a little summer-house at the end of the garden, and through the leaves the juniors could see into it. Three persons were seated at a small table—one of them Gunter, the other two men some years older. Gunter had a cigar between his yellow teeth and a bunch of cards in his hand. Cards were on the table, and money, and glasses furnished with something stronger than ginger-beer.

The juniors looked on the scene in wrath and disgust.

This blackguard had been in the

Fourth Form at Rookwood—he was still wearing a Rookwood cap, with the red badge of the Classical side. And here he was, the nephew of the reverend Head of Rookwood, smoking, drinking, and gambling with Joey Hook, the book-maker and "Tadger" Tagg, the billiard sharper.

His insolence in still wearing the Rookwood cap exasperated the juniors more than anything else. It was part of his plan, of course; but they thought that even Gunter might have been decent enough to put that aside.

"I guess that pot's mine, pardners," remarked Gunter, with a chuckle. He spoke with the nasal twang the juniors knew so well. Rookwood had not changed Gunter in the least; he was still exactly the same fellow who had come from the far-off land of Texas, where his upbringing had evidently been of the roughest and rudest.

Tadger Tagg muttered an oath. "You 'ave good luck, Mister Gunter," said Joey Hook, with a somewhat suspicious look at the one-time Fourth-Former of Rookwood.

Gunter laughed as he raked in the stakes. Probably the two sharpeners had not expected to meet their match in the schoolboy. But Gunter was ahead of anything the quiet village of Coombe could produce in the way of rascality.

"Time we chipped in," murmured Jimmy Silver. "We've fairly got him here!"

"What-ho!"

"Follow on!" said Jimmy.

He put his hand on the gate and vaulted over, and ran towards the summer-house. His chums were after him in a twinkling.

Gunter sprang to his feet as he saw them.

Tadger Tagg and Joey Hook rose also, looking surprised.

"Friends of yours, Mister Gunter?" asked Hook.

"I guess not," chuckled Gunter. "I reckon these galoots have come hyar looking for trouble."

"We've come here looking for you, Gunter," said Jimmy Silver.

"I guess you've found me at home."

"We've got a bone to pick with you," said Tommy Dodd.

"If you ain't no business 'ere, young gents, you'll oblige by clearin' off," said Mr. Hook.

"But we have business here," said Jimmy. "Our business is with Gunter. Gunter, you've been long enough in Coombe. When are you going?"

"When I choose, I guess."

"That's where you make a mistake. You're going when we choose. We've come to tell you so."

"I guess you might have saved your breath," said Gunter. "I'm staying on. I guess your headmaster will be sorry he sacked me before I'm through. Now you can vamoose the ranch or I'll call the stable-hands to shift you."

"You're going!" said Jimmy Silver quietly. "You've disgraced Rookwood enough. Now you're clearing."

Gunter laughed contemptuously and sat down again.

"Mind," said Jimmy Silver, "we mean business. I don't mind saying out plain that I don't believe you're really our headmaster's nephew at all. If you were you'd have some grain of decency in you. I believe you're some rotten swindler. But, anyway, you're going."

Gunter started.

"I guess you're talking out of your hat," he said. "Don't you calculate that Dr. Chisholm knows his own nephew?"

"I know he's never seen him," said Jimmy. "I know you came here from Texas as his nephew. But I know, too, that you had a letter from America in which you were called 'Sam.' Sam isn't the name of Dr. Chisholm's nephew. I know you were scared by that letter, and you let out that you were afraid somebody was coming to Rookwood, and you said the game would be up. Putting two and two together, I conclude that there's some swindle on, and that you're not what you make yourself out to be."

Gunter shrugged his shoulders. "I reckon you'll have to prove all that," he remarked.

"Not at all. I expect it will come out soon enough," said Jimmy, "and anyway, I can't prove it."

"Then I guess you'd better shut your yap-trap," said Gunter, in the elegant phraseology he had certainly not learned at Rookwood. "You make me tired!"

"We're here to clear you out," said Jimmy Silver determinedly. "You can pack your bag and come with us to the station."

"What?" ejaculated Gunter.

"We'll see you off by the next train."

"By gum, will you?"

"Otherwise, you'll get ragged till you're glad to go!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gunter, evidently greatly tickled.

The young rascal had plenty of nerve, at least.

"I say, young gents, you'd better get hout," said Mr. Hook. "You can't interfere with Mister Gunter like this 'ere!"

"You ring off!" said Jimmy Silver. "If you chip in here, Mr. Hook, you'll get hurt. Gunter, are you going?"

"I guess not!"

"Last time of asking," said Jimmy Silver. "Are you going?"

"Nope!"

"Collar him!"

There was a rush.

A Battle Royal!

GUNTER leaped to his feet. His hands closed on the neck of a heavy bottle, and he swung it into the air. His eyes gleamed like a cat's.

"Hands off!" he shouted. "Hands off, or—"

There was no doubt that the reckless young rascal would have struck. But Jimmy Silver was upon him with the spring of a tiger before he could use the dangerous weapon.

Jimmy grasped his arm and forced it back, and Gunter struggled in vain to release it, to strike a savage blow.

The next moment Lovell's grasp was on the bottle, and it was wrenched from Gunter's hand.

"Let up!" shrieked Gunter. "Hook, Tagg, stand by me! Call the stable-men!"

Gunter was struggling furiously in the grasp of three or four of the Rookwooders.

Joey Hook and Tadger Tagg advanced very gingerly to his aid. They were veiled by the juniors and hurled back unceremoniously. The Co. had no ceremony to waste on a pair of blackguards.

Tadger Tagg crashed into the shrubbery and lay there gasping, and Joey Hook crashed after him, and rolled over him.

(Continued on page 16.)

MONTAGUE BAGGS

The SWELL SHERIFF



1. Monty went all of a dither t'other day, when a blot on the landscape rolled across his path. "Huh! So you's the sheriff, eh?" said Nasty.



2. Then Monty got a fit of the trembles as the Blot looked nastier and nastier. His knees became generous—they gave way!



3. Nasty pulled out a couple of peashooters and let fly. He wasn't exactly going to pop Monty off. It was his idea of a joke to pop at the sheriff's tootsies.



4. Monty had never tried to one-step and fox-trot before. But when the bullets went pitter-pat by his big toes he found he could dance jolly well. In fact, like a champion.



5. All the time the Blot on the landscape was shooting off, he was stepping backwards. At last he stepped back too far and toppled over a pail, and found the earth jolly hard.

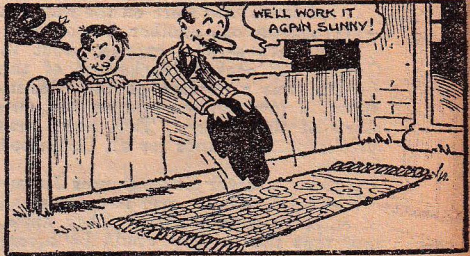


6. That gave Monty the chance he wanted, and in two and a quarter shakes, he'd got Nasty's shooters, and had levelled them at their owner. "Quick march, you!" he chuckled.

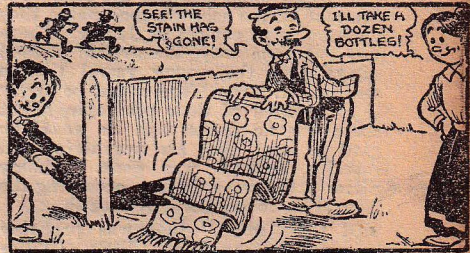
SUNNY BO



1. Sunny's got on to a bright new wheeze of making cash without working for it. See the brilliant idea, eh?

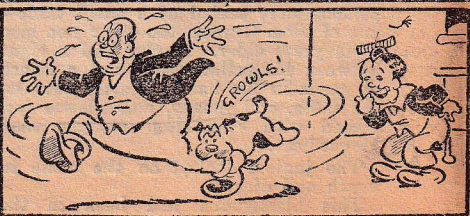
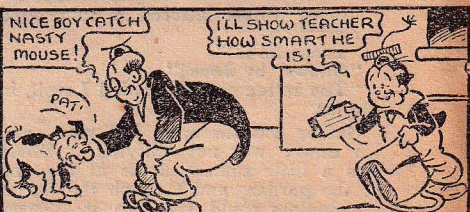
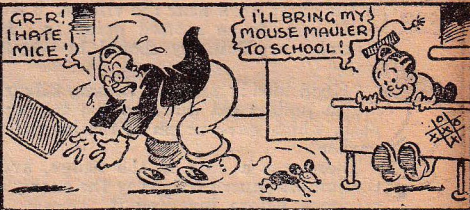


3. Next our two villains came to a homestead, and espied a rug waiting for a beating. "Our next customer," said Pop.

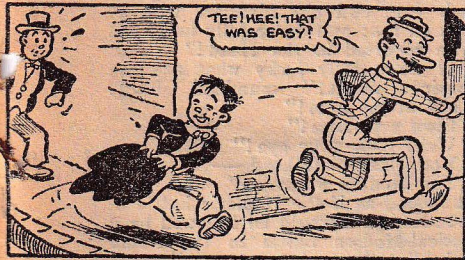


5. A sprinkle of the secret remover, and then—whisk! The stain vanished! "Oooh!" gasped the lady. "Gimme a dozen bottles."

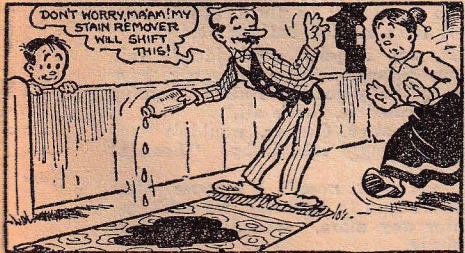
INTRODUCING WILLY HA



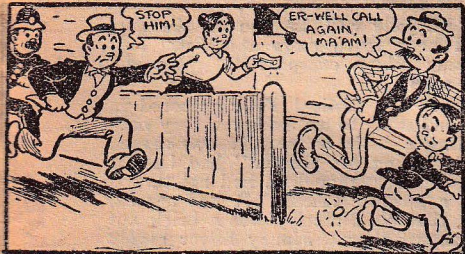
BOY AND HIS POP



2. When the generous gent gave Sunny the money, Sunny did the vanishing trick with his solidified treacle, leaving him gasping.

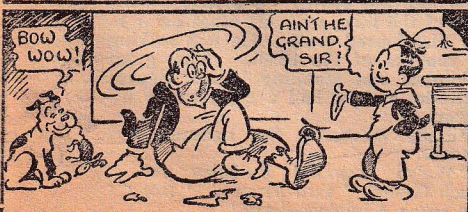
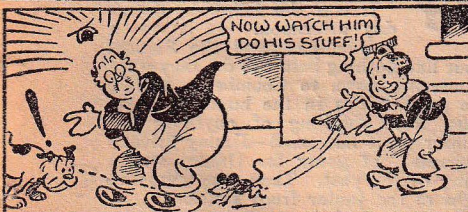
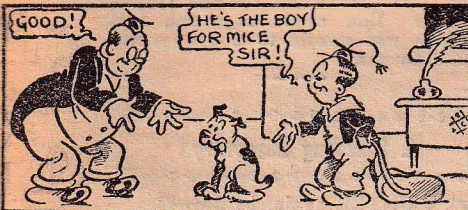


4. The lady of the rug got a norful surprise when she saw the large stain. But Pop stepped in with the rest of the trick.

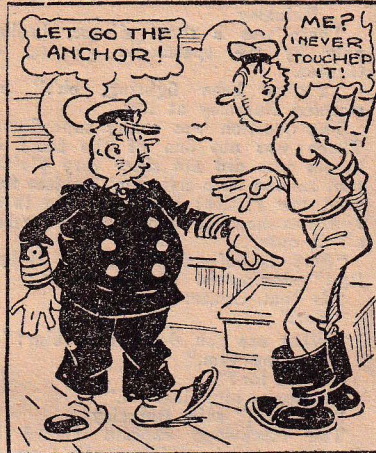


6. But at that moment the first victims arrived with a cop, and not wanting to be copped, our two hopped off.

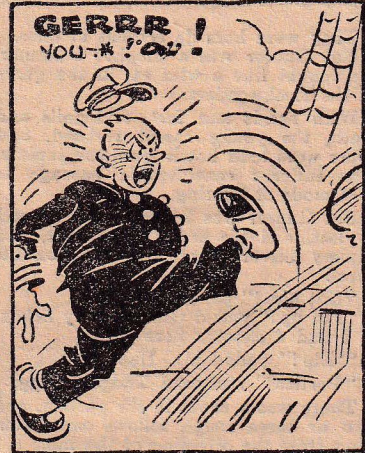
HA'PENNY AND DR. BOB.



CAPPY CRAB AND CREW



1. Boys! Let me introduce you to a couple of crazy coons, who are going to keep you in fits of laughter for the next few weeks. Ain't they a scream!



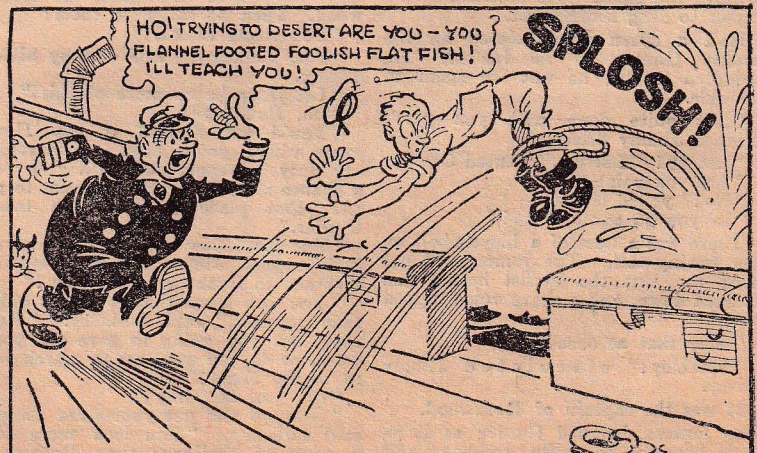
2. Cappy's roaring mad now. He don't like the crew answering back, and the crew don't like being ordered about by him. How awkward it gets!



3. But the crew has to work for its bread-and-marg, any old how. Still, you can see that he's not "anchoring" after doing a spot of weight-lifting.



4. One mighty heave, and away goes the anchor. Notice the rope that's got all muxed and middled up round the crew's fairy leglets.



5. There! Thought that'd happen! Poor old crew! Ain't it looking sick and silly-like. But you bet it looks sillier still (the crew, I mean) when Cappy Crab hops along and does the fierce sea skipper act, in one part. Oh, what a life on the ocean wave.

Good-bye to Gunter!

(Continued from page 13.)

They were hors de combat at once. But Gunter was a tougher customer. He fought like a wild cat in the grasp of the Rookwooders.

With hands and feet, and nails and teeth, the young rascal resisted, and there were loud howls from the juniors, who suffered considerable damage in that mode of fighting.

But Gunter was borne to the ground at last, and his hands were held, and Jimmy Silver planted a knee on his chest.

"Got him!" panted Jimmy. "Let up!" yelled Gunter. "By hokey, if I had a shooter here—"

"Elp!" yelled Mr. Hook.

"Perlice!" stuttered Tadger Tagg.

There was a shout in the garden, and two or three rough fellows came running from the direction of the inn.

"Get him out of here!" exclaimed Tommy Dodd. "Duck him in the river!"

"Good egg!"

Gunter, still resisting desperately, was dragged away, bumping on the ground. Raby kicked the gate open, and Gunter was rushed out on the towing-path.

Right down to the gleaming river he was rushed, and then he was swung, yelling, into the air.

"One, two, three!" shouted Jimmy Silver. "Go!"

And Gunter went.

There was a terrible splash, and Gunter disappeared into the shallow water, two or three yards from the bank.

"Hurrah!" panted Tommy Dodd. Gunter's head came up. He scrambled to his feet in the shallows, smothered with mud.

The water surged round his chest as he stood. There was as much mud as water close to the bank, and Gunter was covered with it. His features were almost hidden by it. The juniors burst into a roar of laughter at the sight of him.

Gunter, grinding his teeth, scrambled towards the bank. He clutched at the rushes to drag himself out.

Half a dozen hands closed on the muddy Gunter as he landed. He wriggled feebly; he was too spent to struggle.

"Not quite done with you yet!" grinned Jimmy Silver.

"Let up! Let up!" panted Gunter.

"Are you going?"

"No!" yelled Gunter.

"In you go again, then!"

There was a buzz of a bicycle-bell on the towing-path. The juniors did not heed it. But the cyclist halted and jumped down, and a sharp voice rapped out:

"Stop that at once!"

"Bulkeley!" ejaculated Jimmy Silver.

It was the captain of Rookwood.

The juniors dropped Gunter as if he had become suddenly red-hot, and whirled round to face Bulkeley. Gunter squirmed and gasped in the rushes at their feet.

THE POPULAR—No. 606.

Not a Success!

BULKELEY looked at the juniors grimly. The juniors looked at Bulkeley.

There was a short silence, broken only by the spasmodic gasping of Gunter.

"You've been fighting, eh?" exclaimed Bulkeley at last.

The question was really superfluous. There was not one of the band of heroes who did not show very plainly that he had been fighting. Seldom had even the Fistical Four and the three Tommies shown so many signs of combat all at once.

"Sort of—of—of scrapping, Bulkeley!" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"Is that Gunter?"

"Yes."

"What are you doing with him?"

"Ducking him."

"What for?"

"To make him clear off."

"My hat!" said Bulkeley.

The Rookwood captain stared at Gunter as that muddy youth dragged himself to his feet. Gunter was red with rage under the mud. He shook his fist at the juniors, and then at Bulkeley, and staggered away towards the garden gate.

There was a movement to follow him, and Bulkeley interposed.

"Stop!" he rapped out.

"We—we haven't finished yet," said Tommy Dodd.

"Get back to Rookwood at once, all of you!"

"I—I say, Bulkeley—"

"Shut up, and get off!"

There was no disputing with the captain of the school. Jimmy Silver & Co. marched off, somewhat weary and worn, and very much disappointed. They had not nearly finished with Gunter yet.

Bulkeley followed them, wheeling his bike. He did not speak for some time, and the juniors wondered rather apprehensively what he was thinking about. He was head prefect of Rookwood, and he knew they had been to the Bird-in-Hand. True, he also knew their motive. They were thankful that it was not Knowles who had caught them. But what would Bulkeley do?

Not a word did Bulkeley speak till they were near the gates of Rookwood. Then he called to them:

"You young rascals!"

"Yes, Bulkeley," said Jimmy Silver meekly.

"Let there be no more of this!"

"Oh, Bulkeley!"

"You'd get flogged if the Head knew where you'd been. It's really my duty to report you. I'll give you a chance if you'll promise me not to go near that place again, or to touch Gunter."

"But the fellow ought to be cleared off!" argued Jimmy Silver. "He's a disgrace to Rookwood, Bulkeley!"

"You can leave that to others older than yourself," said Bulkeley. "Now then, are you going to give me your word, or do you want me to march you in to the Head?"

"Oh, yes, certainly!"

"Now go and get yourselves clean," said Bulkeley. "You look more like a gang of hooligans than Rookwood fellows!"

Bulkeley wheeled his bike in, and Jimmy Silver & Co., after looking at one another uncertainly for a few

moments, followed him. They could not feel that the expedition had been a striking success.

"Just like all your rotten Classical wheezes!" groaned Cook. "I've got a black eye, and old Manders will be down on me; and we're jolly lucky not to be reported to the Head!"

"If we're jolly lucky what are you grousing about?" mumbled Raby.

"Look at my nose!"

"Blow your nose!"

"Well, blow your eye!"

"You Classical fathead—"

"You Modern worm—"

It looked as if the Homeric battle of the towing-path would be followed by a Classical-Modern battle in the school quad. But the juniors were feeling too sore, and, after an exchange of compliments, they parted.

The Fistical Four bathed their faces in the dormitory on the Classical side. Their faces needed bathing badly.

"It was a jolly good idea," said Jimmy Silver, a little dubiously, however. "Jolly good! Bulkeley coming along spoiled it, that's all."

"That rotter, Gunter, wouldn't have gone, anyway," said Raby. "Look at my nose!"

"Dash your nose! I suppose, after what we said to Bulkeley, we can't rag Gunter any more," said Jimmy Silver dolefully.

"Of course we can't, fathead!"

"Still, it was a jolly good idea."

"Oh, ripping!" groaned Raby. "Look at my nose!"

"I'll jolly well dot you on the nose if I hear much more about it," said Jimmy Silver, exasperated. "Go and eat coke!"

When the Fistical Four gathered in the end study to tea, however, they were feeling a little better. It was agreed that "going for Gunter" had been a ripping idea, though it had not turned out a howling success. It was agreed, too, that old Bulkeley was a brick not to report them. Jimmy Silver sagely opined that Bulkeley sympathised with their little scheme, though, of course, as a prefect, he couldn't say so.

The Fistical Four, upon the whole, were satisfied with themselves. But the question remained unanswered: How was Rookwood to get rid of Gunter? But, as it happened, that question was shortly to find an unexpected answer.

A Startling Discovery!

GUNTER again, by Jove!"

It was the following Saturday afternoon. As it was a half-holiday, and the Fistical Four had nothing better to do, they were sauntering down to Coombe to sample the good things in the bunshop there. They were thinking of anything but Gunter, as it happened—Jimmy Silver's "wheeze" of going for Gunter was a thing of the past. Then they came in sight of the junior from Texas.

Gunter was sitting on a stile by the side of the lane, with his usual cigar in his discoloured teeth. He was talking to Smythe of the Shell. The great Adolphus was standing in an elegant attitude, and he had a cigarette in his fingers.

Jimmy Silver & Co. exchanged a glance.

"We've promised Bulkeley not to touch Gunter," said Jimmy. "But we can touch Adolphus—hard!"

"You bet!" said his chums.

Adolphus Smythe looked round in alarm as the Fistical Four came up.

"By gad!" he said. "Fancy meetin' you!"

"Sorry to interrupt the little pow-wow," said Jimmy Silver politely. "Don't you remember, Smithey, you've got strict orders to keep away from that blackguard."

"You cheeky fag!" gasped Adolphus, almost overcome with indignation at the idea of receiving strict orders from a Fourth-Former.

"Strict orders from your Uncle Jimmy, you remember."

"By gad!"

showed no sign whatever of going to the aid of Adolphus. He seemed to be amused.

"You cheeky young cads!" stuttered Adolphus. "Lemme go! I'll lick you, by gad! I'll thrash you, you know! Oh, my nose! Leggo my hair! Yow-wow!"

"Ha, ha! Come on, Adolphus!"

Adolphus had to come on.

"We'll take him into Coombe and put his head in the horse-trough," grinned Lovell.

"Good egg! Come on, Adolphus, dear!"

And to Coombe and the horse-trough the unfortunate Adolphus would in-

beside the road might have upset it at any moment, and the occupant would have been hurled out, probably to death.

Jimmy Silver's face was pale. Mechanically he began running after the trap, though there was no hope of getting near it.

"He's done for!" muttered Raby.

"Unless somebody stops him—"

"He'll pass Gunter!"

"Gunter! That cad!"

"My only hat!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

"Look!"

The Classical Four halted, dumb-founded.

Gunter had looked up as the trap came thundering on towards the stile.



There was a yell from Gunter, as the Fistical Four swung him towards the water, followed by a splash. The rogue of the school disappeared into the river.

"Don't you remember, Adolphus?"

"You cheeky young sweep, be off!" exclaimed Smythe, with a wave of the hand.

"Not without you, dear," said Jimmy Silver. "Lay hold, you chaps—anywhere you like. Mine's his ears!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Mine's his nose!" said Raby.

"Mine's his chin," chortled Lovell.

"Geroooogh! Leggo!" spluttered Smythe, struggling wildly as the Fistical Four grasped him, and rushed him away down the lane towards Coombe.

But the Fistical Four did not let go; they had no intention of letting go. All the kind attentions they were now debarred from bestowing upon Gunter they meant to bestow upon Adolphus. In that direction, at least, they could counteract Gunter's little game.

Wriggling and howling, the great Adolphus went down the lane, in the midst of the laughing juniors. Gunter, on the stile, roared with laughter. He

fallibly have gone, had there not come a sudden interruption. There was a wild clatter of a horse's hoofs on the hard road, and a trap came lashing round a bend of the lane ahead.

"Look out!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

The Fistical Four leaped out of the road in time, dragging Adolphus with them. The trap went whirling past.

"A runaway!" gasped Lovell. "That kid'll be killed."

Quite forgetting Smythe of the Shell, the Fistical Four stared after the trap. Its only occupant was a lad of about fifteen, who was dragging at the reins in vain, his somewhat weak face pale with terror. The horse was dashing along at top speed, completely out of control.

The trap from Coombe had passed the juniors in a flash; they had had no time even to think of rendering aid.

And it was impossible to overtake it at the speed at which it was travelling. They could only gaze after it in horror. The vehicle, rocked from side to side of the rough road, and it seemed a miracle that it kept to its wheels at all. A collision with a stone, or the bank

He threw his cigar away and slipped to the ground.

As the trap thundered up Gunter made a desperate spring at the horse's head.

The juniors felt their hearts stand still as they saw it.

Had Gunter missed his grasp he would have crashed down into the road, fairly under the thundering hoofs; to be crushed out of life by the hoofs and the wheels. He seemed to be springing to his death.

But he did not miss his grasp. Rascal and blackguard as he was, Gunter was as cool as an iceberg, steady as a rock. His grasp was on the bit, and the horse's head was dragged down.

Gunter hung on.

Still the trap thundered on, Gunter hanging to the horse's head, dragged along in its wild career.

But in a couple of minutes the weight and the iron grip of the junior from Texas told upon the excited horse. The wild pace slackened and the trap slowed down.

Slower and slower, till the animal was

dragged to a halt, and Gunter, covered with dust, bruised and shaken, but as cool as ever, stood upon his feet, holding the horse.

Jimmy Silver & Co. were running their hardest. They were filled with admiration for Gunter's pluck. They felt that that minute of courage and devotion had atoned for all the sins of the rascal of Rookwood.

They came up, panting.

Gunter had stood for a full minute, getting his breath. The horse, quiet enough now, was trembling in every limb. The weak-faced lad in the trap was still shivering. It was evident enough that his nerve was not like Gunter's.

"Waal, that was a close call, if you like, young 'un," said Gunter, raising his eyes to the boy in the trap.

Then he gave a sudden spring.

"You!" he yelled.

He did not see the Fistical Four racing up. He was staring—or rather, glaring—at the white face in the trap.

"You!" he repeated. "So you've come at last. And I've saved your life—like a fool! Like a thumping fool, Bob!"

"Sam!"

"Saved your life!" repeated Gunter, with a hoarse laugh. "Oh, by hokey! If I'd let you break your neck, Bob, I could have played the game on to the end."

"You've saved my life, Sam," said the lad in the trap, in trembling accents. "I—I should have been killed."

"That's a dead cert, sneered Gunter. "You never had any pluck, Bob. If you'd had any pluck you'd never have let me bullyrag you into playing the game we played, I guess. You changed your mind after I'd left, though, you skunk, and you've gone back on me."

"I—I couldn't keep it up, Sam—there was my father, you know—"

"You hadn't the nerve, you mean," jeered Gunter. "Oh, thumping fool that I was! Why didn't I let you break your neck?"

"What the thunder do you mean?" shouted Jimmy Silver, seizing Gunter by the shoulder and shaking him. "Who's this chap?"

Gunter laughed.

"That chap? Can't you guess?"

"Is it—" began Jimmy.

"The galoot who wrote to me that he'd lost his nerve and couldn't keep up the game—the galoot who was coming to Rookwood to bowl me out and show me up—Bob Gunter, the Head's nephew."

"The Head's nephew! My hat!"

"It's true," faltered the lad in the trap. "I am Robert Gunter—I am the nephew of Dr. Chisholm. I am going to Rookwood now to tell the truth."

"And who are you, then?" shouted Lovell.

The pseudo Gunter grinned.

"I guess I'm Sam Barker, and I was raised on old man Gunter's ranch," he said. "And I guess the game's up!"

The Truth at Last!

JIMMY SILVER whistled.

He had vaguely suspected something of the sort; but it was startling to have his suspicions confirmed in this way. He had been right. The rascal of Rookwood was not the Head's nephew at all, and he had only been playing a part at the old school.

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"I guess you can get on to Rookwood, Bob," said the outcast. "Give my love to uncle—ha, ha—and say good-bye to him for me. Hyer, take the ribbons! My hat!" he added scornfully. "I guess you haven't the nerve to drive the hoss now. I calculate I'll drive you."

He jumped into the trap, gathered up the reins, and drove away. The Fistical Four looked at one another.

"Well, that chap takes the cake!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. "Come on, we're going to see the end of this!"

The Fistical Four hurried after the trap.

The real Gunter sat in it, silent and pale, while the false Gunter drove on with reckless speed and dashed up to the school gates with a flourish. He did not stop there. Without a pause he turned the horse in at the gates and went careering up the drive to the School House. There was a yell from the fellows in the quadrangle as they recognised the driver of the trap.

"Gunter!"

The junior from Texas cracked his whip and laughed, and drove recklessly on. The trap dashed up and stopped outside the School House, the horse in a foam. A crowd gathered round at once, joined by Jimmy Silver & Co., breathless after their race.

"Where's the Head?" shouted Gunter. "Hallo, Bulkeley! How are you getting on? Hallo, Knowles! Still the same foxy-faced galoot, eh? Where's the Head? Tell him I've brought him his nephew."

"What?" shouted Bulkeley.

"Ha, ha! Bring the old boy out!" shouted Gunter.

Dr. Chisholm had already appeared on the steps of the School House. His severe old face was pale with anger.

"You have dared to return here!" he exclaimed.

The Texas junior nodded coolly.

"I guess so. I've brought you your nephew—the genuine article this time."

"What?" ejaculated the Head.

"I guess you'd never seen him alive but for me," chuckled Gunter. "The horse bolted—Bob never did have any nerve—and I stopped him. Haven't I saved your life, Bob, you spoony skunk?"

"Yes," panted the unfortunate Bob.

"It's true, sir!" broke in Jimmy Silver. "We saw it, sir. Gunter might have been killed—it was an awfully narrow shave—Barker, I mean—"

"In Heaven's name, what does all this mean?" exclaimed the Head blankly.

"This galoot is your nephew!" said the junior from Texas, flicking his companion with the whip.

The wretched Bob flinched, and Gunter chuckled again.

"Tell him you're his nephew, Bob. Blessed if he quite believes it now."

"I am your nephew, sir, if you are Dr. Chisholm!" faltered Bob. "I'm your sister's son, Robert, sir."

"Then—then this boy—"

Amazed as he was, relief flashed into the Head's face. That arrant, reckless blackguard was not his nephew, after all! It was a discovery that compensated for much.

"I guess it was my idea, from start to finish," said the so-called Gunter disdainfully. "I don't mind telling the yarn. I was raised on old man Gunter's ranch, and I was Bob's best pal. Wasn't I, Bob?"

"Yes," faltered Bob.

"And when old man Gunter decided to send the kid to England Bob didn't want to come. He was afraid. Weren't

you, Bob, you miserable worm? He was always in a blue funk!"

"It wasn't only that," flashed out the miserable Bob. "You made me; you talked me over!"

"Well, so I did," admitted Gunter. "I bullyragged you, didn't I? You never did have any nerve. And I took your place, and your name, and took the steamer instead of you, and gave your father's letter to the captain, and came here, and left you in Galveston, where you could have had a topping time if you'd had the grit. But you had to weaken, you worm and write to me that you were coming, and take the next steamer, hadn't you? When I got your letter I meant to scrag you as soon as you arrived, and I've saved your life instead, like a thumping fool!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head. "Boy—Robert—if you are my nephew, get down and come into the House. After this reprehensible trick I shall certainly not allow you to stay at Rookwood, and you will be sent home immediately. Go in at once, sir!"

The Head's nephew disappeared into the House. Dr. Chisholm fixed a stern gaze upon the impostor who had so cunningly played his part.

"As for you, whoever you are—"

"Sam Barker, I guess!" chuckled the outcast. "And I reckon I'm going back to Texas. I'm fed up with this country."

"It is the best thing you can do," said the Head sternly. "But for the fact that you appear to have acted very courageously in rescuing my nephew from peril I would place you in the hands of the police to suffer for your imposture. For that reason, and that reason alone, I will allow you to depart in peace. Go!"

"I guess I'm going. Good-bye, cocky!"

The Head, purple with wrath, turned hastily into the House. Gunter—or Barker—swung round the trap and drove down to the gates, amidst a buzzing crowd of excited Rookwood fellows.

"Hold on!" said Jimmy Silver, following the trap into the road.

"Hallo!"

"You're an out-and-out rotter, Gunter—I mean Barker—but you've got heaps of pluck! said Jimmy. "Give us your fist before you go!"

The young adventurer looked at him queerly. Then he leaned over and held out his hand, and Jimmy Silver shook hands with him.

"I guess you're a good sort, Jimmy Silver," he said, and for a moment his reckless hardihood seemed to be gone. "I reckon if I had my time here over again I'd play my cards a bit different. It's too late now. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, and good-luck!"

The trap dashed away. The juniors gazed after it till it vanished round the bend in the road. Then, thoughtfully and sedately, they turned back into the quad.

"Well, this is a go!" said Lovell. "We've got rid of Gunter! But, somehow, blessed if I don't half wish he'd stayed!"

Jimmy Silver shook his head. "He's better in his own country," he said. "There isn't room for a chap of that kind at Rookwood. But he has his good points, and—and I'm glad there won't be any more reason for going for Gunter!"

THE END.

(Now look out for another roaring long series of Rookwood yarns starting next week.)

FRANK RICHARDS & CO.'S RAID.



By
MARTIN CLIFFORD

The Woes of Chunky Todgers.

"YOW-OW-OW!"
"Hallo, Chunky! What's the trouble?"
"Wow-wow!"

Chunky Todgers was dolorous and mournful.

Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc, the three chums of Cedar Creek School, came upon the chubby youth in the school ground, uttering sounds of woe.

Chunky was bent almost double, apparently with pain, and his usually chubby and cheery face was contorted into weird expressions.

He blinked dismally at the three.

"What on earth's the matter?" asked Frank Richards.

"Woop!"

"Gunten been pinching your fat ears again?" asked Bob Lawless, frowning.

"Nunno! Yow-ow!"

"Been eating too much maple-sugar?" asked Beauclerc, with a smile. "You should draw a line, Todgers."

"It isn't that! I never get enough," said Chunky Todgers. "It's that horrid beast Grimm!"

"Grimm?" repeated Frank Richards.

"Yow-ow! Yes!"

"Who's Grimm?"

"Of course, you don't know," said Chunky, rather loftily. "You're a new fellow here. Everybody knows old Grimm, bless him! Blow him! Bother him!" All about an apple—Yow-ow!"

"You've been raiding old Grimm's apples?" grinned Bob Lawless.

"Well, they looked so jolly," said Chunky Todgers; "and he's got crowds of them—swarms—millions—"

"But they're his, not yours."

"Well, one wouldn't make any difference," said Chunky. "I simply got into the tree and sampled them. Old Grimm didn't know I'd eaten seven when he came up; he only saw the one in my hand."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But who is Grimm?" asked Frank Richards.

"Yow-ow! A beast!" groaned Chunky.

Bob Lawless laughed.

"Grimm's a fruit-farmer," he said. "His farm's the other side of the timber, towards Thompson town. He

raises apples for export. I suppose you know British Columbian apples are the best in the world?"

Frank laughed.

"We get some rather good ones in England," he remarked. "But what has Chunky to do with Grimm's apples?"

"Nothing—except to scoff them when he gets a chance. Old Grimm is a Galician emigrant, and talks queer English, and he has the temper of an Iroquois Indian full of firewater. He keeps a cattlehip for fellows who go on his land," said Bob. "He's a bit of a beast, really, and we generally give him a wide berth."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Well, you had the apples, Chunky,

"Serve you right for bagging his apples," said Bob. "Keep your paws from picking and stealing, you know."

Chunky Todgers snorted.

"Any other farmer in the section wouldn't mind," he growled. "It's because he's foreign trash. Yow-ow!"

And Chunky wriggled painfully.

"Look here!" he added.

Chunky rolled back his shirt, and showed his shoulders, on which lay the red marks of the cattlewhip.

Frank's brow darkened as he looked.

"Dash it all, that's too bad!" he exclaimed. "The man must be a rotten beast!"

"He laid it on as if he was threshing!" wailed Chunky. "All about a few apples, worth a few cents. I've

a jolly good mind to show this to popper, and he'd go and whale the beast. Yow-ow!"

"Don't do that," said Bob.

"No good telling tales and making trouble. But it's too bad, all the same. The fellow wants talking to."

"It's brutal!" said Beauclerc, frowning. "That kind of thing wants stopping. It would do Grimm good to get a dose of it himself!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bob Lawless burst into a sudden chuckle.

"I'll tell you what! We'll fine old Grimm for assault and battery on Chunky."

"Fine him?" said Frank.

"Yes."

"How are you going to fine him, fat-head?"

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and you must balance that against the licking," said Frank.

"Yow-ow! The awful beast had me treed, and I couldn't vamoose!" groaned Chunky. "He sat down on a log to wait for me to come down. I couldn't stay up, as I had to get back for afternoon lessons. Yow-ow!"

"He just sat there, with his whip across his knees, and grinned at me, and waited for me to climb down. Yow-ow! I—I had to chance it. Yow-ow! And he chased me along the Thompson trail for about a quarter of a mile, letting out with the whip—Yow-ow-ow!"

"We'll fine him two dozen apples, the fine to be paid to Chunky as compensation for damage," explained Bob. "That's fair!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Chunky Todgers' doleful face brightened up.

"That's a jolly good idea," he exclaimed. "You always did have jolly good ideas, Bob. And, look here, I'll let you fellows have some of the apples."

"Rats! We don't want Grimm's blessed apples! It's a fine, and we're going to administer the sentence," said Bob. "You fellows game, after school?"

"Yes, rather!" said Frank at once. "Quite!" agreed Beauclerc.

"So cheer up, Chunky, and think of the feed you're going to have when the fine has been levied," said Bob consolingly.

And Chunky Todgers did cheer up. He looked quite happy and bright in class that afternoon, though he occasionally twisted very uncomfortably on his form.

"Treed!"

AFTER school that day there were three fellows at Cedar Creek who were not thinking of taking the home-trail immediately.

Bob Lawless' peculiar scheme of fining the heavy-handed, Galician farmer had to be carried out first.

The chums of Cedar Creek felt that they were quite justified in inflicting that punishment upon Mr. Grimm.

Certainly, Chunky Todgers had been in the wrong, in the first place, for raiding Mr. Grimm's orchard. But any other farmer in the district would willingly have spared a few apples from an overflowing orchard for the asking.

Be that as it might, Mr. Grimm certainly had no right to leave the marks of his cattlewhip upon a Cedar Creek fellow, and the chums felt that retaliation was justified.

After school was dismissed by Miss Meadows, Frank Richards and his chums sauntered away towards the timber.

"Coming on the creek?" Dick Dawson called after them.

"We're taking the canoe down to the island," added Lawrence.

"Another time," said Bob Lawless. "Come along with us to see old Grimm, if you like."

"No jolly fear—too dangerous," said Lawrence promptly.

And the three chums went on their way through the timber.

Beyond the wood was the Thompson trail, which ran southward from the town, past the borders of Grimm's farm, and far away over the plain towards Kamloops and the distant railway.

It was a dry, sunny day, and the trail was as hard as iron, and thick with dust. The three schoolboys sauntered along the trail, shaded here and there by big trees, and reached the Grimm clearing.

The farmhouse could be seen in the distance, surrounded by wide expanses of well-cultivated land.

The Galician emigrant, for all his crusty temper and heavy hand, was a good farmer, and his orchard was one of the best between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific.

"Here we are!" announced Bob Lawless. "Don't go near the gate. We'll get over the fence. No need to leave our cards on Grimm."

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"Ha, ha! No!"

"There's a rail loose here," said Beauclerc.

"Good!"

Bob Lawless dragged the loose fence-rail a little farther aside, and the three squeezed through.

Keeping carefully out of sight of the farmhouse, they scudded to the orchard, closely planted and thick with fruit.

"Safe as houses!" said Frank Richards, as he stood among the clustering trees. "We shan't be spotted here. Grimm will never know that he has been fined."

"All the better," grinned Bob. "He might come along and complain to Miss Meadows. That would mean trouble. He's complained at the school a dozen times before now, and it always makes Miss Meadows waxy."

"This tree will suit us!" remarked Beauclerc.

"Give me a bunk up!"

Frank Richards was quickly in the apple-tree.

Bob Lawless followed, with a hand from Frank above.

"You stand there and catch them, Beau."

"Right-ho!"

There was the sudden bark of a dog through the trees, and Bob Lawless uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"By gum! We're spotted!"

There was a heavy tread under the trees. A dog frisked into sight, barking—and he was followed by a heavily-built man, with a heavy, stolid, bearded face. His eyes a pale blue in colour, glinted at the sight of Beauclerc. He did not see the other two for the moment.

"Ach! So I catch you vunce more!" he shouted. It was evident that the Galician had not quite mastered the language of the country. "I catch you vunce more in my orchard, you rasgal!"

"Hop it, Cherub!" shouted Bob Lawless.

Beauclerc made a jump for the tree. Bob's hand caught him above, and he was dragged into the lower branches.

It was the only way of escape. Mr. Grimm's cattlewhip was lashing behind him, and the thong curled round the trunk with a loud crash as Beauclerc eluded it.

The fruit-farmer stood under the tree, glaring up at the three schoolboys in the branches.

"Ach! Tree of you!" he exclaimed.

"Gum down!"

"Catch us!" said Bob.

"Vill you gum down?" roared Mr. Grimm.

"I guess not."

"Young rasgals!"

"Rats!"

Mr. Grimm cracked the whip with savage energy. But the schoolboys, perched on the thick boughs above his head, were out of reach, and they grinned down at him.

They were cornered, but they were not caught.

"Treed, and no mistake," murmured Bob Lawless. "That old Injun means business. I don't want to get near that whip."

"Same here," said Frank ruefully. "I rather wish you hadn't thought of fining him, Bob."

"Can't be helped now."

"Vill you gum down, you rasgals?"

"Not just yet," said Bob cheerfully.

"Go away and come back in an hour or so!"

"Ach! I skin you alive!"

"Go hon!"

"If you come not down, I gum up after you!" roared the Galician.

"Do!" grinned Bob.

"I tink you belong to te school, isn't it?" snorted Mr. Grimm. "I goes to speak to Miss Meadows apout tis."

"What school?" asked Bob innocently.

"Ach! I gum and fetches you."

"Go ahead!"

Mr. Grimm strode towards the trunk, as if with the intention of climbing. Bob Lawless loosened one leg from the branch he was standing on, with the evident purpose of greeting the farmer with his boot. Mr. Grimm changed his mind.

"Frans!" he roared.

"Hallo!"

"Bring der ladder here."

"I'm coming."

A farmhand came through the trees with the ladder used in picking fruit. Mr. Grimm took it from him, and set it up against a low bough of the tree.

The farmhand grinned, and went back to his work. But Mr. Grimm was not grinning; he was breathing fury.

"Now you looks out, I tink," he exclaimed.

Bob Lawless whistled softly.

"He's coming up, you chaps," he murmured. "I don't like the idea of that whip at close quarters."

Mr. Grimm mounted the ladder, his eyes on the schoolboys above, and the heavy whip grasped in his gaarled right hand.

Frank Richards, swinging to a higher bough with his hands, freed his feet, and kicked at the ladder.

Slash!

The whip curled round his legs, and he gave a yell of pain. But his boots crashed on the ladder and sent it flying.

"Ach! Ach! Oh!"

Mr. Grimm jumped clear just in time, and landed on the ground, and sat down heavily. The ladder crashed over.

"Hurrah!" roared the trio above.

"Ha, ha! Well kicked!" shouted Beauclerc.

"Ach!"

"Try it again!" yelled Bob Lawless.

But Mr. Grimm did not try it again; he had had enough of that. He sat on the ground, gasping for breath, and pouring out a stream of remarks in his native language which the chums could not understand.

Perhaps it was just as well for their youthful ears that they could not.

Running for It!

MR. GRIMM picked himself up at last, snorting.

He did not set up the ladder again, and did not attempt to climb the tree. He had had enough of that.

He sat on a log a few yards away, placed his whip across his knees, and watched the apple-tree with a grim expression, a good deal like a bulldog.

After a few minutes, he took out a pipe, and began to smoke. Evidently the farmer had settled down to watch.

Frank Richards and his comrades exchanged looks of dismay.

They were safe where they were—so long as they could stay there. But they could not stay there indefinitely. Frank and Bob had a long ride home before them, and Beauclerc's home was at a distance.

There would be anxiety at home if they did not turn up by dark.

And Mr. Grimm was evidently prepared to sit there all the evening rather than allow his victims to escape.

"My hat!" said Frank Richards, when half an hour had passed. "How long is the beast going to watch us?"

Bob Lawless groaned dismally. "He's settled down to it, I guess. He knows we can't stay here all night." Mr. Grimm refilled his pipe, relighted it, and went on blowing out clouds of smoke.

He grinned sourly once or twice as he glanced up at the treed schoolboys.

He had only to wait, and he was sure of his victims.

And evidently he was prepared to wait till they fell into his hands.

A plump, ruddy-faced woman, evidently Mrs. Grimm, came through the trees and spoke to the farmer.

"You know where little Josef is?" she asked.

Mr. Grimm shook his head.

"He has wandered away, Karl." Mrs. Grimm glanced up at the treed trio. "Why do you wait here?"

"The poys, they take mine apples," said Mr. Grimm. "I have zis retty for zem." He tapped the big whip on his knees.

"But little Josef, he—"

"He will gum back. It is no matter! I stay here!"

Mrs. Grimm, with a compassionate glance at the schoolboys, went back to the farmhouse.

Mr. Grimm again refilled his pipe. He was surrounded by a haze of tobacco-smoke as he sat watching, with the grim patience of a lynx.

"Oh crumbs!" said Frank Richards at last. "We shall have to make a break somehow. The sun's going!"

"We can't stay here all night," said Bob, with a nod. "We shall have to chance it and run. Get some apples—"

"Oh, bother the apples!"

"Ammunition, I mean!"

"Oh, good!"

The three speedily gathered in a dozen big apples. Mr. Grimm watched them, and his eyes glittered.

He could not save his apples, but he could visit condign punishment on the raiders, as soon as they came within reach. And he waited.

But the schoolboys were not gathering the apples to eat.

"Fire!" shouted Bob suddenly.

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!

"Ach! Ah! Oh!" yelled Mr. Grimm.

The first apple knocked his big Stetson hat off, the second caught him under his bearded chin, and the third landed on his chest.

The farmer rolled back over the log,

and for a moment only his big, heavy boots could be seen.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from the tree.

"Ach!"

The farmer scrambled up, red with rage, and brandishing his whip at the schoolboys above.

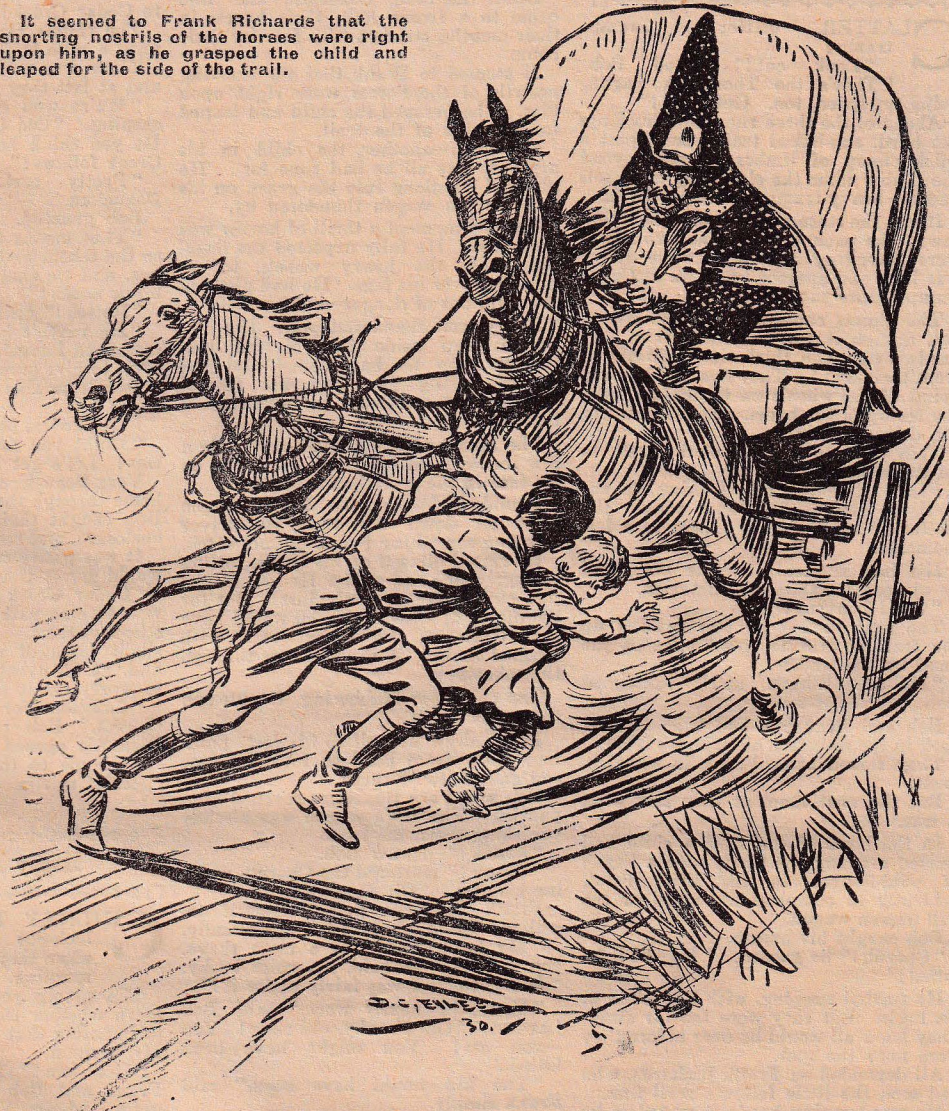
"Ach! I skin you alive!" he roared.

"Oh! Ah! Ach!"

Biff! Biff! Biff! Biff!

Apples, well aimed from above, fairly rained on the farmer.

It seemed to Frank Richards that the snorting nostrils of the horses were right upon him, as he grasped the child and leaped for the side of the trail.



He dodged them frantically; but as fast as he dodged one another caught him and he fairly danced.

"Go it!" roared Bob.

"Ha ha, ha!"

"Oh, you rascals! Oh, you peasts! I skins you alive!" yelled the unhappy Mr. Grimm, as he dodged.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fusillade was too hot for Mr. Grimm, obstinate as he was. He beat a retreat through the trees, out of range, and stopped when the whizzing apples fell short. There he took up his stand again, grasping his whip, and breathing wrath.

"Now's our chance," murmured Bob.

"We can run faster than that old hobo!"

Frank nodded.

"We've got to race him to the fence," he said. "If he catches us, we've got to tackle him, that's all."

"Good!"

There was a last whizzing of apples, keeping the furious farmer at a good distance, and then the three schoolboys suddenly dropped from the branches to the ground.

They were out of the orchard now, and running for the fence on the trail.

Tramp, tramp, tramp came the heavy footsteps behind them.

But the schoolboys had a start, and they were fleet of foot. They reached

THE POPULAR—No. 606.

the fence a dozen yards ahead of the farmer.

Bob plunged through the gap where the loose rail was pulled aside, and the others followed in a hurry.

Frank Richards & Co. did not delay. They ran their hardest up the trail, and the dusty road fairly flew under their feet.

At the Risk of His Life.

CLATTER, clatter! Tramp, tramp!

"Look out!" panted Bob. "That's the Thompson wagon, going top speed, too. Get aside!"

Ahead of the three running schoolboys the hard, sun-baked trail wound past a thick clump of timber. From beyond the timber came the clattering of wheels and the heavy tramp of dashing hoofs.

It was the store-wagon from Thompson town; the pace at which the two horses were travelling showed that the driver was late, and anxious to get in at Cedar Camp before sundown.

The chums could not see the wagon yet, though it was not more than fifty yards, away, the thick timber hiding it from their sight. They heard the heavy grind of the wheels on the baked mud, the tramp of the hoofs, and the crack of the driver's whip.

They drew to the side of the trail, to let the wagon pass.

Frank Richards was looking up the trail, at the bend round which the clattering horses would appear in a few moments.

His face suddenly became pale, and he uttered a startled exclamation.

"Good heavens!"

The next instant he was dashing up the trail at frantic speed towards the bend by the timber.

"Hallo! What's up?" exclaimed Bob.

Bob and Beauclerc had been looking back in the direction of Grimm's farm.

They stared after Frank in astonishment.

But the next moment they saw what it was.

In the bend of the trail a child had started crossing the road, with a bunch of wild-flowers in his little hand, evidently in complete disregard of the still unseen wagon.

Bob caught his breath. "Cherub!" he gasped. "He—he'll be killed!"

He started running, with Beauclerc at his heels. But they were too far away. They knew all would be over before they were near the spot.

All depended on Frank Richards, who had seen the little fellow's peril first.

He was running hard—the hardest he had ever run.

The wagon had not yet reached the bend; it was still out of sight. It would come sweeping round the timber-clump, with two horses at a gallop, and the heavy wagon thundering behind, and the child was in the centre of the trail. The driver could not see him till it was too late.

Could Frank reach him in time?

It seemed leagues to reach him, though it was only fifty yards. The schoolboy fairly flew over the rough ground.

He caught his foot in a mud-rut and stumbled. He ran on again blindly, furiously.

THE POPULAR—No. 606.

The little boy—he was not more than seven—had seen him, and was standing looking at him with wide-open blue eyes, his little back to the oncoming wagon from Thompson.

Could he reach him?

It passed like a flash now. Frank, with a final bound, reached the startled child and grasped him by the arm.

Round the bend of the trail swept the wagon, with its two powerful horses crashing up the dusty road.

It was fairly upon Frank as he grasped the child.

Down the road, Beauclerc and Bob came to a frozen halt, their hearts in their mouths, stricken with fear for their chum.

It seemed to Frank that the snorting nostrils of the horses were right upon him, as he grasped the child and leaped for the side of the trail.

One leap—another, the child in his arms—it was all he had time for. He plunged headlong into the grass, on his face, as the wagon thundered by.

For one moment a thrill of horror was upon him. He fully expected the dashing hoofs, the heavy wheels, to go grinding over his legs. He had plunged the child out of danger—but himself?

The wagon thundered past. His desperate leap aside had carried him farther than he had hoped, and the driver, seeing him and his fearful danger, had succeeded in swerving a little away.

The heavy wheels ground past, only a few inches from his boots, as he lay on his face in the grass beside the trail.

Thunder, thunder, the heavy wagon went on down the trail, the driver shouting something Frank did not catch.

He raised himself on his knees, feeling strangely sick and giddy. He had leaped just out of danger—only just! But for the mercy of Providence, he would have lain there on the dusty trail, with crushed limbs! A shudder ran through the schoolboy.

The child was blubbering, frightened, though not hurt.

Frank drew himself to his feet, panting, dusty from head to foot, his face red and white by turns.

Bob and Vere Beauclerc reached him, panting. The store wagon was already vanishing down the road.

"Frank!" panted Bob.

"Frank!" muttered the Cherub, pressing his arm. "Oh, Franky!"

Frank Richards pulled himself together. He laughed a little hysterically.

"My hat! That was a close shave, you fellows!" he said, his voice husky. "I—I thought I was fairly under it!"

"You jolly nearly were," said Bob Lawless. "Oh, Franky, old chap! You—you ass! You might have been killed!"

"The kid would have been," said Frank simply.

"I guess so. The kid oughtn't to be here, out on the trail, alone!" growled Bob. "Hallo! Dry up, young'un—nothing to howl about now!"

The kid was howling loudly, however. The fall in the grass, as Frank Richards pitched him out of danger, had shaken him, and he was frightened and bumped.

"Hallo, look out!" exclaimed Beauclerc.

He pointed down the road.

Within a dozen yards of them, Mr. Grimm was charging up the trail at full speed. The chums had forgotten the farmer for a moment.

"Vamoose!" said Bob.

"But the kid——" said Frank, hesitating.

Bob grabbed his arm.

"Come on, you duffer! The kid's all right now. Do you want to be skinned?"

"Stop!" bawled Grimm.

"Rats!"

The three schoolboys ran for it, and fairly bolted. Mr. Grimm came charging on like a bull; but Frank, looking back as they rounded the timber clump, saw that the farmer had stopped where the child was standing.

"All serene!" said Bob. "Old Grimm will see to the kid. He must belong to the place, I should think—there's no other homestead near here. Put it on—we don't want to be trailed to Cedar Creek!"

The chums ran on, and did not stop until a mile had been covered.

There was no sign of further pursuit, and at last they dropped into a walk.

"We're well out of that!" said Bob gasping. "Old Grimm meant business. Do you think he knew we were Cedar Creek fellows?"

"Pretty certain to guess," said Beauclerc.

Bob grunted.

"That means that he will drive over to the school and complain in the morning, and we shall be in Miss Meadows' black books!"

"Rotten!" growled Frank.

"He mayn't be able to identify us," remarked Beauclerc. "We're not called upon to give ourselves away. I dare say he won't be able to pick us out of thirty chaps."

Bob Lawless brightened up.

"Right you are! Not a word about this! Let's get home!"

Vere Beauclerc left his chums, to walk home through the wood, and Frank and Bob caught their ponies in the school enclosure, and rode home to the ranch.

It was pretty certain that Mr. Grimm would guess that the raiders belonged to Cedar Creek School, and that he would come with a complaint to the schoolmistress. But the chums had a slight hope of escaping identification, and, at all events, they did not intend to worry about the morrow.

"Sufficient for the day was the evil thereof," Bob remarked; and Frank Richards agreed with him. And they rode home to the Lawless Ranch in cheerful spirits.

Happy Anticipations.

CHUNKY TODGERS was on the look-out for Frank and Bob when they arrived at school next morning.

The plump youth was very keen to learn whether the chums had succeeded in imposing that "fine" upon the crusty Mr. Grimm.

"Got 'em?" he asked eagerly, as Frank and Bob came in at the school gates, where Vere Beauclerc joined them.

"Got what, fatty?"

"Eh? The apples, of course!"

"Nix!"

"Oh, I say!" murmured Chunky.

"Didn't you go?"

"I guess we did, fathead, and I guess we had a row with old Grimm," said Bob. "And I guess we'd better say nothing about it, as we've got to keep it dark, see? You'll have to do without your apples, and I hope we shall be able to do without a row with Miss Meadows."

The school bell rang and the Cedar Creek fellows went into the big school-room.

The chums took their places as usual in Miss Meadows' class.

That morning they were doing "History—British and Canadian," as it was called in the school curriculum. But it is safe to say that three in the class, at least, were thinking more of Farmer Grimm, and his expected visit, than of "History—British and Canadian."

It was not long before there was a sound of wheels without. Black Sam put his head in at the school-room door.

"Mass' Grimm want to speak to missy!" Blake Sam was saying, and Miss Meadows signed to him to admit the unexpected caller.

There was a heavy tread, and the big farmer came striding into the school-room. All eyes were upon him.

Miss Meadows made him a curt bow, and eyed him with cold questioning. She was a little tired of Mr. Grimm's complaints, as a matter of fact.

But, oddly enough, the farmer did not look quite so crusty as usual.

"Well, sir"—Miss Meadows voice was cold and clear—"I presume that you are aware that you are interrupting lessons?"

"Ach! Yes."
"Will you kindly state your business briefly?" said Miss Meadows coldly.

"Ach! Yes."
Mr. Grimm deposited his heavy bag on the plank floor, removed his Stetson hat, and puffed and blew a little.

"Ach! I haf come, Miss Mettows, to see tree poyt tat gum to mine farm last efening to take te apples from mine orchard."

Miss Meadows compressed her lips a little.

"Three boys of this school, Mr. Grimm?"

"Ach! Yes."
"You are sure?"
"Ach! I tink so, Miss Mettows."
"Very well. Kindly point out the three boys if they are here."

"Ferry goot, Miss Mettows."
The big farmer came along the class, his eyes glinting at them.

"Now for the merry ordeal!" whispered Frank Richards. "Sit tight!"

And the chums sat tight, and hoped for the best.

But it was as much as they could do to keep up their expressions of simple innocence, when Mr. Grimm halted before the three, and raised a thick, stubby finger to point at them.

"Ach! I have found dem!"
"Richards, Lawless, Beauclerc! Stand out before the class!" said Miss Meadows.

And the three stepped out grimly.

Meadows severely. "I am sorry, Mr. Grimm, that this has happened, and the boys will, of course, be punished."

"Ach! Bunished, Miss Mettows?"
"Yes, certainly."

"Ach! But it is not tat I vish dose poyt to be punished tat I haf come to see you dis morning, isn't it?" exclaimed Mr. Grimm.

Miss Meadows looked at the farmer in astonishment.

"Dose tree poyt gum into mine orchard, and I goes after dem!" explained Mr. Grimm. "I chases dem on te trail mit mine big whip, I tink, and den"—the farmer's voice trembled a little—"den comes tat big wagon from Thompson, mit hosses going full speed, and mine leedle poy Josef is in der trail!"

"I stops wiz me dead, tinkng tat Josef he is killed! Miss Mettows, mine leedle poy he was right in front of tat wagon. Ach!"

"His voice broke."
"My hat!" murmured Frank.

The child whose life he had saved on the Thompson trail was "little Josef," the son of the Galician fruit farmer. That was why Mr. Grimm had come to Cedar Creek that morning.

Miss Meadows was listening with great interest now.

"I was too far away to help," resumed Mr. Grimm. "But I sees it all, Miss Mettows. Vun of dose poyt—tat poy"—he pointed to Frank Richards—"tat poy—he run in front of te hosses, and he save leedle Josef, and I tink for a minute they are both killed. Ach! But when te wagon pass, I see it is all right. I come up ferry fast, but dose poyt tink I am still after dem mit mine whip, and dey vamoose. So dis morning I drive in mine cart to find zem."

"I understand," said Miss Meadows softly.

"I forgives dem mit all mine heart!" said Mr. Grimm. "If they shall want some apples, mine orchard he is open to zem always. Mine leedle Josef, I lose him if tey have not gum to take mine apples. And dis poy—gif me your hand, mine poy!"

He grasped Frank Richards' hand, and wrung it with a grip that nearly made Frank yell. "Mine poy, I neffer forget. I zank you from mine heart tat you have risk your life to safe mine leedle Josef!"

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Frank.
"And here," continued Mr. Grimm, opening the big bag on the floor—"here is plenty apples vich I have brought for you, mine poy. They are a present from Karl Grimm."

And Mr. Grimm wrung Frank Richards' hand again, and bowed to Miss Meadows, and tramped out of the school-room.

"Richards"—Miss Meadows' voice was very soft—"you appear to have performed a very brave action, my boy."

Frank crimsoned.
"I—I—I yanked the kid out of the way, ma'am!" he stammered. "It was nothing."

"It was a great deal to the child and his father, Richards. You may go back to your places, my boys."

Which was very agreeable to the three.

Chunky Todgers stood up in his place, his fat face beaming. The sight of the big bag of apples had brought joy to Chunky's heart.

"Three cheers for Frank Richards!" he shouted.

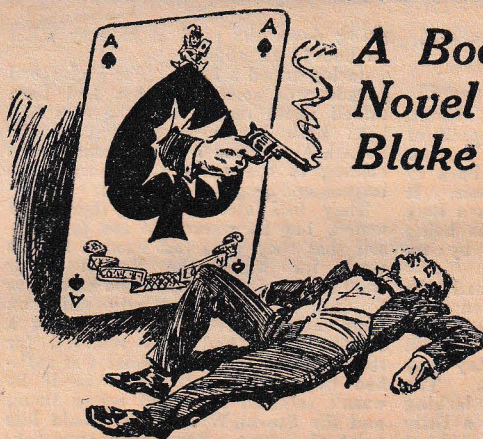
And Cedar Creek gave them with a will.

THE END.

(Another stunning yarn of the Chums of Cedar Creek next week, boys!)

◆◆◆◆◆
A Slight Surprise.
◆◆◆◆◆

MR. GRIMM eyed the three schoolboys, and stroked his big beard. He was quite sure of the three.
"Ach! Dey are the tree!" he declared. "Dey come to mine orchard to take mine apples, and dey pelt me from mine own tree, isn't it?"
"Is that the case, Lawless?"
"Ahem!" murmured Bob.
"You were in Mr. Grimm's orchard?" asked Miss Meadows.
"Ye-e-es."
"You went there to take his apples?"
"Yes, because—"
"Never mind why. You did so?"
"Well, yes."
"And you pelted Mr. Grimm with his own fruit?"
"Ahem! Yes."
"Mr. Grimm is quite right in complaining, in that case," said Miss



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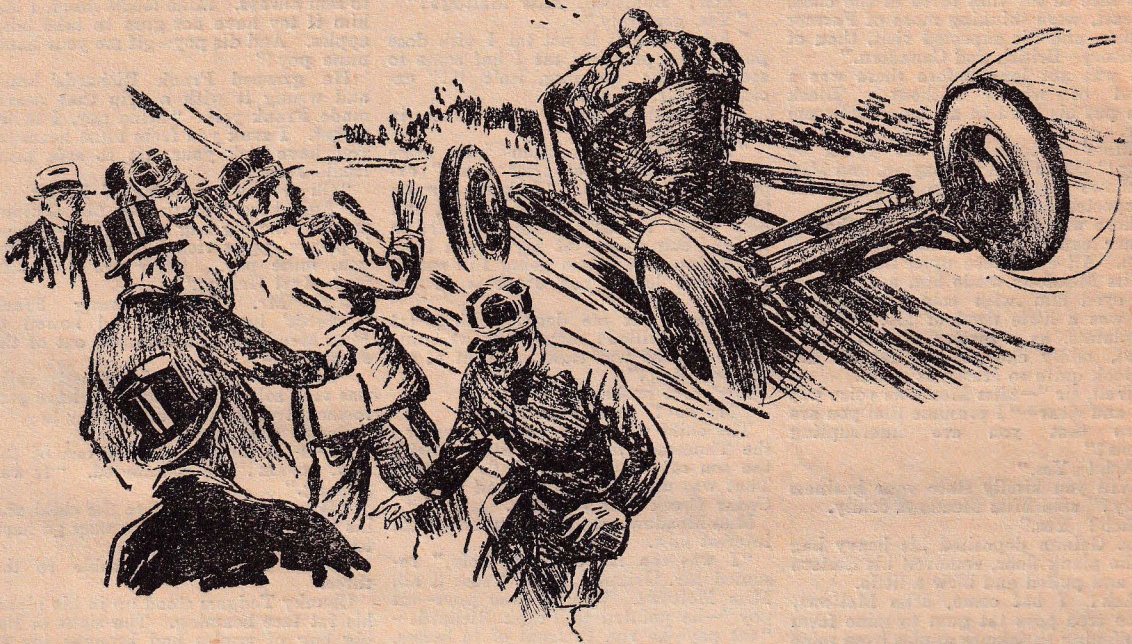
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SOME KID—SKID KID!

By ALFRED EDGAR.

Spick and Span.

WITH a flick of the duster, Jack King wiped a speck of grit off the polished engine cover, and then stood back to admire the gleaming new chassis. It was one of twenty drawn up in a long line in the shed, and each was being given a last careful polish by its driver.

Never in all its history had the Steven-Wills Motor Works seen anything quite like this. Each of those chassis had been specially built to fulfil an important contract, and to-day they had to pass their final tests. The chassis were really motor-cars, lacking only their bodies, and to each a little bucket seat had been clamped behind the steering-wheel.

Jack's eyes glistened as he glanced down the long line. Every machine had received very special attention in the way of finish, and all polishable parts had been well and truly polished. Each of the twenty drivers wore clean, white overalls, and each had a white racing-type cap strapped on his head.

The concrete floor of the shed had been cleaned down, and reddish-coloured sand had been sprinkled evenly over the dull, grey surface. Even the tyres of the chassis had received a coating of black tyre-paint, and not a single speck of mud or dirt showed anywhere.

"Look, posh, don't they?" Sid Manners straightened up from his own machine as he glanced across to Jack. "It'll be a fine sight to see 'em all

going down the road at seventy miles an hour!" he added.

Jack grinned a little. The high-speed parade was something that had been talked about for days. The cars had been built for a department of the French Army, and a French official was coming to the works that morning to inspect and pass the machines.

They had already been thoroughly tested, but he wanted to see for himself that they were fast enough for the work for which the French Army wanted them. Therefore, the cars were to dash by him at seventy miles an hour, and a stretch of road across a near-by heath had been reserved for the final test. If the official was satisfied he would accept the cars—if he wasn't satisfied he would refuse them, and the Steven-Wills works would lose a lot of money. Something approaching a sum of £20,000 was involved; that was why so much trouble was being taken.

Jack was broad across the shoulders, and he had keen-looking grey eyes. He had got into the Steven-Wills Motor Works because he liked cars and because he didn't want to accept a stool in his father's office. Jack had made good already, and he had progressed from odd boy in the general repair shop to a position in the Steven-Wills Racing Shed.

Like his chum, Sid, he had come out of the shed to-day in order to drive one of the chassis in the parade. Sid Manners was a lean, cheerful boy, who honestly believed that, some day, Jack was going to prove the finest racing-car driver that ever trod on an accelerator pedal.

He had good reason for thinking so,

because Jack had recently run a car in a race at Brooklands, and, moreover, had won the event.

"If the old Froggie ain't pleased with this little lot, then I hope he gets indigestion in his carburetter!" said Sid, as he tucked his duster in a pocket of his overall. He added: "I noticed Moran has got somebody to rub his chassis down for him; he's too proud to do a job like that, I s'pose?"

He nodded to where pimply-faced Ben Moran stood at the head of the line. Moran was the head tester in the works—a swanking, bullying fellow, who had a grudge against Jack and Sid. He hated Jack still more since he had won the Brooklands race.

Moran was standing apart, straightening his overalls, while a mechanic finished off his machine, and they saw a sudden, ingratiating smile light up his face as a grim-looking man stepped into the shed. The new-comer was Foreman Turner, who was in charge of the racing-cars, and was responsible for the performance of these new chassis.

He paused by Moran's machine, and inspected it swiftly. The chums saw him turn to the head tester and speak quickly and curtly. Moran jumped to correct some fault that had been found, then the foreman moved on along the line, looking at each machine until he came to Sid's.

"Your outfit's all right," he said, and a faint smile curved his lips. "But why you can't keep oil off your face I don't know!" And he pointed to a black smear down Sid's cheek. "Come here!"

The foreman wiped the oil away, then moved on to Jack. He walked

round the machine, and stopped beside the boy.

"Very nice job!" he said. "Moran will lead the parade, but I want you to take second place. It'll be best if you—Mornin', sir!"

He suddenly broke off as he turned round. Mr. Lucas, the general manager, had entered. He wore a silk hat and morning dress, and his iron-hard face wore a worried look.

"Mornin', Turner! Is everything all right? I shall be mighty glad when the whole thing is over! If we don't please this Frenchman he's got the power to turn all the cars down—and he'll do it, too!"

"It must be a funny sort of contract, sir," said the foreman.

"It is, Turner. Those cars are for the French Army, and they really ought to have French-made machines. But ours were better, and they got selected. They've passed the most stringent test, but they must receive the approval of Monsieur Gaubert. If he says he doesn't like the shape of the radiator cap, for instance, he can turn the whole lot down!"

The two moved on. Jack glanced at Sid, but neither said anything. Presently Mr. Lucas went out to the front of the shed.

"Now, you fellows, you all know exactly what you're to do, I think. After Monsieur Gaubert has inspected the chassis in here you'll go out on to the heath. You're to drive past him at intervals of about thirty yards, each car to pass him at seventy miles an hour. And for Heaven's sake drive carefully, because the road is muddy and wet! If one man gets into a skid it may spoil everything. It's—"

He stopped as a hoarse voice suddenly hissed from the doorway:

"Mr. Lucas—he's here!"

The Test Run!

A GESTURE from Foreman Turner sent every driver to the side of his machine, standing level with the steering-wheel. Mr. Lucas hurried to the door; and Jack saw him remove his silk hat with a sweeping gesture as the French official entered the shed.

"Stone me, look at 'im!" gasped Sid beneath his breath, as Monsieur Gaubert appeared, and Jack's own eyes widened.

He had expected this important Minister of the French Army to be a tall, imposing, soldierly man. He wasn't. He was a very short, very fat fellow, who strutted in like a fiery little bantam.

He wore a uniform of horizon-blue, and a cap, the peak of which was heavy with golden laurel leaves. There were massive epaulettes on his shoulders, and his cuffs were weighted with braid. From the polished belt at his waist hung a sword, the tip of the scabbard clanking against the concrete with every step.

Behind him came several men in the uniform of the French Army, all of them big, fine men, who moved with a martial air. With them, hats in hand, appeared important members of the Steven-Wills Works.

Monsieur Gaubert stalked around each chassis in turn, coming down the line, and finally pausing in front of Jack.

"You built heem yourself—cleavaire boy!" he observed. "I offair my felicitations!"

He smiled as he spoke; and Jack was surprised to find that he had very kindly, twinkling, dark eyes. Oddly enough, he reminded Jack of a little terrier that wanted to be friendly, and it was plain that he didn't know much about cars if he thought Jack had built the chassis by himself.

"Exceedin' clevaire!" Monsieur Gaubert added. "Most—most decent, clean—parfait!"

And he passed on.

In a minute or so he reached the end of the line, then left the shed with those who had followed him in. Immediately the tension in the building relaxed.

"Took a likin' to you!" Sid grinned across to Jack. "Funny little bloke, wasn't he? Looked like he was scared stiff! I bet he knows as much about cars as I do about zoology!"

"Get 'em out now, lads! Start 'em up!" Foreman Turner's voice boomed through the shed.

As he started his machine, Moran turned in his bucket seat and glared at Jack.

"Fancy crawlin' to a silly old fool like that Frenchy!" he snarled in his unpleasant way. "You ought to be ashamed o' yerself!"

Jack grinned cheerfully. He guessed that Moran was upset because the Frenchman hadn't taken any notice of him. The head tester went on:

"Wait till we get on the speed parade—I'll show him a bit of real drivin'!"

A mile or so out on the heath, Monsieur Gaubert had taken up his position with his companions, just beside the road. Planks had been laid for them to stand on and keep clear of the mud; behind them stood a phalanx of gleaming, polished limousines in which the party had arrived.

The chassis drove past at a sedate speed; then, about a mile and a half beyond, they turned in a big curve and stopped, ready to go forward for the test run.

"Seventy miles an hour, Moran!" Foreman Turner called. "Are you all ready?"

He moved out to the front, with a flag in his hand, to start them off.

"Keep thirty yards behind Moran!" Jack reminded himself, as he slipped into gear. He guessed that it would be a very impressive thing to see the long line of cars go by at seventy miles an hour.

He rather wished he was watching instead of taking part.

The flag dropped suddenly.

With a roar Moran shot off, Jack after him. The head tester revved his engine to its limit before he changed gear. There wasn't any need to do that, because they had plenty of room in which to get up speed.

Jack lost a little distance, and they were still half a mile away from the group when he found that Moran was leaving him at not far short of eighty miles an hour. Jack gave his engine full throttle, because it would look bad if Moran got away from him.

At eighty miles an hour they roared down.

Back of Jack came the rest of the line—a long trail of thundering, gleaming machines, each with its white-clad, white-capped driver, intent behind the wheel.

Jack saw the little figure of Monsieur Gaubert standing out in front of the

rest, right at the edge of the planks. He moved as though he would have stepped back when Moran smashed towards him; but he remembered his dignity and stopped where he was; it wouldn't do to show that he was a little scared of the roaring monsters.

They were twenty yards from the group when, from the rear wheels of Moran's machine there suddenly sprayed a fount of mud as he hit a pothole on the road. The car bumped out of it, slithering a little to one side.

The fraction of a second later, and the hurtling machine was in an eighty-miles-an-hour skid!

It went almost broadside on, rear wheels slithering off the road into the soft earth before the planks.

They flung out a solid slash of slimy black mud, plastering the Frenchman and those behind him from head to foot as Moran snatched the car straight, got back to the road, and hurtled on.

As Jack went steadily by, he saw Monsieur Gaubert gouging mud out of his eyes with one hand, while he all but danced with sudden rage as he shook his fist after Moran and roared angrily at the machines still storming past him!

Jack's Brain-wave.

"I THINK you've just about done it!"

Foreman Turner was white as he addressed Moran, where the men stood by the shed at the works. All the chassis had been brought in, and now the drivers were standing in a group listening.

"The old fool shouldn't ha' stood so near with all that mud about!" Moran grunted. "I couldn't 'elp the skid, could I?"

"Seventy you were told to do, but you did eighty!" the foreman exclaimed. "You'll get—"

"Moran!" Mr. Lucas, the general manager, suddenly appeared. His clothes were splashed with mud, and there was a great blob of it on his silk hat. "Moran, you'll be glad to know that Monsieur Gaubert absolutely refuses to take delivery of these cars under any circumstances—thanks to what you've done. I'll deal with you later!"

"I couldn't 'elp it, sir!" Moran gasped. "I didn't mean it—"

But the general manager had walked away, and as he went Jack saw that he was just as white as the foreman.

"Gosh!" gasped Sid. "There won't half be a row over this! Moran is a fool! He was trying to show us how to drive, I s'pose, by the way he started off. He might ha' known he was liable to skid in the mud, especially after being warned about it!"

Jack and Sid remained standing there. Some of the drivers drifted off. Moran went into the shed, and soon the two were standing alone, both realising that the Steven-Wills Works had lost a large sum of money through Moran's effort to swank.

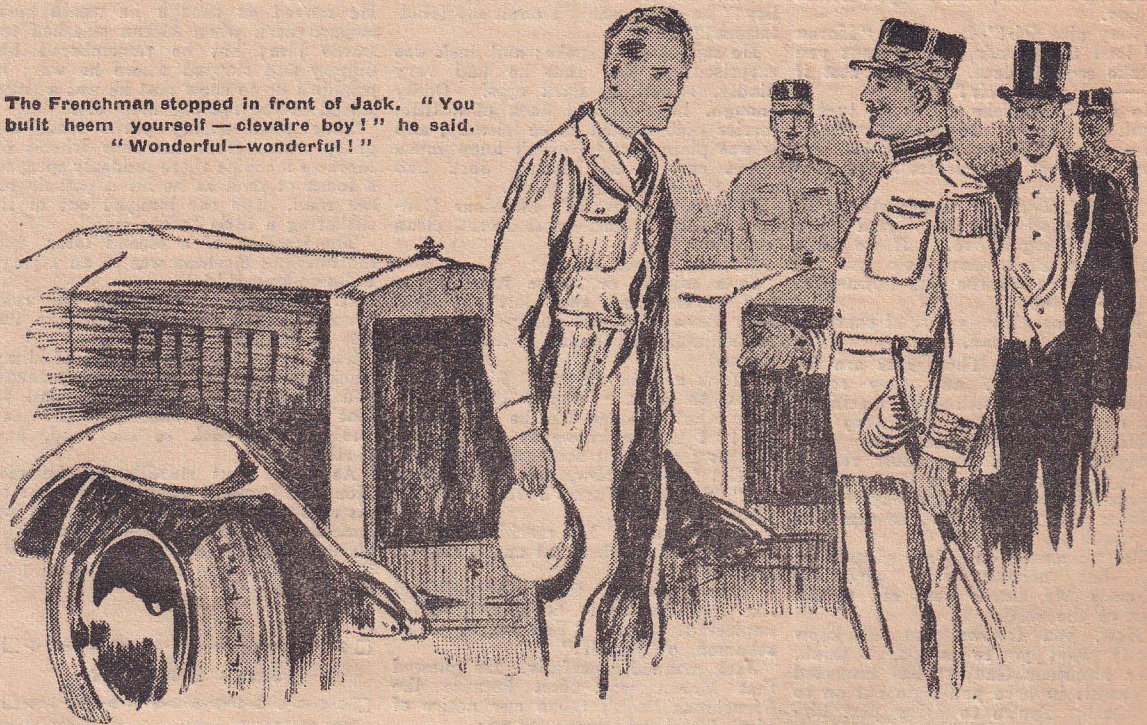
It was while the two were standing there that a telegraph messenger came round the corner of the shed.

"Got anybody named Gaubert round here?" he asked. "Wire for him. They told me at the gate to find Mr. Lucas. Said he'd come up this way."

"Gaubert?" asked Frank.

THE POPULAR—No. 606.

The Frenchman stopped in front of Jack. "You built heem yourself—clevere boy!" he said. "Wonderful—wonderful!"



"Yes. It's urgent, too!" the boy answered. "Missis Gaubert's been hurt in an accident in London, and he's got to go at once. They told me that at the office, so's I wouldn't hang about on the way."

"Accident!"

Jack stared at him. The wire could only be for the French Army official.

An idea came to Jack like a flash of light. Monsieur Gaubert would want to get to London quickly. Suppose they took a fast car and found him, delivered the telegram, and then offered to drive him to London. After all, he was a nice old chap, and he was certain to be anxious, and if they did him a good turn he might look a little more kindly on Steven-Wills machines.

"Sid"—Jack grasped his chum's arm, then told him of his sudden idea, while he took the telegram from the boy—"we could use the chassis I've just driven, and there's a sports saloon body back of the shed. We'll get some of the fellows to put it on—it only wants eight bolts to hold it. Never mind about the lighting wires. Monsieur Gaubert will be at his hotel in the town—I know it. Come on! All right, I'll deliver this wire! Leave it to me!" he yelled to the telegraph boy, and went racing into the shed.

Less than fifteen minutes later Jack pulled up outside the hotel in the town with a smart saloon body hastily clamped to the chassis he had driven in the high-speed parade. The other drivers had helped willingly, not because they knew what was afoot, but because they liked Jack.

Jack jumped from the car and raced into the hotel.

"Keep the engine running!" he called to Sid as he went.

Inside the hall he saw Monsieur Gaubert.

THE POPULAR—No. 606.

"Telegram for you, sir!" said Jack. "It's most urgent!"

Monsieur Gaubert slit the envelope, and the expression on his face changed as he read the wire.

"Mon Dieu! Panne a Celeste!" he gasped, and the colour drained slowly from his features. "Il me fait partit tout de suite!"

"I've got a car outside, sir!" Jack stepped forward as he spoke. "I'll guarantee to get you to London as quick as—"

"A car—waiting!" Monsieur Gaubert jumped forward. "Pardonnez-moi, messieurs!"

And he bowed stiffly to the French officers, then scurried behind Jack down to the waiting machine.

Sid opened the rear door as they appeared. He helped the little Frenchman inside, then the two boys dived into the front seats and Jack sent the car away. It went off with a rush and a roar, slid out of the hotel courtyard, and, almost before Monsieur Gaubert was aware of it, the machine was roaring along the road to London.

Jack's teeth were gritted, and he never took his gaze off the road ahead. He never lost a single second, and he drove as though he was a part of the machine he controlled. They ripped into the London traffic, and, by luck, they did not get held up anywhere. Finally, Jack swung the car between big iron gates, and brought it to a stop outside the entrance to the hospital building.

"You wait for me, please!" Monsieur Gaubert called the words as Sid was helping him out of the car. "I thank you ver' much—excusez-moi maintenant!" and he vanished into the hospital.

They waited there for three-quarters of an hour. At the end of that time Monsieur Gaubert reappeared. The colour had come back to his face, and he was smiling as he approached them.

"All right—not bad!" he told them.

"Ze leg, you unnerstan'? Hurt a leetle. They let madame return to ze hotel—ce soir. Comprennez? I am obliged. You are too good, and ze car—good also!"

"It's one of the chassis that you saw this afternoon, sir," said Jack. "We put a body on it, so that we could fetch you when we heard the news."

"Chassis, he in? Not the one zat sprinkle ze mud?" He laughed a little. "I lose my temper for that. But now I feel different. I present my apologies, unnerstan'? That is good. We will have them—all of them!"

Jack's heart jumped a little. He was saying that he'd take the twenty Steven-Wills machines that he had turned down.

"You inform M'sieur Lucas," he said. "Tell heem all right. Now, I thank you again!" And he held out his hand to Jack. "You are true sport—British sport. I say I won't have ze cars, yet you come to help my trouble—tres sport! I see you later; send you some-tings—leetle present!"

He shook hands with both of them again, then returned to the hospital.

Jack drove off, and as the car rolled into the street, Sid said:

"What next? Go back to the works?"

"We'll ring up Lucas first," Jack said, "and let him know that everything's all right. Decent old chap, that Frenchman! Glad he's going to take the cars! Old Turner won't half be pleased!"

Old Turner was pleased, and so was the general manager and everybody else concerned. On the Saturday, Jack and Sid discovered that their pay envelopes were abnormally fat; that was because each contained an extra month's pay, by way of bonus for what they had done.

But each found something better than that when they got home. Small, registered packets awaited them. Each contained a gold watch from Monsieur Gaubert, and on the inside of each watch was inscribed: "Tres sport."

MY PAGE

By **WILLY WANGLE,**
the Schoolboy Wizard



coins—a ha'penny and two farthings. To prolong the joke trot out a bit of patter before you shove the penny where it will be perfectly safe—and then, when you've finished the trick, make a bee-line for safety!

SLICK CONJURING.—*You have to be awfully clever to fish a bunny out of a hat. I'm clever. But even I can't tell you how to do it. But I do know how you can conjure a penny to stick to your forehead. You can get the fellows interested by telling them about the silly dude who, asked why he wore a glass stuck in one optic, said it was because he had a weak eye. A rude listener promptly asked him why he didn't wear a glass hat, because it was pretty obvious that he—the said dude—had a weak head. But to get back to our trick with the penny. Whilst you are blathering, moisten your thumb and rub it gently over the coin. Then dab the damp coin on your forehead and it will stick there easily.*

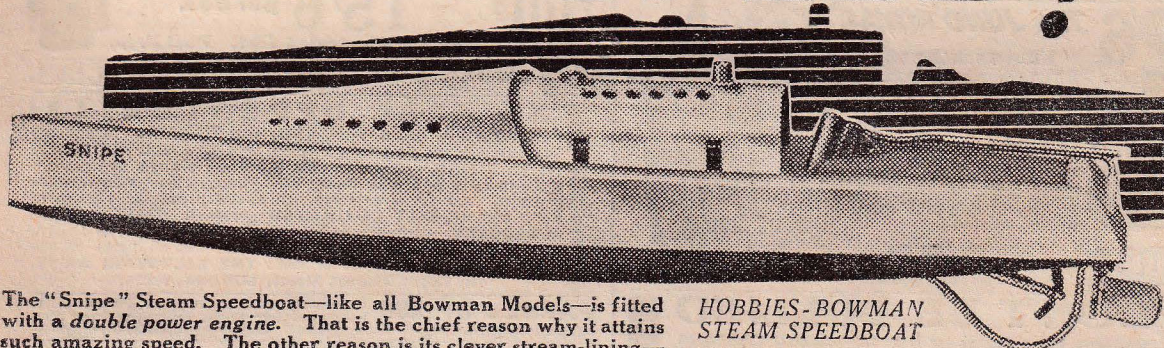
CONGO CONCERTS.—Did you read the other day in the papers about that brisk dust-up in the Belgian Congo? The dusky scrappers were smudged all over with magic paint, sloshed on them by the tribes' respective witch-doctors, guaranteed to protect them against the saw-edged spears of their adversaries. Naturally, one side lost. They got chopped up pretty badly. The survivors went for the witch-doctor and wanted to know how it was his magic had failed. "Well," says he in the native dialect (which sounds like two buzz-saws scrapping), "the other side had stronger magic!" And they had to be content with that. They felt like giving him some of his own magic, but the tribal witch-doctor is an exceedingly big bug in the land. He's Officer Commanding Evil Spirits. He dabbles in poisons, which he brews as callously as other folk brew tea. And if you upset him you perish—usually in a very prolonged and unpleasant manner. I thought at first of telling you how to "do" some of the Congo magic, but on second thoughts I think I'd better not!

THIS'LL RILE 'EM!—Let's switch on to something less bloodthirsty—a nifty match-trick. Lay out on the table three matches so that they form an ordinary triangle. Then shift two of the matches as far as possible—to the other end of the table. Ask Clever Dick to make another triangle, using only one more match. The poor boob won't think of shifting from the single match remaining after you spoiled the original triangle. When he has had enough of trying to do the impossible, take him gently by the hand to where you shifted the two matches, and with the extra match make the required triangle. Got it? Haw-haw!

FUNNY CONJURING.—Strange how each one of my marvellous pars seems to remind me of something else, isn't it? That bit about more of something—to wit, matches—conjures up a conjuring trick that you can bring off without any apparatus whatsoever. You borrow a penny from one of your audience and declare you will make the coin become three—three perfectly good ones, which you will present to the original owner of the penny. Pocket the penny at once, and hand over the three promised

THERE'S HAIR.—Young Billy Green down our way belies his name, for he's about as green as a tin of blacking—always got the right retort. For some reason or other he'll never have his hair cut until it's drooping in more or less graceful tufts over his ears and coat collar. He plucked up courage the other day and had it mown drastically—nearly shaved off. "Good lor!" gasped Sammy Seroggins, when he saw Billy's crop. "Had your hair cut?" "Course I haven't!" was the prompt retort. "Had my ears lowered an inch!"

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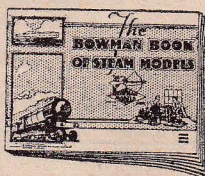
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THE HIDDEN CANYON!

(Continued from page 6.)

Missouri came tramping into the cavern. The canyon was deep in shadow now, and the interior of the cavern was blackness itself. But the burly rustler strode on like one who knew the way well. His heavy boots clumped noisily on the rocky floor, and he did not hear the faintest sound as the Rio Kid followed him through the cavern.

The burly ruffian reached the end of the cavern, where the fissure led out into the arroyo. There he stopped, and stared about him in the deep gloom.

"Say, Sandy!" he called out. "You all-fired geek, you gone to sleep, and left the rock open, you bonehead. Say—Thunder!"

He broke off, gasping, as a hand was gripped on the back of his neck, and the muzzle of a revolver pressed to his side.

"Quiet!" whispered the Rio Kid. "Dog-gone my cats!" gasped Missouri. "If that's you fooling, Sandy—"

"I guess it ain't Sandy," murmured the Kid. "It's the sheriff of Plug Hat, you gink, and if you touch a gun or give a yalp, you get yours!"

"Carry me home to die!" gasped Missouri.

"Keep your mouth shut, you gink!" The muzzle of the Colt, grinding into the rustler's ribs, emphasised the order. Missouri made no movement. The Kid heard him gasping.

"Say, you win, sheriff!" he muttered. "Dog-gone my cats—"

"That's the lot!" said the Kid. And the rustler was silent. Quietly, deftly, the Kid relieved him of his gun and jerked off his greasy neck-scarf.

"Put your paws together—here!" The Kid's voice came from the gloom. "You want to act jest like a pet lamb, feller, or you go over the range so quick it will make your head swim."

In a few minutes Missouri was bound and gagged. From the darkness, the eyes of Sandy Tutt were gleaming up like a cat's.

The Kid chuckled softly. The rustlers, he figured, if they heeded that Sandy Tutt did not come to the locked canyon, would naturally reckon that he was remaining with Missouri. Anyhow, he had to take the chance. It was for the Kid now to light out, burn the wind for Plug Hat, and get back with the posse.

Likely enough he would find the rock door still open when he came; but if the rustlers, in the meantime, found it open, and shut it they would not know what had happened, for Sandy Tutt and Missouri would not be there to tell them. And a charge of giant powder would open the rock from the outside.

DOWN BY THE SEA!

LOOK OUT for our representative at the seaside resort you are visiting; he is giving away splendid prizes and thousands of dandy free gifts.

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The Kid dragged Sandy Tutt to his feet, freeing his legs from the bonds. He bound his right arm to Missouri's left.

"Now you want to move!" murmured the Kid; and the two rustlers stumbled before him, out of the rock doorway, into the fissure that led into the arroyo. "I ain't walking you to town, you guys; I guess I'll walk you to a safe place and leave you tied to a tree, and you'll sure have time to chew on it that it's a poor game to rustle cows while this baby is sheriff of Plug Hat!"

They emerged from the fissure into the open ravine.

To take the two prisoners to a safe distance, leave them safe and silent, and then hit for Plug Hat, was the Kid's intention. But that intention was never carried out.

The arroyo lay silent under the dim light of the stars. But as the Kid emerged from the fissure into the open air, there was a sudden sound and a movement. His hand flew to a gun, but at the same moment the muzzle of a rifle was clamped to his chest.

"Hands up!" came a cold, hard voice. "Hands up, you durned rustler!"

And a quiver ran through the Rio Kid. For he knew that voice; every hard, metallic tone in it was familiar to his ears. It was the voice of Mule-Kick Hall, the captain of the Texas Rangers!

The Rio Kid, alias Texas Brown, sheriff of Plug Hat, was in the hands of the enemies who had so long hunted him!

THE END.

(Life's getting exciting for the Boy Sheriff. He can't turn without running into fresh troubles. See next week's yarn of Texan adventure, entitled: "OUTLAWS K.O.D. BY OUTLAW!")

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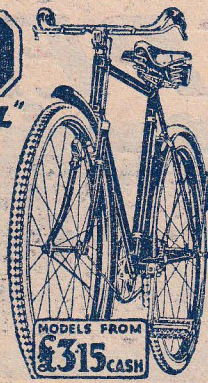
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