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Week Ending—
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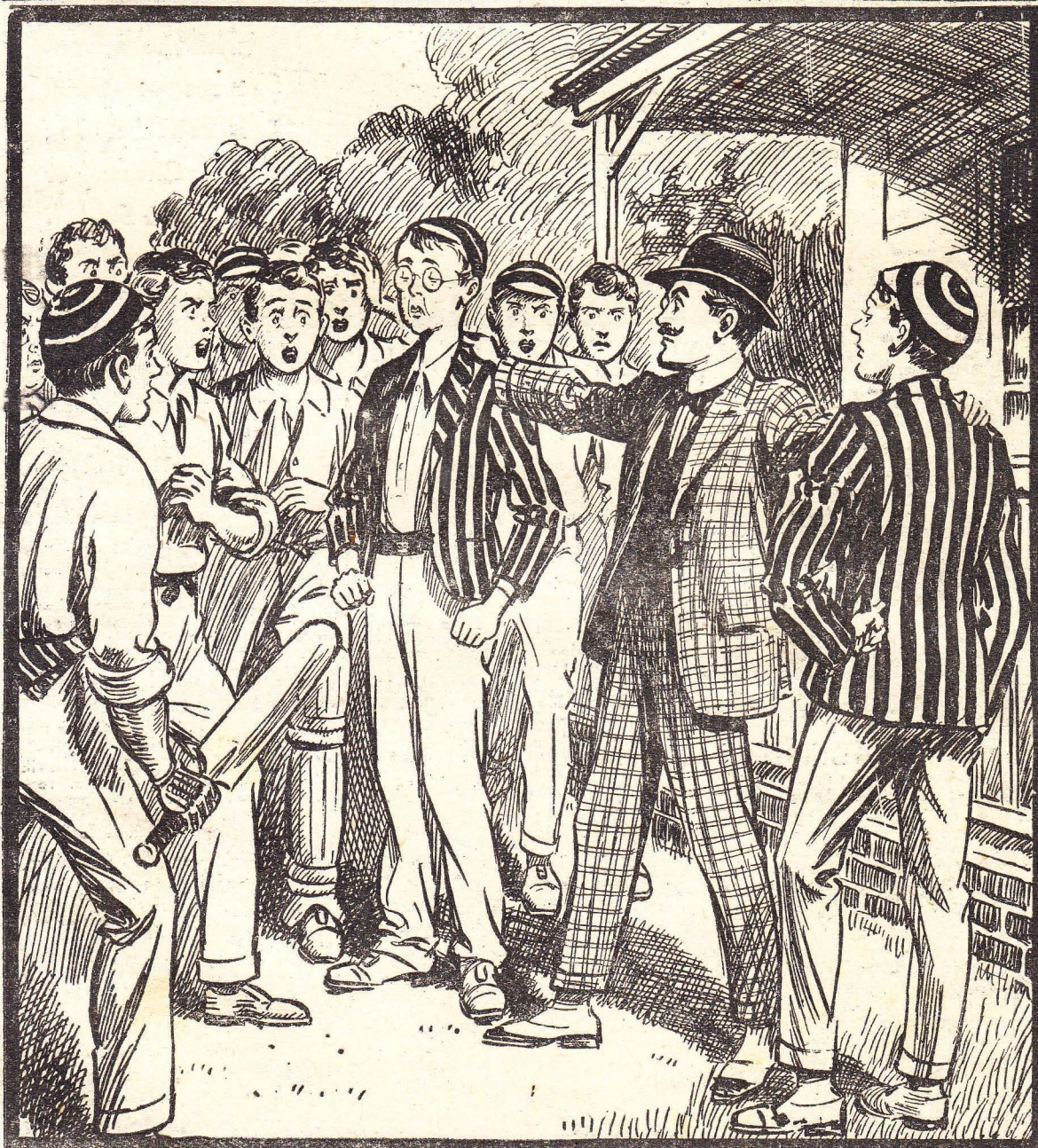
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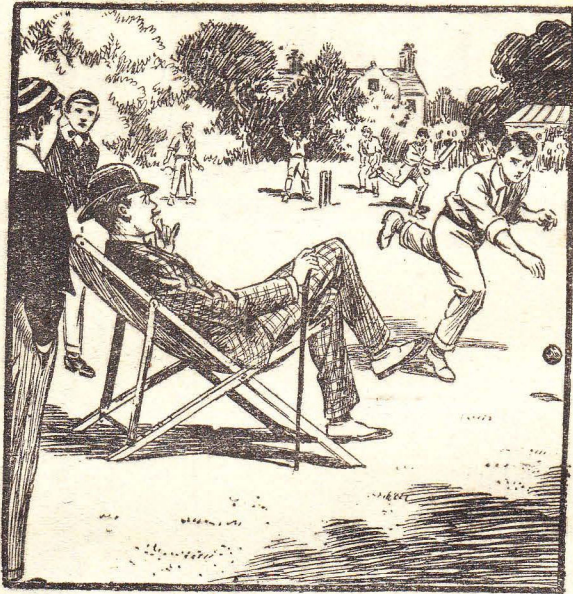
SKIMPOLE AND GRUNDY ARE SELECTED TO PLAY AT LORDS!
(A dramatic episode from the long complete tale of St. Jim's in this issue.)

"CAPTAIN CHUMLEY" COMES TO ST. JIM'S TO SELECT TWO PLAYERS FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ELEVEN. AMAZING THINGS HAPPEN DURING THE COURSE OF THE AFTERNOON!

THE PLACE OF HONOUR!

BY
MARTIN
CLIFFORD.

(Author of the Tales of Tom Merry & Co. now appearing in The "Gem Library.")



A Grand New, Long, Complete Story, dealing with the adventures of TOM MERRY & Co., the Chums of St. Jim's School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Figgins Comes a Cropper.

"I DON'T feel very fit to-day." It was unusual for Figgins of the New House to make a remark like that.

In the ordinary way there were few fitter fellows at St. Jim's than George Figgins. "Get fit, be fit, keep fit," was Figgins's motto, and he was generally in the pink of condition.

But on this particular morning Figg was off colour. Nothing very serious—just a headache and a heavy, drowsy sort of feeling.

"This is just the day when fitness is absolutely necessary," said Kerr. "It's the House match this afternoon, you know."

"Yes, I know," growled Figgins. "And Captain Chumley's coming down. It's rotten luck that I should feel seedy."

Figg had good cause to feel upset.

Captain Chumley was a member of the M.C.C., and a famous cricketer.

A big match had been arranged at Lord's between a Public School eleven and a team of Sandhurst cadets. Captain Chumley was to choose the Public School side. He had already enlisted players from Eton, Harrow, Charterhouse, and Greyfriars, and there were two more places to be filled. So Captain Chumley was coming to St. Jim's to watch the House match, with a view to selecting the two juniors who showed most promise.

Tom Merry was a "cert" for one of the places.

The captain of the Shell happened to be in great form just now, and he was worthy of a place in any side.

Who would get the other place? Figgins had designs on it. So did

Talbot and Dick Redfern and Fatty Wynn—fine cricketers, all.

Figgins was desperately anxious to play in the great match at Lord's. He thrilled at the thought of it.

Figg was a fine forcing bat, a useful change bowler, and a brilliant man in the field. If he put up a good show in the House match under the watchful eye of Captain Chumley he would be pretty certain to be selected along with Tom Merry.

But would he be able to put up a good show? That was the question! The School House bowlers would probably have a big say in the matter. They were not likely to give Figgins an opportunity of making a century.

Figg didn't feel in a century-making mood, either. He got out of bed that morning feeling tired and listless, and his head was throbbing painfully.

"You're looking a bit green about the chops, Figg," said Fatty Wynn. "But buck up! You'll feel better as the day goes on."

"Yes, rather!" said Kerr.

As the morning advanced, however, Figgins felt worse, instead of better. In the Form-room he was unable to give his mind to his work. And when the class was dismissed he came out of the Form-room with a heavy tread, and his face wore a haggard look.

"Feeling better, old scout?" asked Kerr.

"Do I look it?" growled Figgins.

"No, you don't. But appearances are sometimes deceptive. I was hoping they were in this case."

"Well, they're not! I feel as rotten as I look!"

"Rough luck, old man!"

"You'll play in the House match, of course!" said Fatty Wynn.

"Of course! I'd play if I had to be

wheeled on to the field in a bathchair! But I don't feel like breaking any records."

Figgins sat gloomy and silent during dinner. He ate but little. He was thinking of the visit of Captain Chumley, and wondering how he would shape under the eye of that great man. He had an uncomfortable premonition that he was going to do badly.

Captain Chumley arrived after dinner. He came in a taxicab, which he had apparently hired at the station.

The St. Jim's juniors were rather disappointed at Captain Chumley's appearance. They had expected to see a hefty, stalwart man, wearing a familiar orange-coloured blazer of the M.C.C. Instead of which, they beheld a dapper little man in a tweed suit and a bowler hat.

Captain Chumley had a military moustache, and he was wearing silk spats.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy described him as "wathah a stylish-lookin' cove." But the majority of the fellows would have preferred to see the captain looking a little less foppish and a little more sportsmanlike.

The captain nodded genially to Tom Merry & Co., who were in their flannels. "How d'ye do?" he drawled, extending his hand to the captain of the Shell. "You're Merry, I believe?"

"Yes, sir." "You haven't a fellow called Bright in your team, I s'pose?"

"No, sir," said Tom.

"That's a pity! Merry an' Bright would go well together."

The captain's feeble joke caused an equally feeble titter.

"Lead the way to the cricket ground," said Captain Chumley. "There's goin' to be a chief among you takin' notes this afternoon. I want two tip-top players for the Public School eleven. I shall

watch this House match of yours very intently. I've a good eye for talent—"

The speaker broke off suddenly. With a hasty "Excuse me!" he turned on his heel and hurried away in the direction from which he had come.

Mr. Railton, the Housemaster, had been in the act of approaching the party, and for some reason or other Captain Chumley seemed anxious to avoid him.

"Funny thing, that!" remarked Monty Lowther. "Why did he want to give Railton the slip, I wonder?"

"Ask me another," said Tom Merry. "He's a disappointing sort of chap, isn't he? After reading about his wonderful performances you'd expect to see a giddy giant. But he's an undersized merchant. And he hasn't what you might call a charming personality, either."

"Still, he's a good judge of cricket," said Talbot. "He can tell talent a mile off. The fellows who want to bag those two vacant places in the Public School Eleven will have to play like Trojans!"

"Yaas, wathah!" chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "We shall have to lick the New House to a frazzle, an' show Captain Chumley what we're made of."

The captain reappeared a few moments later.

"Sorry I popped off so suddenly," he said. "I remembered that I hadn't tipped the taxi-driver who brought me here."

Tom Merry & Co. exchanged glances. They could not bring themselves to believe Captain Chumley's explanation. He had obviously dodged off in order to avoid a meeting with Mr. Railton. Though why the captain should have been anxious to dodge the Housemaster was a mystery.

"When does the merry match begin?" inquired Captain Chumley.

"We're starting right away, sir," said Tom Merry. "Come along, Figgy! We'll toss for choice of innings."

Figgins came slowly up the pavilion steps. His face was as white as the cricket-shirt he wore. Tom Merry stared at him.

"By Jove, old man!" he ejaculated. "You're ill!"

"Rats! It's only a headache!" muttered Figgins.

"You're going to play?"

"You're about the twentieth fellow who's asked me that. Of course I'm going to play!"

Tom Merry produced a coin and sent it spinning in the air.

"Tails!" said Figgins.

The coin came down with the King's head uppermost.

"It seems that I'm not going to have any luck to-day," said Figgins. "You'll bat first, I suppose?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"We'll take our knock while the going's good," he said.

Figgins led the New House team on to the field.

"You bowl from the pavilion end, Fatty," he said. "Koumi Rao can take the other end."

"And may the merry wickets fall like ninepins!" said Dick Redfern.

"Hear, hear! But I'm afraid they won't."

Tom Merry and Talbot came strolling out to open the innings for the School House.

Captain Chumley reclined in a deck-chair in front of the pavilion, and his keen eyes scanned the players. In a way, he resembled King Solomon sitting in judgment.

From the outset runs came freely.

Tom Merry and Talbot, brilliant bats both, were on top of their form.

There was a roar of delight when Tom Merry banged a leg ball from Fatty Wynn to the boundary. It wasn't often that Fatty was treated with such gross disrespect.

Talbot, too, began to hit with vigour. He didn't believe in stone-walling—"sitting on the splice," as it was called. He hit out fearlessly, confidently at the New House bowling.

Figgins, fielding on the boundary line, began to look glum.

He had expected this to happen. Thirty runs registered on the scoreboard, and no wicket had fallen, nor was one likely to fall for some time.

If only he felt fit he would be able to relieve Fatty Wynn, who was beginning to tire. It was a broiling hot afternoon, and Fatty was bowling at his fastest.

Whilst Figgins was pondering on the situation, Tom Merry hit the ball hard and high in his direction.

The leather was coming right into Figgins's hands. It was a "sitter."

"Figgy's got it!" came a triumphant shout from the New House supporters.

But Figgy hadn't. The ball came into his hands with stinging force, only to pop out again and fall to the ground with a thud.

"Oh!"

"Muffed it, by Jove!"

Figgins flashed crimson. He picked up the ball and threw it back to the bowler almost savagely.

"I've made a priceless ass of myself!"

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DON'T MISS IT!

he muttered. "And in front of Captain Chumley, too! I'd have given anything to have held that catch!"

But the opportunity was gone beyond recall, and Tom Merry profited by his lucky let-off. He continued to pile up runs at a rapid rate.

That first wicket partnership between Tom Merry and Talbot was by way of a record.

The two batsmen were not separated until 140 runs were on the board. They thrashed the New House bowlers unmercifully, and they would have stayed together indefinitely but for a wonderfully smart return by Dick Redfern, which caused Talbot to be run out.

Talbot had made 68.

Jack Blake was the next man in, and he did pretty much as he liked with the tired bowling.

Blake hit up a hurricane 40 before being caught at the wicket.

In the meantime, Tom Merry had not been idle. He had completed his century, and he came in for a great ovation.

Fatty Wynn beckoned to Figgins.

"You'd better take me off, Figgy," he said. "I can't seem to do anything right this afternoon."

"Sling the ball over," said Figgins. "I'll have a go at bowling myself."

And Figgy did, with disastrous results. Disastrous, that is to say, for the New House.

Tom Merry, who was now joined by Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, scored three boundaries in succession off Figgins.

Never had a bowler come in for such heavy punishment.

Figgy was doing his best, but his bowling was made to look as ineffective as that of a fag in the First Form.

At last the painful ordeal was over.

The School House declared their innings closed, with the score at 250 for three wickets.

It was a prodigious score, and Tom Merry made 132.

"Good lad, Tommy!" said Monty Lowther, clapping his chum on the back.

"Captain Chumley will select you for a cert!"

"And I reckon the other man will be Talbot," said Manners.

Tom Merry smiled.

"We shall see," he said. "Don't count your chickens before they are hatched."

But his tone was very confident.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Staggering Sensation!

TEA was the next item on the programme.

The School House fellows ate heartily. Their rivals of the New House seemed to have mislaid their appetites.

"We're fairly up against it, and no mistake!" said Kerr. "Two hundred and fifty for three! Jove, what a score!"

"Think we shall win, Figgy?" asked French, with grim humour.

"Yes," said Figgins. "If a whole series of miracles happens."

Fatty Wynn passed his chum a dish of buttered scones. Figgins made a gesture of refusal.

"I can't eat," he said. "It would choke me!"

"Oh, cheer up, Figgy!" said Dick Redfern. "Things aren't so hopeless as all that! If we can't win we'll do the next best thing, and go under with our flag flying."

"That's the idea!" said Kerr.

Captain Chumley joined the juniors at tea. He made no comment on the match.

He seemed engrossed in the pleasant task of satisfying his inner man. The captain was a great trencherman. He tackled first one kind of cake, and then another.

Then he tackled a third kind, and a fourth, after which he started again at the beginning. For a small man he possessed an abnormal appetite.

Shortly after tea the New House started on their tremendous task.

The wicket was worn by this time, and it was all in favour of the bowlers.

Still, there were many who hoped that the New House would put up a great fight.

Figgins sent in Kerr and French to open the innings.

Kerr came a cropper almost at once. He happened to put his leg in front of a straight one, and was sent back without scoring.

French batted brightly for a while. But when he had made 10 he was out to a glorious catch in the slips by Harry Noble.

After this there was a gloomy procession of batsmen to and from the wickets.

Man after man was skittled out by the tricky School House bowlers. And when Figgins went in the score was 27 for six wickets.

Figgy had put himself in much later than usual. And he was the man to stop the rot if anybody could.

The New House leader was still feeling queer. His head seemed to be on fire. He had never in his life felt so little like run-getting.

Figgy noticed that Captain Chumley's

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A LONG NEW TALE OF ST. JIM'S.

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keen eye was following him as he walked out to the wicket.

There was still just a chance that he might redeem his failures in the field and hit up a big score, thus gaining a place, after all, in the Public School Eleven.

"Play up, Figgy!"

It was a last despairing shout from the New House supporters. They realised that if Figgy failed it would be indeed "all up."

Figgins took his guard, and held his bat firmly in position.

The bowler was Talbot. And the ball sent down to Figgins was a rattling good one.

Figgy sprang forward with the intention of driving the ball. Then he changed his mind, and decided to play back at it.

He jumped back to defend his wicket, but he was too late.

The ball curled round the bat and crashed into the wicket.

"Well bowled, sir!"

Well bowled, indeed! Figgy, turning to survey his wicket, saw that not a stump was left standing.

"Hard cheese, Figgy!" said Tom Merry sympathetically.

Figgins scarcely heard. He gave a groan and walked slowly back to the pavilion.

Gone were his dreams of playing at Lord's.

What a sorry exhibition he had given! He had muffed a catch, he had bowled atrociously, and he had made a "duck's egg."

Captain Chumley would certainly never dream of selecting George Figgins for the Public School team.

The New House innings came to a swift and inglorious close.

"All out for 32!" chortled Monty Lowther. "Isn't it great, Tommy? Come to my bosom and rejoice!"

Tom Merry laughed breathlessly.

"We've played the New House a good many times," he said, "but we've never licked them by such a hollow margin."

"Captain Chumley won't have much difficulty in making his selections," said Manners. "You're a cert, Tommy, and Talbot's another."

"Yaas, wathah!" agreed Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "They've cawwied off the honahs of the match."

"Let's come and hear what the captain has to say," said Tom Merry. "I know it's pretty well a sure thing for Talbot and me, but—well, there's many a slip and you never know."

Captain Chumley found himself surrounded by a crowd of cricketers.

"A very one-sided match, by gad!" was his comment.

"Yes, sir. We didn't expect such a walk-over," said Tom Merry. "But Figgins was queer, and that made all the difference to the New House team."

"Quite so," said the captain.

There was a pause. The juniors looked questioningly at Captain Chumley.

"Well, sir," said Monty Lowther, breaking the silence, "what's the verdict?"

The captain smiled.

"I've chosen the two players for Lord's," he said.

"Tom Merry's one, of course?" said Manners.

Captain Chumley shook his head.

"What?" Manners almost shouted the word. "You—you haven't selected Tom Merry?"

"No."

There was a general gasp of astonishment. Tom Merry himself looked very crestfallen.

"This is a bit of a blow to me, sir," he confessed. "I suppose you've selected old Talbot?"

Again Captain Chumley shook his head. And again there was a gasp of astonishment from the cricketers.

Tom Merry and Talbot had been the two outstanding players in the House match, yet neither had been selected to play at Lord's!

"Weren't you satisfied with our performances, sir?" asked Tom Merry.

"Leaving my own century out of it for the moment, Talbot made 68, and—"

"Against weak bowling," interjected the captain.

"And he took six wickets for 12 runs—"

"Against weak batting," said the captain.

"It's hardly fair to say that," said Tom Merry, flushing. "The New House met us on equal terms. There's nothing weak about them, as a rule. Anyway, sir, it would be interesting to know who you've chosen to play for the Public Schools."

Captain Chumley gazed calmly at the eager faces around him.

"I watched the match very closely," he said. "Nothing escaped me. And I reluctantly came to the conclusion that among the whole of the twenty-two players there was not one who is worth a place in the Public School Eleven."

"My hat!"

"It seems a harsh thing to say," said the captain, "but there it is. However, my visit to St. Jim's has not been a waste of time. I have had a conversation with two boys, who have satisfied me that they are first-rate cricketers. Although I have not seen them perform, they have convinced me that they are the real goods. I have, therefore, selected them to play for the Public Schools at Lord's."

"And their names?" said Tom Merry breathlessly.

"One is Grundy—George Alfred Grundy—"

"W-w-what?"

"And the other is Skimpole."

So great was Tom Merry's amazement on receipt of this startling information that he staggered back, and would have collapsed, had not the ready arms of Monty Lowther supported him.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Chosen Couple!

GRUNDY and Skimpole! Probably the two worst cricketers in all St. Jim's! To appear at Lord's!

It was truly staggering.

Grundy was the type of batsman who shuts his eyes and slogs blindly. Skimpole was a fellow who scarcely ever handled a bat at all. And when he did it was a sight for gods and men and little fishes.

"Hold me up, Monty!" panted Tom Merry. "I sha'n't get over this in a hurry."

"Captain Chumley must be potty!" muttered Jack Blake.

"Clean off his wockah, bai Jove!" murmured D'Arcy.

Like the prophet of old, the St. Jim's juniors were amazed with a great amazement. They stared blankly at Captain Chumley.

"I can't congratulate you on your selection, sir," said Talbot, who was the first to recover his composure. "Grundy and Skimpole are the biggest duffers breathing at cricket. And at most things!" he added.

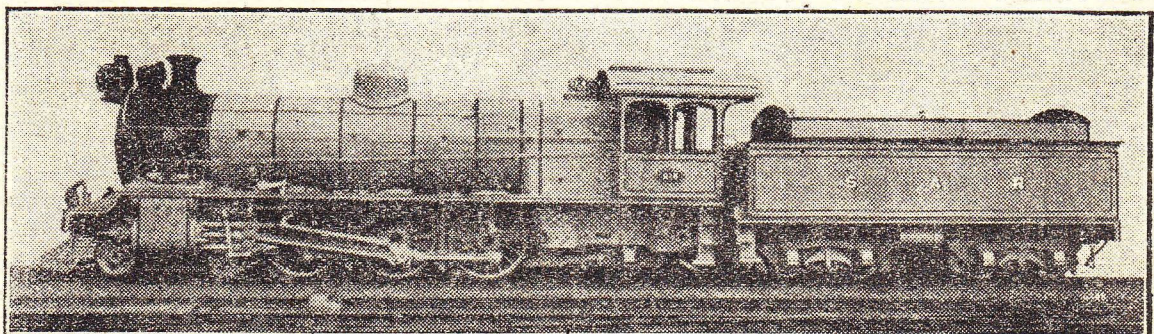
"I am not disposed to argue about the matter," said the captain. "I have made my choice, and those who don't like it must do the other thing. I have instructed Grundy and Skimpole to travel up to Lord's on Wednesday."

Captain Chumley rose to his feet.

Mr. Railton was approaching the pavilion, and the captain looked rather startled.

On this occasion he could not avoid the

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Housemaster. He had noticed his approach too late.

"Good-afternoon!" said Mr. Railton. "I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance. You are an Old Boy, I presume?"

Captain Chumley shook his head. "Then would you be good enough to disclose your identity?" asked the Housemaster.

"I am Captain Chumley."

"Impossible!"

"What do you mean?"

"I was speaking to Captain Chumley on the telephone not five minutes ago," said Mr. Railton. "He rang up to apologise for not being able to come to the school this afternoon. He is coming to-morrow."

The Housemaster's words had an electrifying effect upon the juniors.

As for the person who called himself Captain Chumley, he gave a rueful laugh.

"The game's up," he said, "and rather sooner than I expected."

"Who are you?" demanded Mr. Railton sternly.

"I'll show you, sir," said the impostor in boyish tones which were at once familiar to Tom Merry & Co.

Off came the bowler hat and the wig that was beneath it. And off came the military moustache. A pair of false eyebrows were also removed, and the St. Jim's juniors, and Mr. Railton had little difficulty in recognising Gordon Gay of the Grammar School.

There was a whoop of amazement from the cricketers.

"Gordon Gay!"

"It's a spoof!"

"The beggar's had us on toast!"

Gordon Gay chuckled.

"You must admit I pulled your legs very nicely," he said. "Grundy and Skimpy were getting quite excited at the prospect of going up to Lord's!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Despite the fact that they had been japed, the St. Jim's cricketers could not help laughing.

The only two who failed to see the joke were Grundy and Skimpole.

"Do I understand," murmured Skimpy, "that we are not to play for the Public Schools, after all?"

"Of course, you're not playing, fat-head!" said Manners. "Can't you see this is a Grammar School jape?"

"Oh dear! That is rather a pity, because I should certainly have scored a lot of goals."

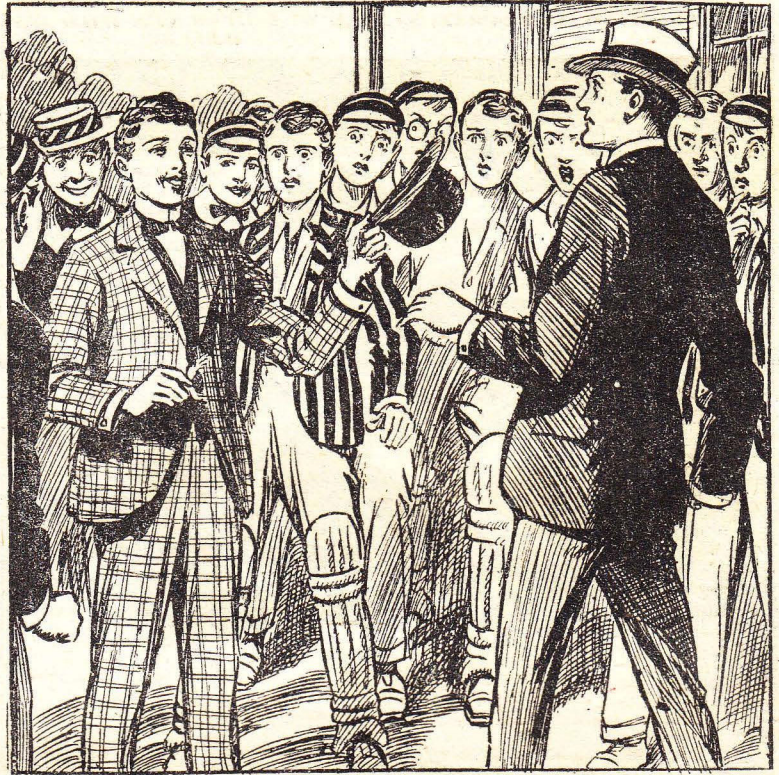
"Ha, ha, ha!"

As for George Alfred Grundy, he mourned, and would not be comforted.

Grundy had jumped at the idea of going to Lord's, and showing the world what a really fine cricketer he was. And now, with Gordon Gay's self-exposure, the rosy dream was shattered.

Mr. Railton frowned at Gordon Gay, though his lips were twitching a little.

"I cannot wink my eye at this deception, Gay," he said. "It is a harmless



SHOWN UP!—"Who are you?" demanded Mr. Railton sternly. "I'll show you, sir!" said the impostor. Off came the bowler, a wig, and the military moustache. There was a whoop of amazement from the St. Jim's cricketers. "Gordon Gay!" "It's all a spoof!" (See Chapter 3.)

'jape,' as you would call it, but you must understand that you are trespassing. You have no right on these premises at all. I shall have to mention the matter to your headmaster. I am afraid—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"But I will lodge an appeal for leniency at the same time," said Mr. Railton.

And he was smiling now.

"Thanks awfully, sir!" said Gordon Gay.

And he promptly took to his heels and dashed away in the direction of the school gates. Possibly he was afraid that the St. Jim's juniors would have mobbed him.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" ejaculated Monty Lowther, when the Grammarian had gone. "Fancy allowing ourselves to be japed like that! You'd have thought old Kerr would have twigged the disguise."

"I hadn't a suspicion," admitted Kerr. "Gay's jolly clever at that sort of thing, you know."

"I'm jolly glad," said Figgins, with a breath of relief, "that it wasn't Captain Chumley, after all!"

Next day the genuine Captain Chumley arrived at St. Jim's.

There was a practice match in the afternoon, and George Figgins felt his own self again. The queer turn had passed, and he expressed himself as fit as a fiddle.

He must have been fit, to make a score of eighty-five against good bowling. And it came as no surprise to the St. Jim's fellows when Captain Chumley selected Figgins as one of the fellows to go to Lord's. Tom Merry was the other.

And thus, in spite of all his earlier disappointments and set-backs, George Figgins found himself exalted to a place of honour. And he went up to Lord's resolved to play the game of his life.

THE END.

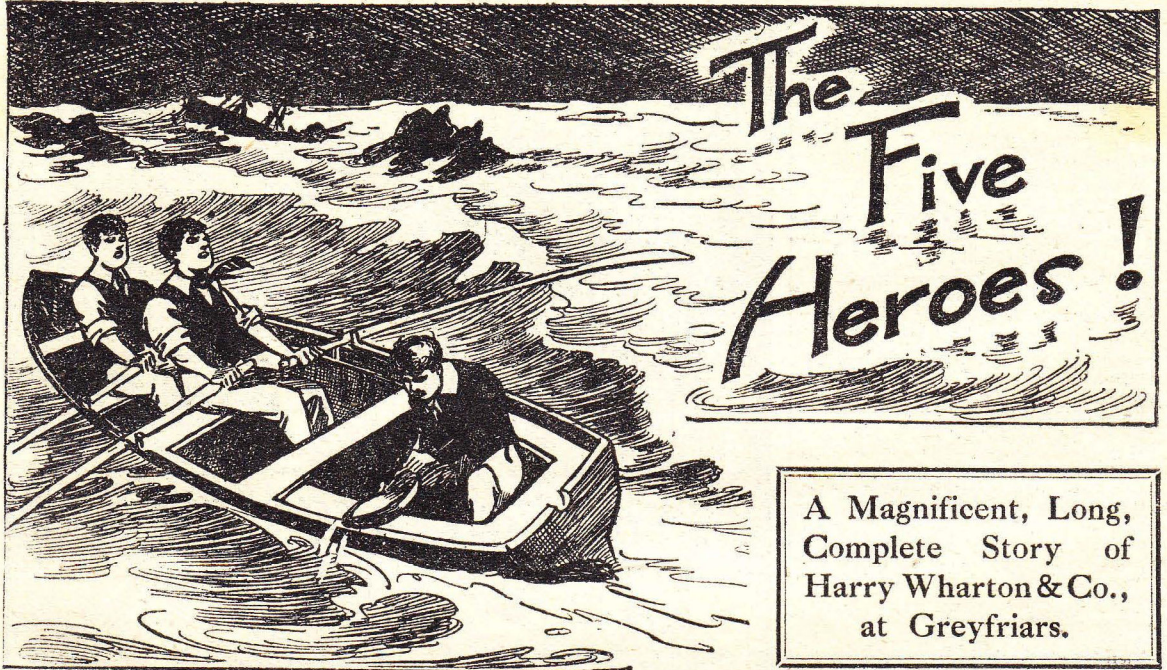
Another Magnificent, Long, Complete Story, dealing with the adventures of Tom Merry & Co., the Chums of St. Jim's, entitled:

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By MARTIN CLIFFORD,

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A Magnificent, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS

(Author of the Famous Greyfriars Tales appearing in the "Magnet" Library.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Storm!

"**P**HEW!" How it's blowing!" It was blowing great guns. The old trees in the Close of Greyfriars bent and groaned under the fierce wind, and the windows shook and rattled. In the distance could be heard the sound of the breakers booming upon the rocky shore.

A group of juniors were looking out of the hall window into the wind-swept Close at the swaying, groaning trees and the torn leaves whirling in the wind. Lessons were over at Greyfriars for the day, but the fellows did not venture out. Billy Bunter, of the Remove, had made a desperate effort to get across to the tuck shop, and had been fairly blown over, and had been glad to crawl back again to the shelter of the house. Only one of the Remove, the Lower Fourth, was out of doors—Harry Wharton, the captain of the Form; and his chums were looking out anxiously for him.

Crash! A tile, torn away by the wind, came crashing down from the roof, and was shattered to pieces on the ground outside the window.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I wish Wharton would come in. Where the dickens is he all this time?"

"May be staying at Cliff House till the storm's over," said Frank Nugent.

"The storm won't be over to-night."

Harry Wharton had gone to tea at Cliff House, the girls' school near Greyfriars. He had matters in connection with forthcoming amateur theatricals to discuss with Marjorie Hazeldene, and a rough wind was not enough to keep him in. But since he had gone the storm had increased in violence, and his chums were anxious for his safety if he should

return through it. They watched from the window, wet with rain. Johnny Bull uttered a sudden exclamation.

"Here he comes!"

It was growing dark. The sun was not gone, but thick clouds were massing over the sky. Through the dimness of the Close the figure of the junior could be seen struggling against the fierce wind that sought to whirl him off his feet. Nugent ran to the door. There was a sharp call from Wingate of the Sixth as he put his hand on the latch.

"Don't open that door, Nugent! It couldn't be shut again in this wind!"

"Wharton's just come back!"

"Oh, blow Wharton!" growled Wingate.

"He's being blown already!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Open the window for him," said Wingate. "You can't open that door. It was trouble enough to get it shut when it was opened before."

"Oh, all serene!"

Nugent returned to the window. He tapped on it to draw the attention of the junior out in the windy Close. Harry Wharton came on at a run, and stopped outside the little window, and Bob Cherry raised the lower sash a little. A fierce blast of wind came in at the opening, and howled along the passage.

"Come in this way, Harry!" shouted Bob Cherry. "I'll open the window for you."

Wharton, clinging to the window-sill to keep his feet, shook his head. Through the window the juniors could see that his face was white.

He put his face close to the opening, and called through it, shouting to make his voice audible above the roar of the wind.

"I'm not coming in. I want you fellows to come out!"

Bob stared at him.

"Come out in this storm? Are you off your rocker? Come in, you ass, and get into some dry clothes!"

Wharton shook his head again.

"There's a schooner ashore in the bay, and the crew can't get off!" he gasped. "We may be able to help. You fellows must come! I've come back for you!"

"Oh!"

That altered the case. Wrecks were not uncommon in stormy weather on that iron coast, and more than once before the chums of Greyfriars had lent good aid. Bob Cherry looked round cautiously. Wingate had gone back to his study, and there were only juniors in the hall. If a prefect had been there, he would certainly have stopped the juniors from going forth on such an adventure. But there was no time to lose; Wingate or Loder or Gwynne might come along at any moment.

"Better get our coats!" said Johnny Bull.

"No time," said Bob. "We shall be spotted! Never mind your caps, either. We must go as we are, or not at all. Come on!"

"The come-on-fulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, the Indian junior. "The readyfulness of my esteemed self is terrific."

Bob Cherry pushed the window up. The wind roared through, and howled in the passage, and there was a clattering of doors and a yell of remonstrating voices.

"Shut that window!"

"You silly young asses!"

"Who's got that window open?" roared Coker of the Fifth, coming down the passage in great wrath. "Are you looking for a thick ear apiece, you silly kids? Close that window at once! Do you hear?"

"Oh, you go and chop chips!" said Bob Cherry.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"COKER'S FUND!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

And Bob rolled out of the window into the Close. Frank Nugent followed him in a twinkling, and then went Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Coker rushed up to the window.

"Come in, you young lunatics!" he shouted. "You'll be blown to bits! Come back!"

The Removites did not reply. The juniors staggered through the gates into the windy road, and Wharton jammed the gate shut after them.

It was impossible to speak. It was difficult even to breathe in the gale. The juniors followed Harry Wharton's guidance.

They hurried down the lane towards the fishing village of Pegg, on the bay. Louder and more menacing sounded the boom of the sea on the shingly beach and on the great rocks of the Shoulder.

Buffeted by the fierce gale, they struggled on their way, trampling through broken branches torn from the trees by the wind and scattered in the lane.

The sea burst on their sight at last, as they came out on the beach, breathless and almost exhausted. They were drenched with rain, and the wind cut through their clothes like a knife.

Angry and sullen, the sea rolled and heaved under the tearing wind, and through the clouds of spray the great Shoulder loomed up dimly.

The boats had been dragged far up the beach out of reach of the thundering waves. On the shore a group of fishermen stood, looking out to sea. Far off over the dusky waters a small vessel could be seen dimly, jammed on the rocks a quarter of a mile from the shore. Round the stranded vessel the waves broke and roared, pounding the timbers to pieces.

The little schooner had evidently but a short time to live; ere long the waves would have smashed in the timbers. Like ants in the distance three figures could be seen clinging to the wreck.

Bob Cherry clung to a big rock and gasped for breath.

"They're done for!" he said.

Wharton caught the arm of a big fisherman who was holding on to the rock. The man looked down at him.

"Can't you do anything, Trumper?"

The fisherman shook his head.

"No boat could live in that sea, Master Wharton."

"But you can't leave them to die."

Trumper shook his head hesitatingly.

But his wife was there, and she caught his arm and held him back. She was speaking, wildly and hysterically, but the wind carried away her words. But her meaning was clear. Her husband should not go.

Wharton drew back with his chums into the shelter of the big rock, where they could speak. His face was white and set.

"It's horribly risky!" he said. "They can't go; they've got their wives and children to think of!"

"It would be chucking their lives away!" muttered Johnny Bull. "It's not fair to ask them to do it."

"I know that. But—"

"But what?" said Bob uneasily.

"There's nobody dependent on us, Bob," said Harry, in a low, steady voice.

"It's frightfully risky, I know; but—"

"You want to go?"

"Yes."

The juniors were silent. The wind roared round them, and a dash of spray drenched them with salt water. Wharton peered round the rock again. He saw a fragment of canvas waved from

the wreck. It was a mute appeal for help, and it went straight to his heart.

"We can't see them drown," he said. "It's up to us, you fellows! I want two of you to come with me. Two will be enough."

"They'd stop us if we tried to take a boat out!" muttered Johnny Bull, with a nod towards the group of fishermen.

"I know. But there's the Cliff House boat in the cove up the shore yonder. We could get it out, and it's a chance."

Another long silence. Well the juniors knew what it meant—life or death—with the chances against life! But they were made of the right British stuff.

"We'll do it!" said Bob. "Heaven help us!"

No more was said. They scrambled away over the rocks towards the little cove where the Cliff House boat was securely moored from the wild waves—the little skiff in which they had rowed many a time with Marjorie and Clara, when the bay was calm, and the sea blue and sunny. The skiff was going upon a different mission now. The rocks hid them from the sight of the fishermen before they reached the cove.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Rescue.

HARRY WHARTON & CO. lost no time.

They had made up their minds what they were going to do, and having done that they ceased to count the risks.

In the little cove the skiff lay above high-water mark. Great waves came thundering into the cove and broke in volumes of foam and spray, filling the air with deafening sounds. Only three fellows could go in the boat if room was to be left for the three castaways on the wreck. Wharton selected Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry to accompany him, and the others aided in launching the boat. They had to watch their opportunity carefully. If an incoming billow had struck the boat, it would have been smashed like an egg-shell, and its occupants dashed to death upon the rocks.

The juniors stood ready, and ran the boat out as a great wave receded. Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh rushed behind the skiff, launching it successfully upon the retiring wave, blinded by foam and spray, deafened by the roar of the waters. They stood dashing the water from their eyes, and gazing with horrible anxiety after the dancing skiff.

Wharton and Johnny Bull were at the oars, and Bob Cherry had the baler in his hand. The boat whisked away like a cockle-shell. Then came the roar of the returning wave. It came on thundering, and Nugent and Hurree Singh had to race up the cove to get away from it, and even so it overtook them, struck them, and hurled them half stunned on the shingle.

They clung to the shingle, gasping, and the waters receded once more, and left

them drenched and dazed. But they did not think of themselves as they scrambled to their feet. They stared out on the wild waters, searching with their eyes for the boat. They fully expected to see it bottom upwards, the sport of the waves, and their comrades struggling in the water—or vanishing beneath it.

Nugent gave a choking cry as he pointed.

The boat was dancing on the waters—swept to and fro by the mighty billows—but still living in the sea.

The launching, at least, had been successful. Wharton and Johnny Bull had the oars out, and they were pulling for the wreck, and Bob Cherry was baling as fast as he could bale.

"Heaven help them!" muttered Nugent; and the nabob, whose teeth were chattering, could not speak at all.

The faces of the juniors in the skiff were white and set.

The little craft was tossed like an egg-shell upon the waves, and the wonder was that it was not overturned at every surging billow.

But it rode the waters like a bird, disappearing now into the trough of the sea, and now emerging into view again upon the crest of a wave.

And all the time the juniors were pulling for the wreck on the rocks that lay strewn, half submerged, along the base of the great cliff.

They could not speak. The roar of wind and water would have drowned their voices.

They laboured on, Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull tugging at the oars, and Bob Cherry baling out the water that nearly swamped the boat.

Now the three castaways on the wrecked schooner had seen them tossing on the waves in the growing dusk, and they were waving their hands wildly and shouting for help—though their voices could not be heard.

Round the grounded schooner the wild waves dashed and roared, and as the juniors drew nearer to her they could see that a close approach was impossible. The skiff would have been dashed upon the schooner and crushed to fragments.

Harry Wharton drew in his oar, and stood up in the boat. He kept his feet with difficulty, as the little craft rose and fell upon the whirling waters. He waved his hand to the three seamen on the wreck.

They understood his gesture. They were to jump for it, and take their chance of being dragged into the boat. It was the only way.

One of them waved his hand in response, and with grim determination let go his hold upon the rigging, and plunged into the sea, as a great wave rolled back from the side of the schooner towards the boat.

He came up within a couple of yards of the skiff, and Wharton reached over for him. He made another effort and their hands met, and he was dragged into the boat.

The skiff danced and rocked, and the three juniors had hard work to keep her afloat; all three of them baling furiously while the rescued man lay exhausted at their feet.

Then Wharton waved his hand to the wreck again.

Another seaman let himself go, and was dragged into the boat, half drowned and half stunned by the thumping of the waves.

But the last man did not take his chance. He saw Wharton's gesture, but did not jump. He was a lascar, as they could see by his dark-skinned face and

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"COKER'S FUND!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

rolling black eyes. The stunning force of the waves now breaking over the schooner had probably partly deprived him of his senses. He was clinging to the shrouds, and holding on for his life, with just sense enough to hold on, but not enough to understand that there was only one chance for him—to gain the little boat.

"He won't jump!" muttered Bob Cherry. "We can't stand this much longer, Harry. We may be under at any minute."

The two rescued seamen were baling now, but every wave that broke round the boat sent more water into her. It was touch-and-go all the time; grim Death was hovering over the juniors of Greyfriars.

Wharton looked towards the schooner. The man would not jump; but to go back and leave him to his doom was hard.

A wave rolled past the boat, making it oscillate wildly, and rolled on over the schooner, completely submerging her.

As the water subsided again they saw that the wreck had sunk lower, and they hardly expected to see the lascar again. He had disappeared for the moment under the rolling wave. But there he was, as the water passed, still holding on to the shrouds.

Wharton set his teeth. "I'm going to try to get him off!" he said.

His chums did not hear him, but they understood. Bob grasped his arm.

"You can't!" he roared.

"Give me the rope!" said Harry.

He uncoiled the rope that lay in the bottom of the boat, and tied one end to his arm. Bob grasped the other, and tied it round his waist. Then Harry Wharton, waiting till a great billow was rolling upon the half-submerged schooner, let himself go with it, taking his life in his hands.

The wave swept him on, and he caught at the torn rigging, and clung there till the water rushed on and left him clinging there above it, close to the lascar.

The man stared at him stupidly.

It was impossible to speak. Wharton untied the rope from his arm, and tied it round the lascar under his armpits.

Then he signed to the man to let go.

The man was too scared and stunned. He held on frantically to the shrouds, while the schooner was grinding to pieces under his feet. There was no time to waste. Wharton grasped him and dragged him from his hold, and they plunged into the water together, the junior clinging to the rope.

But for the rope they would have been swept away; but Bob Cherry was dragging upon it, and they came sweeping up to the boat.

The juniors dragged them in.

The lascar sank down insensible under the thwarts. Wharton sat, panting and gasping. The boat whirled away on the waters towards the shore. The oars were not needed now; the thundering waves rushed them shoreward.

The fishermen on the beach had seen them, and were waiting and watching to help. As the boat was dashing upon the beach at the mercy of the waves, the big fishermen plunged in waist-deep, and grasped the juniors and the rescued seamen. The boat went to pieces in the surf, but the fishermen dragged the occupants ashore and out of reach of the hungry waters.

Harry Wharton felt all grow dark about him, but he felt dimly that he was being dragged through the deafening surf, that he was laid upon the sand, that

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someone placed brandy to his lips, and he gasped and choked with the fiery liquid.

He opened his eyes. Nugent and Hurree Singh were bending over him.

"Harry, old man, you're safe!" The tears were streaming down Nugent's cheeks. "Safe, old chap!"

"The safefulness is terrific, my noble chum!"

"Bob and the others?" gasped Wharton.

"All serene!"

"Oh, good!"

And then Harry Wharton's eyes closed again.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter is Willing!

"WHARTON!"
No answer.
Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove at Greyfriars, looked annoyed.

The Remove master was taking evening call-over, and this was the fifth name he had called without receiving the usual "Adsum" in reply.

Bull, Cherry, Hurree Singh, Nugent, Wharton—all the five had failed to respond to their names.

Considering the terrific storm that was

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raging over Greyfriars, it was certainly not a time for junior boys to be out of doors.

"Does anyone know where these boys are?" asked Mr. Quelch, looking at the Remove fellows.

"Sure, I think they're gone out, sir," said Micky Desmond.

Mr. Quelch closed his lips tightly.

"Gone out! In this storm?"

"Yis, sor. Can't get back because of the weather, sir," said Micky. "It's very windy, sir!"

Mr. Quelch stared at the Irish junior. As the wind was almost rocking the old school upon its solid foundations, Mr. Quelch was quite aware that it was windy. Micky wanted to make excuses for the missing juniors, but he had not succeeded.

"I am aware that it is windy, Desmond," said Mr. Quelch stiffly. "I am not deaf."

"No, sor," said Micky.

"The boys should certainly not have gone out in this weather. I shall punish them severely when they return. I—"

Mr. Quelch was interrupted. Trotter, the page, came into the hall.

"If you please, sir, Dr. Locke wishes to see you in his study."

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch.

And the annoyed Remove master proceeded to the Head's study, while the assembly broke up, most of the fellows

discussing the absence of the Famous Five, and wondering what had become of them.

Dr. Locke was standing by the telephone in his study when Mr. Quelch came in, and there was a very startled expression upon his kind old face.

"You have taken call-over, Mr. Quelch?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"All the boys are not present?"

"No, sir. Five members of my Form have absented themselves," said Mr. Quelch. "It is very reckless of them to go out in this storm, and I shall have something to say about it when they return."

"Ah, that accounts for it!" said the Head.

"For what?"

"I have just had a telephone message from Pegg. The landlord of the Anchor tells me that the boys are quite safe, and have been put into bed with hot-water bottles, to prevent them from catching cold, and will return later."

"What are the boys doing at Pegg?" asked Mr. Quelch, in amazement.

"I am afraid they have been getting into trouble," said the Head. "I gather that there has been a shipwreck, and the boys have lent aid."

Mr. Quelch's face cleared, "Wharton once did a very brave thing at a shipwreck in Pegg Bay, sir," he said.

"If this is another thing of the same sort, I suppose he must be excused, though I do not like the boy taking these risks."

"Quite so. I will ring up the Anchor again and ask for further information," said the Head. "I was very much surprised to hear that the boys were there, as I did not know any were missing."

And the Head rang up again.

"Is that the Anchor Inn? What are the names of the boys with you?"

"Wharton, Nugent, Bull, Cherry, and Hurree Singh, sir," came back the gruff voice of the landlord of the Anchor. "Five of 'em, sir."

"What have they been doing?"

"Taking out a boat to rescue three seamen from a wreck, sir."

"Dear me! Did they save the seamen?"

"Yes, sir; reg'lar heroes they are."

"And they are not hurt?"

"No, sir—only wet."

"Very good! Thank you very much for taking care of them."

The Head turned to Mr. Quelch.

"I do not think we need be very severe with the boys for missing call-over on this occasion," he said, with a smile.

"They have brought credit upon Greyfriars College."

"I agree with you, sir."

It was not long before Greyfriars knew the story. Wharton's friends were anxious about him, and they asked Mr. Quelch if anything was known of where he was, and the Remove master told them. Then the school was buzzing with it.

"Just like those bounders," said Lord Mauleverer, as the Remove discussed it excitedly in the Common-room. "Might have guessed somethin' of the sort, begad."

"Queer how they're always getting into the limelight, isn't it?" said Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, with a curl of the lip.

"Oh, rats!" said Bulstrode. "They've acted rippingly."

"Splendidly!" said Mark Linley.

"I guess they ought to have told me they were going," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "They needed a

galoot like me with them. Yes, sir. If I had been on the beach—"

"You'd have stopped there," grinned Russell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess—"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "they'll be jolly hungry when they get in. It's up to us to stand them a feed, you know. I'm expecting a postal-order, but the postman hasn't arrived, owing to—the state of the weather. If you like to hand me the cash, I'll try to get across to the tuckshop."

"I dare say you will," said Bulstrode. "But you're not going to have any of my cash."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode! I should settle it up, of course, as soon as my postal-order comes. It will arrive as soon as the storm's over."

"If the storm lasts till your postal-order comes, I fancy it will be the longest storm on record."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter turned his back on Bulstrode.

"I say, Mauly, old man," said the fat junior persuasively, "you know how jolly hungry they will be when they get in. If you like to hand me ten bob, I'll get across to the tuckshop. It won't be easy, I know; but I'd do more than that for fellows like."

"Begad, it's not a bad idea, you know," said Lord Mauleverer. "But I haven't any change. Will a pound note do?"

Would it?

Billy Bunter's fat fingers closed like a vice upon the pound note, and he made for the door. But the door was locked, and he had to leave by the window. He opened the hall window, and plunged out into the windy Close. A powerful gust of the gale caught him and rolled him over, and he gasped and panted. The juniors watched him from the window, and roared with laughter.

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Buck up!"

Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet. It was no easy task. But Bunter would have faced the Russian guns at Balaclava if there had been a tuckshop behind them. The Owl of the Remove righted himself, and plunged on, the wind beating on him and causing him to cross the Close in a series of tacks. He zigzagged away into the dusk and disappeared.

"Begad! It won't be easy to carry the grub back in this wind," Lord Mauleverer remarked.

"Easy enough, the way Bunter will carry it," grinned Tom Brown.

"Begad! How will he carry it, dear boy?"

"Inside!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was not much doubt what Billy Bunter would do with Lord Mauleverer's pound note. He would certainly expend it upon tuck, as agreed; but he would take so many "snacks" before he started back that there would not be much left for Harry Wharton & Co.

Billy Bunter was having the fight of his life with the wind in the Close. A gust sent him staggering again, and he rolled on the wet ground, and tacked away towards the gym, and rested there under the lee of the building for some minutes. Then he started again, and tacked away towards the porter's lodge. A third tack brought him to the tuckshop, and the wind bumped him on the door. He opened the shop door, and rolled in, gasping for breath, and the wind rushed in after the fat junior, and

there was a clatter of falling articles as it swept round the shop.

Mrs. Mimble came in a hurry out of her little parlour.

"Close the door!" she shrieked.

Billy Bunter struggled with the door. With the fierce wind beating upon it, it was not easy to get it closed. Mrs. Mimble came to his assistance, and between them the door was shut once more.

Mrs. Mimble did not look pleased. She was generally glad to see customers, but Bunter was not a desirable customer. And the gust of wind in the shop had worked havoc. Packets of tea had been blown into the butter and the treacle, and paper bags were whirling all over the shop.

"Now, what is it, Master Bunter?" said Mrs. Mimble with great asperity.

"If you have come to ask me for goods on credit again—"

"I haven't," said Bunter, with dignity.

"I have come to expend a pound—ready money, Mrs. Mimble. Just trot out some tarts to begin with."

"Just show me the pound to begin with," said Mrs. Mimble tartly.

She knew Bunter!

Bunter grunted. It was hard to have his word doubted, when he really was in possession of money for once. He groped in his pocket for the pound, to confound the doubting Mrs. Mimble by the sight of the pound note.

The note was not there.

Bunter groped carefully through the pocket, and then through all his other pockets. He came back to the first pocket again, and groped in it, and turned out the lining. But the note was not to be found. The dreadful truth dawned upon Bunter. In his uninten-

tional gymnastics in the Close, in buffeting again the wind, he had dropped the pound note.

"Oh, lor!" groaned Bunter. "I've lost it!"

Mrs. Mimble had watched his vain search for the pound note with a sarcastic smile. She did not believe in the existence of the note at all. She was too much accustomed to Billy Bunter's little ways.

"It's all right, Mrs. Mimble," said Bunter. "I've dropped it in the Close somewhere; but I shall find it to-morrow in the daylight, and then I'll settle up. I'll have some tarts!"

"You will have nothing, Master Bunter. You are a dreadful, untruthful boy!"

"I tell you I've dropped the money!" roared Bunter.

"I do not believe you, Master Bunter. I know you never have a pound of your own."

"Mauleverer lent it to me!" roared Bunter.

"Then Lord Mauleverer was very foolish to trust you. I do not trust you. Please go back, Master Bunter; and I hope you will be ashamed of trying to impose upon a poor widow."

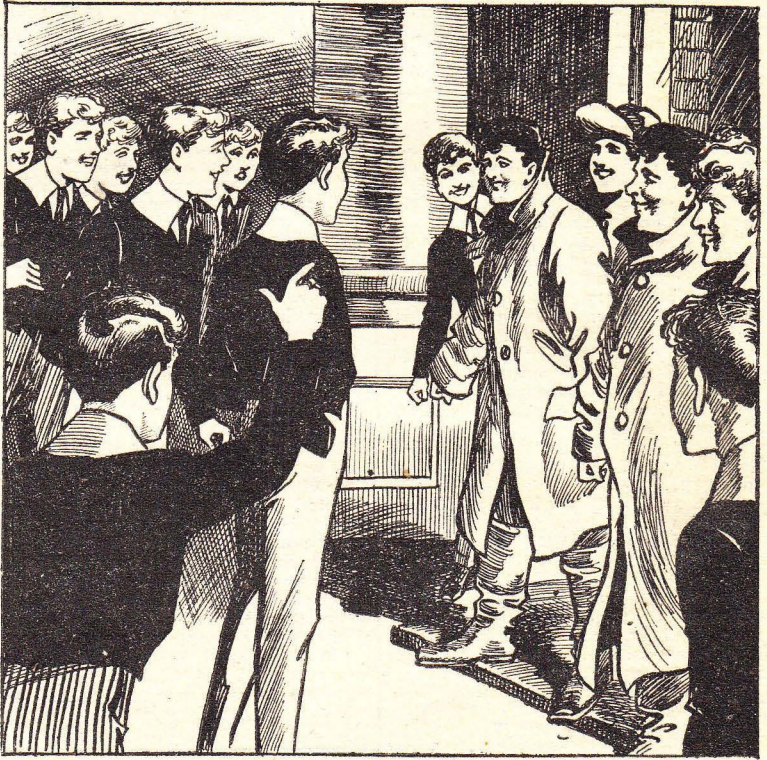
"I tell you—" yelled Bunter.

"I shall complain to the Head if you tell me any more stories, Master Bunter."

"I've lost the note!" shrieked the unhappy Owl of the Remove. "I tell you—"

"Nonsense!"

Bunter snorted. There was no convincing Mrs. Mimble; and the Owl of the Remove opened the shop door again, and rolled out into the quad, in the



THE RETURN OF THE HEROES!—"Here they come!" There was a rush of the juniors to get the door open. The Famous Five, wrapped in thick overcoats, and with sea boots on, came in. "Three cheers for the giddy heroes!" roared Tom Brown. (See Chapter 4.)

faint hope of being able to extract another pound note from Lord Mauleverer. Mrs. Mimble wrestled with the door, and shut it after him, and murmured things uncomplimentary to Bunter as she went back, red and flushed, to her little parlour.

And Billy Bunter, heedless and disconsolate, tacked away across the Close, and reached the School House at last in a state of exhaustion and exasperation, to find fresh troubles awaiting him there.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
The Way of the Transgressor!

HERE they come!" There was a rush of the juniors to get the door open now, wind or no wind. Five youths wrapped up in thick overcoats, with sea-boots on, had arrived. The Famous Five, provided with a change of clothes at the Anchor, had returned to the school.

The great oaken door swung open, and the Famous Five came in, with the wind behind them, breathlessly.

They were surprised to find Greyfriars already in possession of the news.

"Three cheers for the giddy heroes!" roared Tom Brown.

And they were given with a will.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The door was shut, after a struggle. The juniors surrounded the five heroes, who looked queer enough in huge sailor clothes and sea-boots.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you duffers chattering about?" asked Bob Cherry.

"We've heard!" explained Bulstrode. "They telephoned from the Anchor. We know all about the giddy rescue. Hurrah!"

"Yaas, begad! Hurrah!"

"The hurrafulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The hungerfulness of our esteemed selves is also great."

"We're going to stand you a feed, begad," said Lord Mauleverer. "Bunter's gone for the grub now. He'll be back by the time you've changed."

"He may be back, but I'm doubtful about the grub," said Bulstrode.

"We'll scalp him, begad, if he has wofed it!" said Lord Mauleverer.

The Famous Five went up to the Remove dormitory and changed their clothes. They came down with keen appetites for tea. They had not suffered from the effects of their adventures, only, as Bob Cherry remarked, it had made them extra hungry. They were fully prepared to do justice to Lord Mauleverer's feed.

"Where's the giddy spread?" asked Bob Cherry, as they joined the juniors downstairs.

"Bunter hasn't got back yet," said Tom Brown.

There was a loud knocking at the hall window.

"Here he is!"

The window was opened, and Billy Bunter was dragged in. He collapsed upon the floor, and gasped for breath. The juniors surrounded him. There was no sign of a parcel about the fat junior.

"Where's the grub?" demanded Lord Mauleverer.

"Ow! I'm winded! Ow!"

"Got the tommy?" asked Nugent.

"Ow! No!"

"Couldn't get across to the tuckshop, I suppose," said Hazeldene. "Never mind. Hand over the quid, and let somebody else try."

"Where's the grub?" demanded Lord Mauleverer.

"Ow! I'm winded! Ow!"

"Got the tommy?" asked Nugent.

"Ow! No!"

"Couldn't get across to the tuckshop, I suppose," said Hazeldene. "Never mind. Hand over the quid, and let somebody else try."

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"Ow! I got there, but Mrs. Mimble wouldn't let me have the things."

"What rot!"

"Rats!"

"Produce the quid!"

"I've lost it!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"Bosh!"

"Rats!"

"I tell you I've lost it, and Mrs. Mimble wouldn't trust me."

"Shows her sense, anyway," said Bulstrode.

"Begad, that's rotten!" said Mauleverer.

"The fat bounder!" growled Johnny Bull. "He's scoffed the grub, and made up this yarn. I know him!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"I said he would bring the grub back inside!" grinned Tom Brown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," roared Johnny Bull, shaking the fat junior by the shoulder, "we're hungry. We've come back with a top-notch appetite. Understand? Produce that grub!"

"I—I—I—"

"Up-end him and shake him by the feet if you want to see the grub produced," suggested Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I tell you I lost the quid—I really lost it! I—I'm not telling fairy-tales this time."

"You can't expect us to believe in a sudden change like that," said Nugent.

"Now, Bunt, did you, or did you not, go to the tuckshop?"

"I've told you I did!" roared Bunter.

"Then what have you done with the grub?"

"There wasn't any grub. I lost the quid, and Mrs. Mimble wouldn't trust me with the tommy," said Bunter. "My word wasn't good enough. Huh!"

"That sounds true enough," said Johnny Bull. "I know Mrs. Mimble is a sensible woman."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"All the same, you can't expect us to swallow yarns about lost quids," said Bob Cherry. "It's too thick!"

"The thickfulness is terrific!"

"I suppose you can take my word for it?" grunted Billy Bunter.

"We want grub for it, not your word. You'd better produce that grub, or—"

"How can I produce it when I haven't got it?" roared Bunter.

"Turn him inside-out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull shook a threatening finger at Billy Bunter.

"You say you haven't eaten the grub?" he demanded.

"Ow! No!"

"Have you hidden it in your study?"

"No!" yelled Bunter furiously.

It was particularly exasperating to the Owl of the Remove to have his word doubted when he was, as a matter of fact, telling the truth for once. But he could not expect the juniors to believe him. As Bob Cherry remarked, they would want a lot of evidence before they believed that a leopard could change his spots, or a Ethiopian his skin, or that Bunter would tell the truth.

"Well, if you haven't eaten it, it can be produced," said Johnny Bull. "If you haven't got it into our study in five minutes, we'll scalp you!"

"The scalpfulness will be terrific, my honoured and esteemed and disgusting Bunter."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Bunter. And he rolled away. Johnny Bull called after him.

"Five minutes, mind!"

Five minutes elapsed without the feed being placed on the table of Study No. 1. The Famous Five were exasperated. The keen wind had given them specially good appetites, and they wanted that feed badly. Lord Mauleverer was ready to stand another pound note if somebody could be found to make the perilous voyage to the tuckshop. But the chums of the Remove did not see it. They did not think, either, that even Bunter could have stored away a pound's worth of food at one sitting. It followed, therefore, that he had concealed the tuck for a future feed, and they meant to make him disgorge.

Billy Bunter had taken refuge in his study. He trusted to the protection of Peter Todd, his study-mate, who was a wonderful fighting-man. But Peter Todd was not disposed to take up the cudgels for Bunter. He did not believe the story of the lost pound note any more than the others did, and he was inclined to help the Famous Five to deal severely with the Owl of the Remove.

When six or seven angry faces glared into the study in search of Bunter, the fat junior promptly placed himself behind Peter Todd. Peter Todd equally promptly caught him by the collar and spun him across the study, so that he fell into the arms of the avengers.

"Hold on!" roared Bunter, as they grasped him. "Hold on! That is to say, let go! Yow! I say, Todd, you beast, stand by a fellow, can't you?"

"Not unless you produce the grub," said Todd cheerfully. "I'm not going to have a grub-hunter and plate-licker in my study. Own up, and be decent."

"I tell you—"

"Whoppers!" said Peter Todd.

"Look here, you beast—yarooch! I say, you fellows, I'm telling the truth—the whole truth, and nothing but the—yow!—truth—"

"Then you must be ill," said Bob Cherry. "Perhaps a bumping will set you right."

"Ow! Ow! Yah! Beasts!"

Bump!

"Now, then," roared Johnny Bull.

"Where's the grub?"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Master Wharton," exclaimed Trotter, the page, hurrying along the passage.

"Mrs. Kebble has got tea all ready for you. She thought you would be hungry, and—"

"Hurrah!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Mrs. Kebble is a giddy brick! Come on, you chaps! We can let Bunter off, in the cires."

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "You can keep the grub now, Bunter!"

The juniors walked away chuckling and leaving Billy Bunter boiling with indignation. Mrs. Kebble had got a nice "high tea" ready for the five heroes, and they did full justice.

Later that night, when the wind had fallen a little, a fat form might have been seen groping about in the shadowy Close and peering through a pair of very large spectacles into all sorts of holes and corners.

It was Billy Bunter, in search of the lost pound note!

THE END.

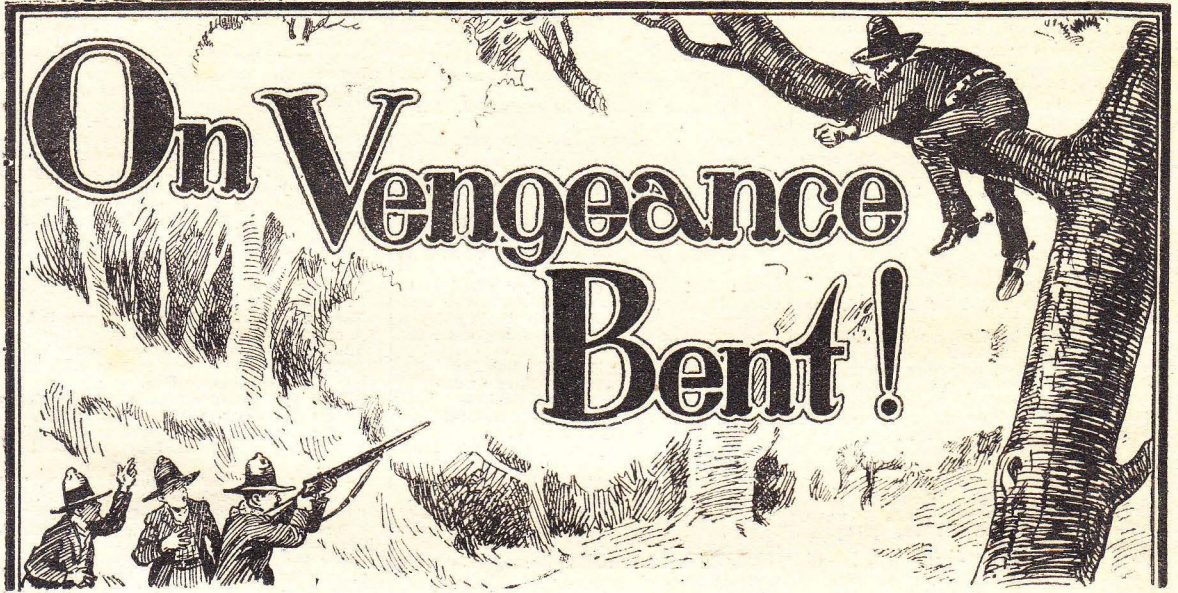
(Another long, complete story dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars, entitled "Coker's Fund!" in next week's issue.)

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:
FUND!

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

NEXT TUESDAY! "COKER'S FUND!"

IN WHICH THINGS ARE SQUARED UP BETWEEN THE CEDAR CREEK CHUMS AND 'FRISCO JO, THE MEXICAN HORSE-THIEF.



A Splendid Long Complete Tale, dealing with the Schooldays in the Backwoods of Canada of

FRANK RICHARDS

(Author of the Famous School Tales of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Vamoosed!

IT was growing late. Frank Richards & Co. stood in the irregular main street of Thompson town, looking tired and exasperated. Gunten's store was already closed, and the naphtha-lamps at the Red Dog Saloon were being extinguished by the Chinese bar-keeper.

"Thompson's going to bed," said Frank Richards, with a faint grin. "It's about time we did the same."

"I guess so," said Bob Lawless dismally. "Better get home, I suppose," said Vere Beauclerc slowly. "But—"

"But what, Cherub?"

"We're pretty late, as it is," remarked Beauclerc. "We've taken an inch, so we may as well take an ell."

"But the game's up!" said Frank Richards. "We've hunted through the town for that rascal Lopez. He's gone, plain enough."

"Vamoosed the ranch," grunted Bob; "and our fifty dollars gone with him! He's hit out, Cherub. Didn't Lawrence tell us he saw him taking the trail, mounted on Mulligan's old hoss, bother him?"

"Why shouldn't we take the trail, too?" "Oh!"

"It's a clear moon to-night," said Beauclerc. "And there's still a good bit of snow on the trail. That horse of Lopez's isn't fit for much. We've got good horses. And if we catch that Mexican rascal, we can haul him easily enough—the three of us."

Beauclerc's chums exchanged a glance. They were quite ready to act on the suggestion of the Cherub.

It was an exasperating position for Frank Richards & Co.

'Frisco Jo, the Mexican, had sold them a share in a gold-mine for fifty dollars.

He had departed with the cash, leaving them to discover that the gold-mine was a swindle, and worth no more than the rest of the rocks in the Thompson foothills.

The chums of Cedar Creek School were not simpletons, but they had been taken in by a "salted" mine, as many another had been taken in before.

They had not suspected that the gold grains they had discerned in the rock were made by a cheap bronze powder, carefully dusted there by the astute Mexican.

They would have given a good deal more

than the fifty dollars to get to close quarters with Jose Lopez, and tell him what they thought of him—with appropriate action.

"Why not try it?" continued Beauclerc. "You fellows will get into a row for being so late, anyway."

"Right-ho!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Let's try it! If we run down that rotten greaser we'll make him hand back the dollars fast enough!"

"And Mulligan's horse," added Beauclerc—"he's stolen that. Mulligan was hiring it to him, but he won't see it again now."

"I reckon not. Come on!"

"Hold on a minute!" said Beauclerc quietly. "There'll be a good many hoof-tracks on the trail. We can get an old shoe from Mulligan. You remember he told us his horse was shod this week."

"Good old Cherub; you've got the brains!" The three chums made their way at once to Mulligan's cabin, which lay back from the street behind Gunten's store.

A light was still burning there, and the door was opened by Mulligan himself when Bob Lawless knocked.

"You young gossoons again!" exclaimed Mr. Mulligan. The chums had been there before that evening, inquiring after Jose Lopez.

"Us!" said Bob Lawless. "We're going after that greaser, Mr. Mulligan, and if we rope him in we'll bring your hoss home for you."

The big Irishman grinned. "Sure, 'Frisco Jo will be too slippery for yez," he said. "But I wish you luck!"

"Your horse was fresh shod this week——"

"Thru' for yez! The yaller villain was already thinkin' of lightin' out. I can see that now," said Mr. Mulligan ruefully.

"Is the old shoe knocking about?" "It's in the yard."

"I suppose we can take it?" "Take it an' welcome!" said Mr. Mulligan, smiling. "I'll show yez a loight."

He came out with a lantern, and in a couple of minutes Bob Lawless picked up the discarded shoe of 'Frisco Jo's horse.

"Is that it, Mr. Mulligan?" "That's it."

"Thanks! Good-night!" "Good-night to yez, and good luck!" grinned Mr. Mulligan; and he went back into his cabin, evidently not placing much faith in

the ability of the three schoolboys to run down the elusive greaser.

The chums returned to their horses, which were hitched on one of the posts outside Gunten's store.

They mounted, and rode out of the town to the south, the trail taken by the Mexican, according to the information they had received from Bill Lawrence, the elder brother of one of their friends at Cedar Creek School.

Outside the town there was snow from a late fall on the rough trail, and the ruts were thick with it.

But near the town the trampling of many hoofs and boots had obliterated the tracks they were looking for.

They did not expect to pick up the Mexican's trail so near at hand.

They rode on at a trot.

Overhead the full, clear moon sailed high in a velvet sky, shining down in a flood of silver light upon the valley and the wide river and the foothills beyond.

It was almost as light as day on the trail.

Half a mile from the town the three schoolboys halted, and jumped down.

Here the trail was clear of the many tracks that had gathered near the settlement, and only a few tracks were to be seen in the velvety carpet of snow.

Bob Lawless, who was skilled from childhood in woodcraft and scoutcraft, examined the tracks attentively.

"Only three horsemen have been along here since sundown, coming away from the town," he remarked.

"And one of them was Lopez!" said Frank Richards.

"You bet!" "Pick out the trail, then."

"I guess I can do it—and, by gum, here it is!"

With the cast shoe of Mulligan's horse in his hand, Bob easily identified the track of that animal.

"Lucky there hasn't been a later fall of snow," he said. "Look! Here it is, clean cut as a die! Follow on!"

Leading their horses, the schoolboys followed the track.

For a good mile the chums of Cedar Creek tramped on, and then Bob Lawless halted with a sudden exclamation.

"The rotter left the trail here!"

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NEXT TUESDAY! "CHECKMATING 'POKER PETE'!"

A MAGNIFICENT TALE OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The hoof-track turned off abruptly from the snowy trail, and was lost on a rising ridge of stony ground that left no trace.

For ten minutes the three chums sought for a further track, but the hard stones held no trace, and they gathered in the trail again, angry and disappointed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not Beaten Yet!

FRANK RICHARDS frowned, and Beauclerc compressed his lips.

It looked as if the pursuit had come to a sudden and disappointing end.

Bob Lawless knitted his brows in deep thought.

"No go, Bob?" asked Frank, at last.

"I'm not so sure," answered Bob Lawless slowly. "The Mexican cleared off the trail at this point, and there's no track at hand, that's a cinch. But—"

"He guessed he might be followed," remarked Beauclerc.

"Yes; he might have reckoned that Mulligan would come looking for his hoss," grinned Bob. "But he may have had another reason, too. He's crossed this ridge to the eastward, and there's no known trail over that ground. But about six miles away, if he keeps on, he comes to Kootenay Creek, and I guess that's where he's making for. I guess he'll sell Mulligan's hoss there, and light out again to-morrow."

"Likely enough," assented Beauclerc. "We couldn't get to Kootenay Creek to-night, though—unless you fellows are ready to make a night of it."

"No good if we did," replied Bob. "The place would be fast asleep, and we couldn't wake up all the town asking after a Mexican horse-thief."

"Ha, ha! No!"

"But we can get there to-morrow morning bright and early," said Bob, with a glint in his eyes. "Lopez isn't the kind of pilgrim to be an early-riser; and it's likely enough he'll stay on to sell the horse before he goes farther. He won't want to keep a stolen horse with him in the section."

"He may light out for the States," suggested Beauclerc.

Bob shook his head.

"There's that salted mine in the Thompson Hills, Cherub. Lopez didn't fix that up simply to corral fifty dollars. He's going to sell a share in that mine to every greenhorn in the Thompson valley before he leaves this section. I guess he will keep within easy riding distance of that salted mine for some time to come."

"Right-ho!" agreed Frank.

"Anyway, we'll look for him at Kootenay Creek to-morrow," decided Bob Lawless. "If he's there, he certainly won't be expecting us, and we may catch him napping. Is it a go?"

"You bet!"

And the three chums remounted and rode homewards.

"What about this gee-gee?" asked Beauclerc, when they came to the fork in the valley-trail where their paths divided.

Beauclerc's horse belonged to the Lawless ranch, and Bob had lent it to him for that evening's ride to Thompson.

"Get home on it," said Bob. "Meet us here at dawn."

"Right you are!"

And the chums parted.

It was long past midnight as Frank and Bob galloped off to the Lawless ranch in the bright moonlight.

"The popper will be rather wild," Bob remarked, as they drew near the ranch. "We've fairly made a night of it this time. I suppose we shall have to explain. But he will yell when he hears that we've bought a share in a wild-cat mine!"

"Can't be helped!" said Frank.

"And I owe Billy Cook twenty-five dollars out of the fifty we gave Lopez!" said Bob dismally. "I wouldn't have borrowed it, only we'd seen the gold in the mine, and I thought— By gum! Fancy being taken in by a salted mine, like a tenderfoot from Mugsville!"

"We owe it, you mean," said Frank. "We'll save up and square Billy if we don't get it back from Lopez. But I hope we shall."

There was a light burning in the ranch when the schoolboys came in.

Mr. Lawless was sitting up for them with a somewhat stern brow.

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"Well, you young rascals, what have you to say for yourselves?" he demanded grimly.

"Sorry, popper!" said Bob meekly. "I'll tell you."

He told the story of the salted mine and the vain search for the Mexican who had corralled the dollars.

The rancher's stern brow relaxed, and he burst into a hearty laugh before his son had concluded.

"You young donkey!" he exclaimed. "Ha, ha!"

"I suppose it seems funny to you, dad!" mumbled Bob.

The rancher roared.

"It does, sonny—it does!" he gasped. "Next time you buy a gold-mine take your father into your confidence, and let him give you some advice."

"We were going to surprise you with it, dad."

"Ha, ha! Well, you have surprised me!" grinned the rancher. "I should never have thought of it, you, Bob! And where did you get fifty dollars from to pay this greaser for his mine?"

"All our savings!" said Bob ruefully. "And—and one dollar of Chunky Todgers—it was that young ass first told us about it—and I borrowed twenty-five dollars!"

The rancher frowned a little.

"I reckoned it was such a sure cinch, dad," said Bob.

"You young duffer!" growled the rancher. He groped in his pocket. "I'll give you the money to settle your debt. As for your own money, you deserve to lose it for your foolishness!"

Bob took the twenty-five dollars very shamefacedly.

"If—if we get the dollars back from the greaser, dad, I'll hand you back every cent!" he said.

Mr. Lawless burst into another roar.

"I guess that's a big if!" he exclaimed. "Don't make me laugh any more, Bob! Go to bed—go to bed!"

And the chums of Cedar Creek went to bed, not feeling at all pleased with themselves.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Taking the Trail!

EARLY next morning Bob Lawless led the way to Billy Cook's cabin.

It was Sunday morning, and the hour was early, but the ranch foreman was already up, and a kettle was singing on his stove as the chums looked in at his open doorway.

"Hallo, hallo!" boomed the foreman. "You up already! What's your little game?"

"Off on a ride for the day," said Bob. "We'll have some of your coffee and crackers, Billy, if you feel inclined to be hospitable."

The ranchman grinned.

"I'll shove in some more coffee for you," he answered. "And there's crackers and ham. Help yourselves."

"Good man!"

The schoolboys at standing beside their ponies. They had no time to wait for the breakfast in the ranch-house.

The ranchman's fare was homely, but ranch-life spelt keen appetite and good digestion.

Frank and Bob enjoyed that hurried breakfast, washed down by draughts of nearly boiling coffee in tin pannikins.

"And here's your twenty-five, old scout," said Bob Lawless. "And thanks very much for the loan."

"You didn't want it after all?" asked Billy Cook.

"Well, yes; but"—Bob coloured—"Frisco Jo, of Thompson, sold us a part share in a gold-mine."

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the ranch foreman.

"Funny ain't it?" said Bob dismally. "The popper's given me the tin to square you, Billy; but we're going to get it back from Jose Lopez and square popper."

"Not in a month of Sundays!" grinned Billy Cook.

"You'll jolly well see, you doubting Thomas!"

"Haw, haw! Are you going gunning after Jose Lopez this morning?" spluttered Billy Cook.

"That's the game."

"I guess I'd corral you here, an' not let you go, only I know you'll never get inside a ten-mile ride of him!" chuckled Billy Cook.

"Oh, rats!"

And the chums rode away, leaving the big ranchman still guffawing.

They soon reached the forked trail, where they found Vere Beauclerc waiting for them with his horse.

He mounted at once, and the three rode on together.

Once or twice they met and exchanged greetings with some rider, but for the most part that early-morning ride was solitary.

The sun was getting high when they came in sight of Kootenay Creek at last.

The camp, busy enough in the summer-time, was almost dead now; deserted by more than half its inhabitants, and little going on on the busiest day of the week.

The store was open, and several horses hitched outside it, and Bob Lawless dismounted there to look at the animals.

"Good luck!" he exclaimed.

"What is it, Bob?"

"Mulligan's horse!"

"Oh, good egg!"

The three chums had seen the horse before, but only Bob had recognised it.

Mulligan's horse had changed somewhat in appearance. It had been brown, with some white-grey patches, before.

Now it had a white muzzle, white patches on the neck, and one leg was half white.

Only a keen eye would have detected that the colouring was assisted by paint skilfully applied.

Jose Lopez, dealer in salted mines, was evidently an experienced horse-thief also, and well up in the tricks of his peculiar trade.

"Sure that's the gee?" asked Frank, a little doubtfully.

"You bet your sweet life!" said Bob Lawless emphatically. "Look here—he knows me, don't you, old hoss?"

The horse whinnied softly as Bob caressed his nose.

"Yes, that's the gee right enough," said Vere Beauclerc, with a nod. "It's got up pretty skilfully, though. Has Lopez sold it already, I wonder?"

Bob knitted his brows.

"He got here too late for that last night," he said, "and the morning is still young. However, we'll see. Whoever's got possession of the horse now is in the store, as the gee's hitched up here. Come on!"

Bob quietly took the rifle from his saddle and slipped in a cartridge.

He dropped the weapon into the hollow of his arm as he led the way into the camp store.

Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc followed him in, their riding-whips in their hands, and their hearts beating a little.

If the Mexican was there—and it was most probable that he was there—they were booked for trouble, and it might turn out to be very serious trouble indeed.

But they did not hesitate for a moment.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for 'Frisco Jo!

BUEN caballo, senores—a good horse!

What do you say?"

The hisping Spanish voice greeted the ears of Frank Richards & Co.

as they entered the store of Kootenay Camp. There were half a dozen men in the store, cattlemen or lumbermen, some of them taking "nips" that cold morning, though Kootenay Camp whisky was far from being the best means of keeping out the cold.

"Frisco Jo was talking to them in his hisping English.

It was the Mexican. His dusky face was partly turned from the newcomers, and he did not see them for a moment.

And from his remark they knew that they had arrived in time to prevent Mulligan's horse finding a new and illegal owner.

"Buen caballo!" grinned one of the cattlemen. "Good hoss? Spavined old bag of bones, you mean, Don Whiskers!"

The Mexican made a deprecating gesture. "I ask not a thousand dollars for my horse," he said. "I sell him for ten dollars, because I have taken a job at the saw-mill, and do not want a horse any longer. Ten dollars—that is a bargain!"

"I guess I'll look at the critter."

"Same here!"

Bob Lawless strode forward.

"No need to look at the critter, boys!" he chimed in. "That horse is stolen, and that greaser is a horse-thief!"

"Frisco Jo spun round with a gasp.


His black eyes seemed to bulge from his

(Continued on page 17.)

NEXT TUESDAY!

"CHECKMATING 'POKER PETE'!"


A MAGNIFICENT TALE OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.



BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

St. Jim's
Greyfriars
Rookwood

Edited by W. G. BUNTER of Greyfriars, assisted by SAMMY BUNTER of Greyfriars, BAGGY TRIMBLE and FATTY WYNN of St. Jim's, and TUBBY MUFFIN of Rookwood.



IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By Billy Bunter.

My dear Readers,—I am one of those brainy, talented fellows who can make something out of nothing. That's Genius, that is, with a capital "G."

Now, if you were to go to Harry Wharion, and say to him, "Publish a special number of the 'Greyfriars Herald,' dealing with the tellyphone," he would blink at you in astonishment, and say, "My dear chap, it can't be done! The subject doesn't give sufficient scope. It would be impossible to publish a Special Tellyphone Number."

It is not impossibal, and I have proved it.

The tellyphone, in spite of all its faults—or perhaps bekwase of them—provides a grate deal of humour. It's serprizing what a lot of fun you can get out of it. Of corse, a born humorist like me—I'm the Mark Twain of Greyfriars—can skeeweze a tremendous amount of humour out of the tellyphone.

We have several tellyphones at Greyfriars. Unfortunately, there isn't one in my editorial sanktum. Every time I want to get threw to one of my fat subbs at St. Jim's or Rookwood, I have to use the tellyphone in the prefects' room. And the prefects sometimes cut up rusty.

It has been trooly said that the tellyphone is one of the greatest inconveniences of modern times. It's all right if you're not in a hurry; but if you want to kommunicate with somebody quickly, it is far better to write a letter or send a tellygram.

I rang up the Elysian Cafe in Courtfield the other day, to ask them to reserve me a table, as I was giving a little dinner party that evening. I was put threw to the Gas Company, the Water Company, the Post Offis, and the Perlice Station, before I got the number I wanted. And then the proprietor of the cafe said to me, "Sorry, sir, but if you wanted a table for this evening you should have rung up a week in advance. It takes such a long time to get threw." It does indeed!

Well, well, we must get on with the washing, as the lordress said when she returned from her summer holidays. I hope you will enjoy this number, dear readers, to your hart's contempt.

Yours sincerely,
YOUR EDITOR.

WANTED ON THE PHONE!

By Dick Penfold.

In study cool I tried to write,
With volumes piled around me;
And in a sad and sorry plight,
Bolsover major found me.
He bellowed, in his booming tone:
"You're wanted on the telephone!"

Upon the Greyfriars cricket-ground
I hit a lot of sixes;
At batting I am quite renowned,
I get teams out of fixes.
Till Toddy, through his megaphone,
Cries: "Pen, you're wanted on the phone!"

When seated in the tuckshop cool
Devouring strawberry ices,
I nearly tumble off my stool.
For soon there comes a crisis.
I hear Bob Cherry faintly moan:
"You're wanted on the telephone!"

When I go toddling to the gym
With my pal David Morgan,
Intending to encounter him
And punch his nasal organ,
I hear the voice of Wingate groan:
"You're wanted on the telephone!"

But when I sit and swot in class,
And Quelch's sternly scowling,
I never, never hear, alas!
Some frantic schoolmate howling:
"Pack up your books, leave work alone;
You're wanted on the telephone!"

TELLYPHONE TITTLE-TATTLE!

By Sammy Bunter.

The other day a deputation of Second-Formers called upon the Head to demand that a tellyphone should be installed in the fags' Kommon-room. The Head himself has got one, and the prefects have got one, and most of the masters have got one, so why should the fags be left out in the cold? We put the matter very strongly to the Head, and I was the spokesman of the party; but, alas! my elterquence was waisted. The Head ordered me to "ring off," and we are still without a tellyphone. It's a crool shame!

I understand that my brother Billy had a terrifying eggspereience the other day. He was locked in a public tellyphone-box. Horrer of horrors! I wonder Billy is alive to tell the tale. Had he remained in that box a few minnits longer than he did there would be a fresh editor of the "Weekly." And his name would be Samuel Tuckless Bunter! At prezant, Samuel Tuckless is very luckless!

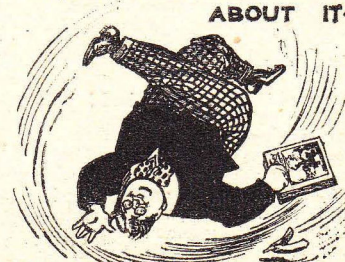
It has come to my nollidge that Wibley of the Remove intends to invent a tellyphone sitem at Greyfriars. All the junior studdies are going to be ekwipped with tellyphones, as well as all the dormitories. This is a grate stunt, and I wish Wibley the best of luck. Won't it be ripping to be able to ring up Billy at midnight, and say, "Hallo, Bill! Have you prepared that midnight feest yet? You have? Oh, good! I'll be with you in two tix!"

It is very funny to hear the different kinds of voices on the tellyphone. The Head roars like a peel of thunder, Quelch barks like a blessed watch-dog, Johnny Bull bellows, Bolsover major booms, and my brother Billy squeeks. As for me, I talk in calm, commanding toans. I should make a jolly good tellyphonist.

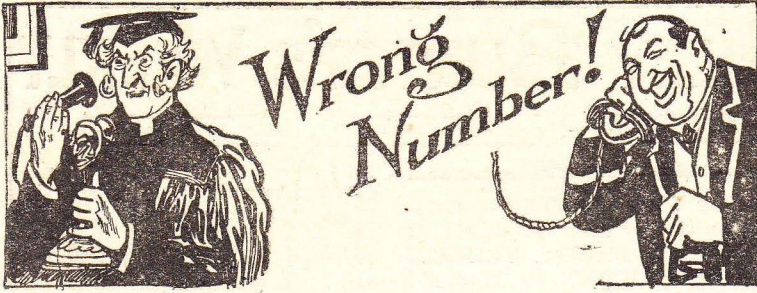
A lot of people seem to think that the tellyphone is a useless instrument. Personally, I regard it as a boon and a blessing to mankind. Think of the money you save on postage-stamps and tellygrams! Think of the pleasure you derive from chatting to somebody who is ten million miles away! I shall never join the ranks of those who are agitating for the abolition of the tellyphone.

I hope to have a tellyphone of my own in the near future. And then you will be able to ring me up, and pass the time of day with me, and ask me if I am fat and well. How glorious it will be to konverse with my vast army of chums!
(Set your mind at rest, Sammy. You'll never have a tellyphone of your own. I'm not going to have my sub-editors holding conversations behind my back, so there!—Ed.)

LOOK SLIPPY ABOUT IT—



—AND GO AND ORDER YOUR COPY OF—
"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"



An Exasperating Experience for the Head.

By JIMMY SILVER. (of Rookwood.)

THE HEAD (at the telephone): Give me Latcham, 102.
 OPERATOR: Half a tick. I'll put you through.
 THE HEAD: Pray be quick, and waste no time!
 OPERATOR: No, sir; that would be a crime!

(Delay of five minutes.)

THE HEAD: Are you there? Are you there?
 Really, I am in despair!
 To Latcham Stores I wish to speak,
 To order groceries for the week.

(Further delay of five minutes.)

THE HEAD: Oh, that lazy operator!
 OPERATOR: Really, I shall have to slate her!
 You wanted Latcham, 102?
 A VOICE: Half a moment, sir—you're through!
 THE HEAD (consulting a list): Who is at the other end?
 Take this order down, my friend!
 VOICE: Half a pound of margarine—
 THE HEAD (impatiently): I don't understand, old bean!
 Do not be a stupid dunce!
 Take this order down at once!
 Half a pound of margarine,
 Twenty eggs, all fresh and clean.
 A one-pound pot of strawberry jam,
 And a really nice York ham.
 A tin of salmon, if you please,
 And a Gorgonzola cheese.
 VOICE: Have you any currant cake?
 THE HEAD: You are making a mistake!
 VOICE: Man! What ever do you mean?
 THE HEAD: This is not the Stores, old bean!
 VOICE: What! Then tell me, if you will—
 THE HEAD: It's the asylum on the hill!
 Oh, that dreadful operator!
 I find it in my heart to hate her!
 I asked for Latcham, 102.
 VOICE: Our number is one-twenty-two!
 THE HEAD: I much regret you have been worried.
 VOICE: It's all right, guv'nor; don't get flurried!

(Rings off.)

THE HEAD: Operator! Where are you?
 OPERATOR: I wanted Latcham, 102.
 THE HEAD: Sorry, sir, I couldn't catch 'em!
 OPERATOR: There's no one at the Stores in Latcham.
 THE HEAD: No one at the Stores, you say?
 OPERATOR: No; it's early-closing day!
 THE HEAD: Had you told me that before,
 OPERATOR: I should not feel so vexed and sore.
 THE HEAD: Why did you give me one-two-two?
 OPERATOR (checkily): The asylum's just the place for you!

(Vanishes from the phone.)

THE HEAD (mopping his brow): Bless my soul! This is too bad!
 I believe I'm going mad!
 Operators are appalling,
 Rude remarks they're always bawling!
 I confess, it is not curious
 That I feel both flushed and furious!
 Gracious! How I gasp and groan
 When I hear the telephone!

(Bell clangs loudly.)

THE HEAD: Someone wants to speak to me.
 They will find I've gone to tea!

(Hurls the telephone to the floor, and stamps angrily out of the study.)
 THE POPULAR.—No. 184.

TORTURE TO TAGGLES!

By Ralph Reckness
 Cardew.

Taggles the porter has always got a long list of grievances, which he airs on every possible occasion.

His latest grievance was the installation of a telephone in his lodge. Taggles didn't want the beastly thing, and he said so. But the authorities seemed to think that the porter's lodge should possess a telephone.

From the moment that the instrument was fixed up Taggles had no peace.

The butcher rang up, to inquire if the Head would like some nice pork chops sent round to his private house. The baker rang up, to ask if Mr. Railton would like any muffins. The dentist rang up, to make an appointment with Mr. Selby. And one of the Governors telephoned, and wished to know if the Head's cold was better.

"Drat 'is cold!" growled Taggles. "Drat the telephone! Drat everything! If fair gets a man's back up, havin' to carry these 'ere messages to and fro."

There was a tap on the door of the lodge. Taggles shuffled to the door, and savagely wrenched it open. Tom Merry confronted him, with a bright smile.

"Wodyer want?" snarled Taggles. "May I use the telephone, please?" "Get hout!" roared the irate porter. And the door was slammed in Tom Merry's face.

There was a brief interval; then another tap sounded on the door.

This time the intruder was Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

"Sowwy to trouble you, Taggles, but may I use the telephone?"

"You—you—"
 The door was again slammed, and Arthur Augustus just managed to withdraw his aristocratic nose in time.

The school porter shuffled back into his lodge, and settled down in the armchair, and pulled out his pipe. But he was not to be permitted to smoke the pipe of peace.

A crowd of fellows came along, and hammered at the door of the lodge.

"Buck up, Taggy!" It was Jack Blake's voice this time. "May we use the telephone, please?"

Taggles had come nearly to the end of his tether. He searched for his broom, and found it, and charged full-tilt into the throng of juniors. Astonished and dismayed by the attack, they scattered in all directions.

"Get hout!" roared Taggles. "Ain't a man to get no peace in 'is old age?"

All through that day the interruptions continued.

Next morning Taggles presented himself in the Head's study.

"Which I've come about that there telephone, sir," he said. "Either it's took away, or I gives in my notice!"

"My dear man—" gasped the Head. "I'm fed-up, that's wot I am!" said Taggles. "Every minute of the day that blessed bell's a ringin' an' a clangin'. Which I refuse to stick it any longer!"

Taggles was quite firm on that point. And shortly afterwards the telephone was removed from the porter's lodge, and Taggles' list of grievances was reduced by one!



In Durance Vile!

By JOHNNY BULL.

BILLY BUNTER stepped into the telephone-box on Friar-ale Station. He closed the door behind him, and gave a gasp.

"Wish they'd make these boxes bigger!" he grumbled. "There's hardly room to turn. And I simply can't breathe!"

The fat junior felt like a hippopotamus in a parrot's-cage. With great difficulty he turned round, and lifted the telephone-receiver off its hooks.

"I want Rookwood School," he said to the operator. "I forget the number."

There was a brief pause. Then a feminine voice rapped out:

"Three pennies, please!"

Billy Bunter was in funds. He had a shillingworth of coppers—all pennies—in his pocket. This constituted his sole worldly wealth.

"It's awful, having to fork out threepence for three minutes' jaw with Tubby Muffin!" he growled. "Still, it's got to be done."

He placed three pennies in the slot, and waited.

"You're through!" said the operator.

Billy Bunter spoke into the transmitter:

"Is that Rookwood School?"

"Yes."

"Can I speak to Muffin of the Fourth?"

"Hold on a moment!"

After some delay, the voice of Tubby Muffin, one of Billy Bunter's four fat subs, sounded over the wires:

"You want me, Billy?"

"Yes. I want you to write a special article, 'How to Cook a Full-Course Dinner in Five Minutes.' I'd write it myself, but I happen to be awfully busy. Get the thing written at once, and post it to-night."

"But—"

"What are you 'butting' about?"

"You can't cook a full-course dinner in five minutes!"

"Yes, you can. And it's up to you to explain how."

"A blessed miracle would have to happen!" growled Tubby Muffin.

"Well, make one happen, then. I've got to have that article by the first post in the morning, or there will be ructions!"

Having delivered that ultimatum, Billy Bunter rung off. He turned to the door, and gave it a push; but nothing happened.

With a snort of impatience, the fat junior hurled himself at the door of the telephone-box. But it refused to budge.

Slowly it dawned upon Billy Bunter's mind that he was a prisoner!

How the door came to be locked was not clear. Something had gone wrong somewhere. But the grim fact remained that Billy Bunter was imprisoned in a place by comparison with which the Black Hole of Calcutta was a spacious and roomy apartment.

The stifling atmosphere caused Billy to perspire. He took out his handkerchief, and mopped his steaming brow. Then he lifted up his voice in a loud cry for help.

Friar-ale Station is one of those sleepy little stations where there is never anybody about, except when a train is due. And no train was due for several hours.

Even had anybody been in the vicinity, it is doubtful if they would have heard Billy Bunter's muffled cries.

The fat junior gave it up at last.

"Oh dear!" he groaned. "This is too awful for words! I shall be suffocated if I have to stay in here much longer!"

Then a brain-wave came to him. He laughed aloud.

"It's not so bad, after all, being imprisoned in a telephone-box!" he muttered. "You can always telephone for help!"

Bunter put through a call to the prefects' room at Greyfriars.

"Now we sha'n't be long!" he murmured. It was unfortunate for Billy that his call was answered by Loder of the Sixth.

Loder happened to be the only fellow in the prefects' room at the time. The others were on the cricket field.

"Who's there?" rapped out Loder.

"Bunter speaking. Is that Loder?"

"Yes."

"I say, Loder, I'm in a beastly hole!"

"Stay there, then!" was the unsympathetic rejoinder.

"Oh, really! Come and let me out, Loder, there's a good chap. I'm locked in the telephone-box on Friar-ale Station, and I'm being suffocated by inches!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Instead of betraying alarm at Billy Bunter's condition, Loder laughed loud and long. He seemed to regard it as a priceless joke.

"It's nothing to laugh at, Loder, I can assure you! I've been here twenty minutes already, and I feel awfully faint and dizzy. If help doesn't come soon, I shall expire!"

"I don't think many tears would be shed at Greyfriars!" chuckled Loder.



Billy Bunter picked up the telephone receiver and bashed it against the stout glass panel of the door.

"Ain't you coming to let me out?"

"No, I'm not. It isn't my place to go round liberating porpoises from telephone-boxes!"

"Oh, you rotter! I'm being suffocated by inches, I tell you!"

Loder gave a mocking laugh, and rung off.

To do the prefect justice, he did not believe that Bunter's plight was so serious as Bunter himself made out. Had he thought that the fat junior was in real danger of being suffocated, he would have taken steps to effect his release.

His telephone-call to the prefects' room having proved a failure, Billy Bunter put through a fresh call to Greyfriars, with a view of getting through to Mr. Quelch. This cost him a further threepence, and he now had only threepence left.

Billy Bunter was panting for breath by the time Mr. Quelch answered his summons.

The Remove master's tone was one of irritation and annoyance. The telephone-call had disturbed him in the middle of an afternoon siesta.

"Who is that?" he snapped.

"Bunter speaking, sir! Come at once! Don't waste a second!"

"What? What?"

"I'm shut up in a telephone-box on Friar-ale Station, sir! Come quickly and let me out, before I breathe my last!"

Mr. Quelch's tone grew thunderous:

"Boy! Bunter! Is this a hoax—a jape, as you would call it?"

"Nunno, sir! Not at all, sir!"

"You wish me to believe, Bunter, that you are incarcerated in a telephone-box, and that there is no one at hand to help you? If you expect me to believe that you must think me a very gullible person!"

"I tell you I'm in danger, sir—deadly danger! Every minute I'm getting weaker and weaker!"

"Enough, Bunter! I am convinced that this is a hoax—that you have called me up on the telephone in order to bring me on a fool's errand. On your return to Greyfriars I shall cane you severely!"

"Ow!"

Billy Bunter made a further appeal, which was cut short by Mr. Quelch ringing off.

With only the price of one more telephone-call in his pocket, the fat junior was in a parlous plight.

He decided, as a last resource, to ring up P.-c. Tozer at the police-station.

At last Billy Bunter obtained satisfaction. The voice of the slow-witted constable sounded like music in his ears.

"I say, Tozer, come and let me out—quick! I'm suffocating! I'm at my last gasp!"

"Eh?"

"You'll find me in the telephone-box—Friar-ale Station! I can't get out!"

"Why not open the door?" suggested Tozer.

"I can't, you chump! It's locked!"

"Which I'll be along in a few minutes," said the constable.

"Oh, good!"

But the minutes passed, and Tozer did not appear.

The situation had become desperate. Billy Bunter felt that he could hold out no longer.

There was only one thing to be done—a thing Bunter had not thought of before.

He picked up the telephone receiver, and bashed it against the stout glass panel of the door. He bashed and bashed with the frenzy of desperation, until he had reduced the glass panel to fragments.

There was now an aperture large enough for even Bunter to get through.

The fat junior staggered out on to the platform, and literally fell into the arms of Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, who had just arrived on the scene.

For some moments Billy Bunter was too exhausted to speak. At length, however, he managed to pour out his tale of woe.

Harry and Bob took compassion on their plump schoolfellow, and led him away to the bunshop in the village, where Bunter, under the influence of food and drink, swiftly revived.

On returning to Greyfriars, Harry Wharton made it clear to Mr. Quelch that Billy Bunter had not been guilty of a leg-pulling stunt. They also had a straight talk to Loder of the Sixth—a talk which made the rascally prefect feel very uncomfortable.

As for Billy Bunter, the next time he goes into a public telephone-box he will be careful not to close the door!

THE END.

HAVE YOU SEEN THE SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ON PAGE 24?

BAGGING BAGGY!

By Harry Manners.

"You're wanted on the phone, Merry, in the prefects' room."

"Thanks, Kildare!"

Tom Merry stepped along to the prefects' room, and Monty Lowther accompanied him.

Tom Merry placed the receiver to his ear, and spoke into the transmitter.

"Hallo!"

"Is that you, Merry?" demanded a voice.

"Yes."

"I will trouble you to say 'sir.' Are you not aware that your headmaster is speaking?"

Tom Merry gave a jump.

He clearly recognised the voice which came over the wires. But it was not the Head's voice. It was the voice of Baggy Trimble of the Fourth.

This was evidently Trimble's idea of a hoax. The fat junior was trying to mimic the Head's voice, but with scant success. Trimble's characteristic squeak could easily be distinguished.

But Tom Merry did not betray the fact that he had "tumbled" to the little deception.

"Oh, yes, sir!" he said meekly. "You wish to speak to me?"

"I do! It has come to my knowledge, Merry, that a banquet took place in the Shell dormitory last night, and you were the organiser."

"Oh crumbs!"

"You will come to my study immediately, Merry, and prepare yourself to receive a severe flogging!"

Tom Merry grinned.

"Very good, sir!" he said.

There was a brief pause. Then Tom Merry spoke again.

"You say you are the Head?" he queried.

"Yes. I am Dr. Holmes!"

"Impossible!" said Tom. "Dr. Holmes has just come into the prefects' room. He is here!"

Tom Merry beckoned to Monty Lowther.

"It's Trimble on the phone!" he whispered. "He's been trying to make me believe he's the Head. You're jolly good at imitating the Head's voice, Monty. Let's see you give the fat bouncer a scare!"

Monty Lowther nodded and smiled. He took the receiver from his chum.

"This is Dr. Holmes speaking!" he thundered. "You are an impostor, sir!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I can tell who you are by your voice. You are Trimble. Where are you speaking from?"

"F-f-from Rycombe post-office, sir!" stuttered Baggy.

"You will return to the school at once, and wait upon me in my study! I will award you a castigation from which you will not soon recover!"

"Ow!"

Monty Lowther rang off, and Tom Merry fairly hugged him.

"Ripping!" he ejaculated. "You've scared Baggy out of his wits. He'll come crawling up to the school in fear and trembling!"

Baggy did. But he didn't get as far as the Head's study. Tom Merry and Lowther met him in the quad, and they promptly pounced upon him, and gave him a terrific bumping.

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EPITAPH ON MR. RATCLIFF'S TELEPHONE!

By Fatty Wynn.

HERE LIES

the battered wreckage

of what was once

A TELEPHONE.

It was the property of Mr. Horace Ratcliff, the arch-tyrant of the New House at St. Jim's. On Saturday last Ratty put through a call to the Wayland Golf Club, and after waiting twenty minutes—during which time he gnashed his teeth and tore his hair—a voice sounded over the wires.

"Is that the golf club?" inquired Ratty. "No," was the reply. "This is the Home for Incurables."

Whereupon Ratty, breathing threatenings and slaughter, gave the operator a piece of his mind. He then made further attempts to get the golf club, and he was put through, in turn, to the grocer, the baker, the town clerk of Wayland, the jam factory, the Theatre Royal, and the Green Man public house.

For an hour and ten minutes Ratty was engaged in shouting himself hoarse at the telephone, and during that period he had three separate apoplectic fits. Finally, in exasperation, he picked up the telephone, and hurled it with all his force out of the window. It now lies in a pool of muddy water, battered, broken, and bent beyond repair.

"Pause, traveller, pause, and shed a tear
For this poor phone that's lying here!

Although it did no harm on earth,
But caused a lot of pleasant mirth,
Old Ratty hurled it from his study,
And here it lies, immersed and muddy.

Its back is broken, I'm afraid,
And it's beyond all human aid.

Oh, nevermore its bell shall ring;
It is a shattered, sorry thing!

Its owner used it every day,
Until it made his nerves give way.

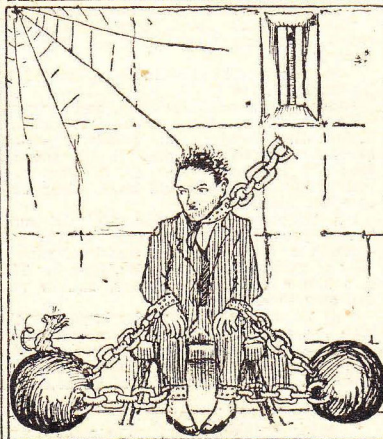
And then he hurled it, as you see,
Into a bleak eternity.

Let's gather round, boys, and bemoan
The fate of Ratty's telephone.

And let us hope he'll ne'er throw us
Out of his study window thus!"

PEEPS INTO THE FUTURE!

By George Kerr.



MARK LATTREY. (Rookwood.)

ESSAY ON "THE TELLYPHONE!"

By Tubby Muffin.

The tellyphone is an instrument of torcher. (Here, here!—Ed.)

When I say an instrument of torcher, I mean that it's an annoying, eggsasperating, nerve-racking kontraption.

The tellyphone is supposed to be a time-saving device. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help sniggering.

A fat lot of time you save on the tellyphone! You don't save time. You lose it. I'd like to have a tanner for every minnit I've wasted on the phone.

The tellyphone consists of a stand, a mouthpiece, and a reseever. They call it a reseever bekwase when you put your ear to it you reseeve a series of shocks! You never by any chance reseeve any konversation. A more appropriate name for it would be a deceiver.

Oh! And there is also a length of cord. I forgot that. The cord is placed near the tellyphone for the konvenience of fed-up subscribers who wish to strangel themselves.

The tellyphone is all right for a person who doesn't happen to be in a hurry. But if you wish to send an urgent message to somebody, it is much quicker to do it by tellygram, or even letter.

In each district there is what they call a Tellyphone Exchange, where lady operators sit with reseevers glued to their ears. These operators are engaged all day in playing a queer sort of game called "Think of a number." When you've thought of a number, they go and get you a number that is quite different. I tell you, tellyfoning is a nice game played slow!

At Rookwood there are several tellyphones. There is one in the Head's study, and another in the prefects' room, and another in Mr. Manders' study. The Head and the prefects and Mr. Manders are driven mad in turn!

I've just heard that Manders is on the verge of a nervus brakedown. I wouldn't mind betting that the tellyphone is responsible!

I frekwently have occasion to use the tellyphone myself, in order to get through to Billy Bunter. We can hardly ever hear each other speak, owing to the awful buzzing that goes on; and when, after a hard struggle, we komence our konversation, the operator cuts us off!

The tellyphone ought to have been abolished ages ago. That's my kandid opinion. I vencher to submit that ninety-nine per cent. of the mizzery which eggsists on this planet can be directly traced to the tellyphone.

Eggsouse me a minnit, dear readers. I have just heard a terribul shattering of glass. Wonder what it is? I'd better go and investigate.

LATER.—I find that old Manders, after waiting on the tellyphone for four and a half hours for a call to come through, has gone stark, staring mad! He has hurled his tellyphone through the window, and it lies in a mangled mass in the quad.

It isn't often that I have any simperthy to waist on Manders, but I can simperthize with him on this occasion.

The tellyphone is enuff to drive even the most level-headed person to Colney Hatch!

ON VENGEANCE BENT!

(Continued from page 12.)

swarthy face as he stared at the chums of Cedar Creek.

"Hallo! Where did you spring from, younker?" demanded the big fellow who had announced his intention of looking at the "critter."

"I guess I'm from the Lawless ranch, up the valley," answered Bob, "and I can swear that that horse outside belongs to Mr. Mulligan, of Thompson."

"And so can we!" said Frank Richards at once.

The Mexican recovered himself. "It is a lie!" he said coolly. "I have never seen these ninos before!"

"You're not 'Frisco Jo'?" demanded Bob.

"My name is Erique Garcia, of Montana!"

"You were 'Frisco Jo, of Thompson, yesterday!"

"It is false!"

The Canadian lad looked at the panting, furious Southerner along the barrel of the rifle.

"Drop that knife!" he rapped out.

'Frisco Jo stood panting, the weapon gripped in his swarthy hand.

Bob's eyes glittered.

"By the Rockies, 'Frisco Jo, if you don't drop that sticker I'll put a bullet through your shoulder!" he said. "And if you try to use it, I'll put one through your heart!"

The Mexican glared, but the knife clattered from his hand to the floor.

"Bray-vo, sonny!" roared the big cattleman.

Bob kept the rifle at a level.

"Get out, Lopez!" he said.

"Caramba! I—"

"Get out! We're going to take you back to Thompson!" said Bob determinedly.

"I'll keep him covered, you chaps, and you touch him up with your whips if he won't move!"

"What-ho!" said Frank Richards.

'Frisco Jo clenched his swarthy hands convulsively.

But the levelled rifle and the cool, glittering eye along the barrel daunted him.

pay your precious friends with our money. You've got to hand over fifty dollars, or face the sheriff at Thompson!"

'Frisco Jo gritted his teeth.

"Be it so!" he snarled. "It is in my saddlebag. I will hand it to you."

"Good!"

The Mexican shambled towards Mulligan's horse, and fumbled in the saddlebag.

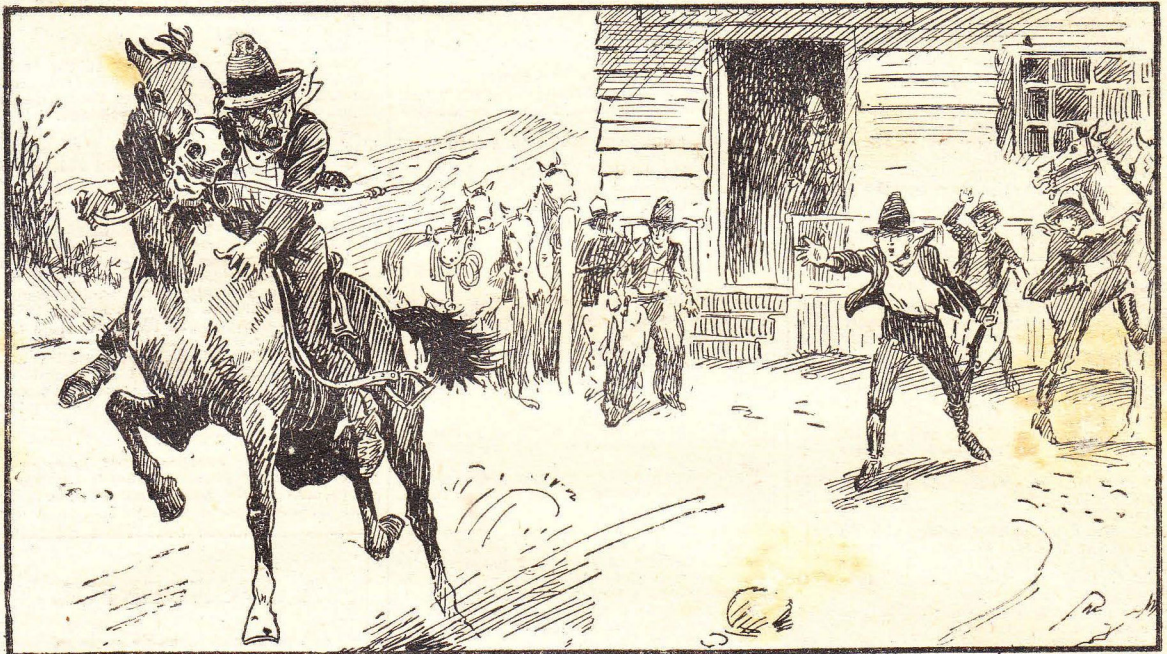
Bob dropped the rifle under his arm, and the three schoolboys gathered round the Mexican, greatly elated at the successful result of their chase.

The Mexican's surrender seemed complete.

But he was not at the end of his resources yet. There was a cunning gleam in his eyes as he bent over the saddle.

With a sudden movement he flung off the rope that hitched the horse to the post and struck the animal in the ribs.

The startled horse jumped and ran, and the Mexican, flinging himself across the saddle, was borne away down the street, pommelling fiercely at the horse as he lay across its back, and urging it to greater speed.



THE ESCAPE!—With a sudden movement 'Frisco Jo flung off the rope that hitched the horse to the post. He struck the horse in the ribs, and flinging himself across the saddle, was borne away down the street. "Look out!" cried Bob Lawless. "After him!" (See Chapter 4.)

"I kinder calculate I'm not buying that boss!" drawled the big cattleman.

And there was a laugh.

"I can sell my horse elsewhere!" said 'Frisco Jo.

He made a movement towards the door.

The Kootenay Camp men looked on, rather amused at the scene.

Frank Richards & Co. stood grimly in the Mexican's way to the door.

"Let me pass!" shouted Lopez.

"Stand where you are!"

The Mexican panted.

He was fearful that at any moment the onlookers might take a hand in the proceedings. Horse-thieves were not beloved in the Canadian West.

He drew back a little, like a puma of his native country crouching for a spring.

His hand went under his velveteen jacket.

"Let me pass!"

"Rats!"

The Mexican made a spring forward, and there was a gleam of steel.

The ruffian fully expected the schoolboys to break aside at the cold glitter of the poignard. But they did not.

Bob Lawless thrust up his rifle, and the muzzle fairly struck the Mexican on the chest, and he stopped.

He shuffled away from the door, the cattlemen in the store shouting with laughter as he went.

In the street, 'Frisco Jo fixed a savage glare upon the schoolboys.

"Now—" he muttered.

"You're coming back to Thompson!" said Bob.

"You'll get on Mulligan's horse, and ride home with us."

"I—I—" panted Lopez.

"Sharp's the word!" rapped out the Canadian lad.

"Senorito!" The Mexican's manner changed. "I—I give in! I will hand you the money! I will repay the dollars! And let me go."

"Oh, rather a different tune now!" grinned Bob. "What do you say, you fellows? Shall we take the dollars and let him vamoose?"

Frank Richards nodded.

"Let the rotter go!" said Beauclerc.

"Shell out, Lopez!" said Bob laconically.

"Fifty dollars!"

"I have but forty!" whined Lopez. "Ten dollars were taken by my friends in Thompson. They would have betrayed that the mine was salted if I had not paid them."

"Very likely," agreed Bob. "But you can't

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Run Down!

"LOOK out!"

"After him!"

Watchful as they were, the chums had been taken by surprise. Bob Lawless, for a moment, was tempted to send a bullet after the fleeing Mexican.

But it would have been more likely to hit the horse than the mah sprawling on its back, and he did not want to risk shooting the horse-thief in a vital spot.

He clambered on his pony instead, and rode in pursuit, with Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc galloping on either side of him.

They left half Kootenay Camp staring after them as they went.

'Frisco Jo, after the first fifty yards, had scrambled into a sitting posture on the galloping horse.

He glanced back over his shoulder, and his black eyes glittered as he saw the three chums in hot pursuit only thirty yards behind.

The ranch ponies were better horseflesh than Mulligan's horse, and there was not much doubt how the chase must end.

THE POPULAR.—No. 184.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"CHECKMATING 'POKER PETE'!"

A MAGNIFICENT TALE OF FRANK RICHARDS & CO. BY MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The three chums rode hard and grimly. Closer and closer they drew to the furious Mexican.

He glared over his shoulder again and again, grinding his white teeth as he saw his pursuers nearer and nearer at hand.

If he had possessed a firearm there is little doubt that 'Frisco Jo would have tried a "pot-shot" at the schoolboys of Cedar Creek.

But his only weapon, the Mexican knife, lay on the floor of the store in Kootenay Camp, and, fortunately, 'Frisco Jo had no other.

Bob's pony's muzzle was only a couple of yards from the whisking tail of Mulligan's horse when the Mexican gave up the vain fight.

It was a mile from Kootenay Camp now on the Thompson trail.

By the side of the horsemen's track a steep acclivity rose, clothed in firs and larch.

The Mexican, without drawing rein, suddenly leaped from the back of the gasping steed, and plunged into the timber.

Mulligan's horse ran on a dozen yards or more, and stopped, dead-beat.

The Mexican had vanished in the trees.

Frank Richards & Co. rode on, unable to stop for a minute or two, and passed the spot where the Mexican had dismounted.

But they speedily spun their ponies round in the trail, and drove them into the thin timber.

Mulligan's horse was left contentedly cropping on the edge of the timber.

That the dollars were not in the saddle-bag was pretty clear from the Mexican fight without the stolen horse.

He would not have parted with the plunder so easily.

"Come on!" shouted Bob. "The thief's got the money on him, you chaps! He was fooling us with that yarn about its being in the saddle. Come on! He can't get through!"

They crashed through the thickets. Beyond the belt of thin timber by the trail the hillside lay almost bare, and there they sighted the Mexican again, tramping desperately up the ascent.

The rise was steep, but not too steep for the active, wiry-limbed Canadian ponies.

The three riders gained rapidly on the desperate Mexican.

Lopez halted, breathless, and turned. "Caramba!" he muttered, between his teeth.

"Surrender, or we'll ride you down!" shouted Bob.

"Caramba!" The Mexican bounded aside, and doubled back to the timber. The ponies were almost upon him as he ran.

He reached the timber again, and then the pursuers had to slack.

Once on the trail again, the Mexican had no chance, and he knew it.

Only a few yards ahead of the pursuers, he clambered desperately into a big tree.

Gasping for breath, he dragged himself into the branches, and Frank Richards & Co. halted under the tree, sitting their steaming horses there, and looking upward.

A dusky fist was shaken a dozen yards above their heads.

"Caramba!" shrieked the Mexican. "Follow me if you dare!"

"Tread!" said Bob Lawless laconically.

He dismounted from his horse, and his chums followed his example.

The ponies were hitched in the timber, and the schoolboys gathered under the big tree.

There was a yell of defiance from the Mexican.

"Come up! Caramba! Come up, if you will, senoritos!"

"I guess you can have that tree to yourself, greaser," said Bob Lawless coolly. "But I reckon you won't keep it long!"

He examined the breach of his rifle with deadly calmness.

Frank Richards caught his arm.

"Bob! You don't mean—"

"I mean to bring that greaser down," said Bob. "We can't stay here for a day, or two days, waiting for him to fall like a ripe apple. He's coming down, or he's going to be brought down, and he can take his choice."

"I—I say—"

"He's robbed us! Do you want him to get clear with the loot?"

"No. You're right, Bob."

Bob Lawless stood back from the tree, THE POPULAR.—No. 184.

and pointed the rifle at the Mexican, crouched like a puma upon a high branch.

"Come down, or you'll be dropped! Take your choice."

"You dare not!"

"Are you coming?"

"No!" yelled the Mexican.

Bob Lawless did not speak again. He pulled the trigger.

Crack!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Corraled!

THE report of the rifle rang through the timber, and far over the hillside.

There was a fearful yell from the Mexican as his hat was spun away from his head by the bullet.

Bob Lawless had handled a rifle from childhood, and he was a crack shot.

He had knocked off the Mexican's hat with perfect ease.

A ringlet of the black hair had gone with the hat. The latter fluttered down to the marksman's feet.

From the branch he was extended upon the Mexican glared down with hate and rage and terror in his face.

It was some moments before he realised that he was not hit.

"Caramba!" he mumbled. "Oh!"

Bob drew a fresh cartridge from his pouch. "Are you coming down, Lopez?" he asked.

He threw up the barrel again.

"Here was a gasping howl from the cornered horse-thief.

"Stop! Stop! Hold your fire!"

"Are you coming down?"

"Si, si, si, senor!"

"Get a move on, then!"

Savagely, sullenly, the Mexican clambered down the tree.

The game was up, and 'Frisco Jo realised it at last.

"Collar him as he lands," said Bob. "If he puts up a fight, I'll let him have it in the legs."

Frank Richards and Beauclere stood ready to receive the Mexican.

They grasped him as he dropped at last to the ground.

'Frisco Jo did not resist.

He was beaten, and he knew it, and he did not want the rancher's son to "let him have it in the legs."

He stood panting in the grasp of the schoolboys, his black eyes rolling, savage and sullen, but completely beaten.

"I guess this lets you out, 'Frisco Jo," smiled Bob Lawless. "You should have stayed in Mexico to play your game; you're bound to run into trouble playing it in Canada. Where's that fifty dollars?"

The Mexican fumbled in his velvetene jacket, and drew out a little buckskin sack.

"Hand it over!"

"There is more—" muttered Lopez.

Bob gave a sniff of disgust. "We only want our own, you rotter! Give it to me!"

The Mexican sullenly yielded the sack, and Bob opened it, dropping the rifle into the hollow of his arm, while his chums held the Mexican secure.

There were sixty dollars in the buckskin bag.

The Mexican, apparently, had found other victims as well as the chums of Cedar Creek.

Bob Lawless took out the fifty he was entitled to, and tossed the bag, with the remainder, to the Mexican.

"I guess that don't belong to you," he remarked. "But it don't belong to us, and we won't touch it. Now you can come along to Thompson, and see the sheriff. He will be glad to see you."

"Senorito, mercy!" mumbled the Mexican, all his defiance gone now. "You have your money—you have the horse of Senor Mulligan—spare me! I—I shall get work at Kamloops, on the railway, and live an honest life!"

"Oh, come off!" growled Bob. "I guess we don't want the trouble of yanking you back to Thompson, if you come to that. You can vamoose, and get out of this section. If I see you again—"

"I will go, senor!"

"You'd better!"

The Mexican was taken back to the trail, where the schoolboys secured Mulligan's horse, to make sure of it before they released Lopez. Then 'Frisco Jo was released.

He tramped away down the trail with a black brow, and Frank Richards & Co. cheerfully remounted their horses and rode away homeward.

Great was the surprise of Mr. Lawless when his twenty-five dollars were returned to him by Bob, and he learned how the Mexican had been made to disgorge his ill-gotten gains.

And great was the surprise of Chunky Todgers when his dollar was given back to him at school next morning, and the chums told the tale of its recovery.

Before sundown that day the dollar was expended in ministering to the demands of the inward Chunky—the plump youth evidently having decided to run no further risks with it.

THE END.

(There will be another grand long, complete tale of Frank Richards & Co.'s adventures in the backwoods of Canada in next week's splendid issue.)

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WHEN BILLY BUNTER, THE FAT JUNIOR OF GREYFRIARS, JOINS THE CHEERY ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS THERE ARE RUCTIONS ON THE ROAD!



The UNWELCOME GUEST!

A Splendid Long Complete Story, dealing with the Adventures of JIMMY SILVER & Co., on Tour

By OWEN CONQUEST

(Author of the Famous Tales of Rookwood, now appearing in the "Boys' Friend.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Very Happy Meeting!

"I SAY, you fellows!" Jimmy Silver & Co. looked round quickly.

The Rookwood caravanners had halted on the long white road that wound over the Downs towards the sea.

Robinson Crusoe, the horse, was cropping contentedly at the grass by the roadside.

Tubby Muffin was seated on a sloping shaft, industriously extracting the last fragment of the contents of a condensed milk-tin with a spoon, and transferring it to his capacious mouth, and the Fistical Four were discussing bread and cheese.

The caravanners had been in luck.

Lovell had found a farmhouse where cheese had been obtainable, and Raby had brought in a loaf which was crusty and new.

Newcome had succeeded in purchasing a huge bundle of lettuces, and Jimmy Silver had bagged a big jug of milk.

So the Fistical Four were enjoying their lunch, with verdant fields stretching before their eyes to the deep blue of the Channel in the distance.

They heard a bicycle on the road, but did not heed it; bikes were many.

They heard it stop, but still did not heed, the bread and cheese and lettuces engrossing all their attention.

But they started when a fat voice addressed them, a voice they knew.

As the caravanners glanced round in surprise they saw the cyclist.

He was a fat fellow, with a rotundity of figure that far outclassed that of Tubby Muffin.

A pair of big glasses adorned his fat little nose, and he blinked through them at the Rookwooders with much affability.

"Hallo!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Fancy meeting you!" said the fat cyclist.

"How do you do, old scout?"

"I've seen you before somewhere," remarked Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Lemme see," remarked Raby thoughtfully.

"You're the butcher's boy, ain't you?"

"Oh, don't be funny, you know! You remember Bunter of Greyfriars—Billy Bunter, you know, of the Remove?" said the fat junior.

"I came to see you at Rookwood in the term. Fancy meeting you here!"

"Fancy!" yawned Lovell.

Jimmy Silver & Co., did not look enthusiastic.

They remembered Billy Bunter of Greyfriars quite well.

In fact, they remembered him too well to feel any special satisfaction in meeting him again.

But Billy Bunter did not notice the absence of enthusiasm on the part of the Rookwood juniors. Possibly he was determined not to notice it.

"Caravanning?" he asked affably.

"How did you guess that?" asked Raby.

"We're staying at Beachcliff," said Bunter.

"My people, you know. Having a tremendous time!"

"Glad to hear it!" yawned Jimmy Silver.

"I haven't had my lunch," observed Bunter.

"Join us!" said Jimmy hospitably.

Tubby Muffin looked alarmed.

His own performances at lunch were very creditable, but they were not a patch on

what William George Bunter of the Greyfriars Remove could do.

But the Fistical Four, though they did not yearn for Bunter's society, were hospitable, and they made him welcome.

"Well, as you're so pressing, I will," said Bunter. "How jolly lucky that I should happen on you fellows here, wasn't it?"

"A wfully!"

"I thought I knew you as I came along," said Bunter. "Jolly glad to see you again. I say, this is ripping cheese. I haven't tasted cheese for a week. All right; I'll help myself, Jimmy, old chap."

"Do!" said Jimmy.

Bunter did.

Tubby Muffin's fat face grew longer, though the other caravanners only smiled.

"Tubby wasn't inhospitable, but it was only too painfully clear that there wouldn't be any cheese for supper now."

Bunter took a camp-stool, which creaked under his weight.

He blinked most affably at the Rookwooders as he started.

It was a very fortunate meeting, from Billy's point of view.

"Got any butter?" he asked, with his mouth full.

"Sorry—no."

"All serene; I can rough it!" said Bunter.

"I'll finish the cheese, if you don't mind."

"Not at all," said Jimmy Silver politely.

There was a faint sound from Tubby Muffin—a peculiar sound, between a sigh and a groan. Bunter blinked round at him.

"Got a pain?" he asked sympathetically.

"Nunno!" gasped Tubby.

"I say, that's a good idea, finishing up with condensed milk!" said Bunter. "You can get me a couple of tins, if you like. I like it."

"I'm afraid we've only one tin left," said Lovell, with studied politeness.

"My dear chap, don't mention it! I'll manage with one."

"Oh!"

"I dare say one of you chaps will open it for me."

"C-c-certainly!"

"There's a lot of sustenance in condensed milk," Bunter confided to his hosts, as he started with a spoon. "I made it a point to get all I can. I say, you fellows, I'm really glad to see you again. How lucky that you stopped on this road for lunch!"

"Yes; wasn't it?"

"Anything else you'd like, Bunter?" asked Lovell.

Tubby Muffin gave Lovell an almost homicidal look.

"Oh, any old thing!" said Bunter. "Anything in the way of chocolates. You should always take chocolates in a caravan. They come in handy when the grub runs short."

"Is there any chocolate left, Tubby?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Nunno!"

"Sorry, Bunter!"

"Oh, don't mench!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, if you travel near my home when I'm at home you must camp in the park, and come up to the mansion for your meals."

"Certainly!" said Lovell. "Where do you live?"

Bunter was afflicted with a sudden deafness.

"Which way are you going on from here?" he asked.

"Down the road."

"Good! I'll come with you part of the way," said Bunter.

"You'll be late for lunch if you do," said Raby, with deep sarcasm.

"Oh, that's all right! I dare say you've got a snack in the caravan if I get peckish. You fellows lift my bike on the van, and I'll take a snooze inside for a bit—see?"

After rolled into the caravan.

Billy Silver & Co. looked at one another.

But they did not speak.

Bunter's bike was lifted on the van, and the horse was put in, and the Rookwood caravanners resumed their route, Bunter snoozing in the van, and the Rookwooders feeling very pleased—perhaps—with that chance meeting which had bestowed upon them the entertaining company of the Owl of Greyfriars.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nice for the Caravanners!

BILLY BUNTER blinked out of the van about an hour later.

Apparently his nap had done him good, for he looked very cheery and bright.

"I say, you fellows!" he remarked.

The Rookwood juniors were walking with the horse, and they did not seem to hear Bunter.

He jumped down, and joined the caravanners.

"You seem to do a lot of walking!" he remarked.

"Caravanners generally do."

"Well, I suppose so, with a little van like that," agreed Bunter. "When I go caravanning I have a whacking big van!"

"How nice!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

"I say, you fellows, I've been thinking," remarked Bunter. "I'm a bit fed up with Beachcliff. I'd like a change."

"So would we!" murmured Raby.

"I suppose we shall pass a post-office sooner or later?" Bunter remarked.

"Very likely."

"Then I could send a telegram."

"Eh?"

"The fact is, I'm thinking of joining you fellows for a few days," said Bunter kindly.

"It would be a rather agreeable change."

"My hat!"

"I'm not a particular chap," continued Bunter. "You'll find me able to rough it. All I really want is plenty to eat and comfortable sleeping quarters and no work to do."

"No need to send your people a wire," said Lovell. "The fact is, Bunter, we feel that you wouldn't be quite comfortable with a turn-out like this."

"Don't worry; I can rough it!"

"We couldn't think of allowing you to rough it for our sakes!" said Lovell, with a shake of the head. "You see, we forgot to bring a footman and a butler, and without them you couldn't possibly stand it."

"I—I say, you fellows, if you're joking—"

began Bunter.

"Not at all."

"The fact is, I'd like to caravan for a few days."

"Then the best thing you can do is to

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NEXT TUESDAY!

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get a whacking big caravan, and do it rather in style," said Newcome solemnly.

"Ahem! If you mean that you don't care for my company—" said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"I'm afraid we do," said Lovell calmly.

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"Good-bye."

"If these are Rookwood manners, I can't say I think much of them!" said Bunter. "I shall certainly refuse to join a party where I am not welcome!"

"And I shall not stay with you after to-day, unless you ask me very civilly. I can assure you," said Bunter. "As I'm out for the day, I'll stick to you till to-night, under the circumstances. I think I'll sit down for a bit; I don't care much for walking."

And Billy Bunter clambered into the van.

Jimmy Silver & Co. stared after him.

They had put it to Bunter as politely as they could, but they had put it unmistakably, and they had expected the fat junior of Greyfriars to take his bike and his departure.

Instead of which, he had ensconced himself in the caravan.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Lovell at last.

"Of all the cheek—"

Jimmy Silver laughed.

"Let him stay till to-night," he said. "He won't do any harm. Never mind his silly gas."

"He doesn't mean to go at all!" exclaimed Lovell wrathfully. "He means to stick to us like glue. You know how he planted himself on us at Rookwood that time."

Jimmy Silver wrinkled his brows.

As a matter of fact, Lovell's suspicion was in Jimmy Silver's mind, too.

He knew that Billy Bunter was a sticker, and that he was as thick-skinned as a rhinoceros.

"If he doesn't clear this evening, we'll put it plain!" said Jimmy.

"We've put it plain!"

"Then we'll put it plainer!"

Arthur Edward Lovell granted, but he acquiesced.

He did not feel quite like bundling Bunter neck and crop out of the caravan, and it was manifest that the Owl was not to be got rid of by any gentler method.

Under the westerling sun the caravanners pursued their way, chatting cheerily as they went, and forgetting the presence of Bunter, who was taking a snooze in the van.

But they were reminded of his presence a little later.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo!" grunted Jimmy Silver.

"Are you going to stop for the Norman castle ruins?"

"I didn't know there was a ruined Norman castle in this quarter," said Jimmy Silver, with interest. "We'd like to see it. Where is it?"

Billy Bunter pointed to a footpath that opened in a wood beside the road.

"That's the way," he answered. "About a quarter of a mile. I'll tell you what, you fellows; if you like to see the place, I'll mind the van while you're gone. It's an awfully interesting place!"

"Not a bad idea," said Jimmy, looking at his chums. "I'd like to see it, you chaps."

Lovell nodded.

His grim mood towards Billy Bunter relaxed a little. It really did seem a thoughtful suggestion on the part of the Owl.

"Wouldn't you like to come, too, Bunter?" asked Raby considerably.

"Oh, I've seen the place!" said Bunter carelessly. "Awfully interesting! I'll look after the van."

"Right you are! Come on, Tubby!"

Tubby Muffin was not very enthusiastic. He was not much fonder of walking than Billy Bunter was.

But he rolled off the van, and walked away with the Fistical Four by the footpath through the woods, to visit the ruined Norman castle.

Billy Bunter blinked after them, with a sly, fat grin on his face.

As soon as they were out of sight Bunter disappeared into the caravan, and from the van there proceeded a steady, incessant sound, which could only have been that of active jaws tirelessly champing.

Quite oblivious of Billy Bunter's occupation, Jimmy Silver & Co. strolled on cheerily through the pleasant-scented wood.

They had covered a good deal more than

a quarter of a mile, and were still looking in vain for the ruined castle.

The footpath led them into another and another, deeper and deeper into the woods, but there was no sign of a Norman castle to be seen.

Arthur Edward Lovell halted at last.

"Look here, that fat bouncer said a quarter of a mile!" he exclaimed. "We've come jolly near a mile now!"

"We can't have missed it," said Jimmy Silver, perplexed.

"I suppose the fathead was making a mistake. Hallo! Here's a man! Let's ask him, anyhow."

A tired-looking labourer was tramping his homeward way by the footpath, and the juniors stopped him, and inquired for the ruined castle.

The countryman scratched his nose, and seemed puzzled.

"Never heard of un!" was his answer.

"Tain't in this part."

"Is there a ruined castle at all, or any sort of ruins?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"Never heard of un, measter."

"You know this part?"

"I've lived 'ere, man and boy, for seventy year," answered the old gentleman. "If there was a ruin about 'ere, I'd have heard of un. But I ain't."

And he plodded on.

The Rookwood juniors looked at one another.

Lovell breathed hard.

"That unutterable fat idiot was pulling our leg!" he exclaimed. "He's sent us on a wild-goose chase!"

"He couldn't be such an idiot!" said Jimmy, aghast.

"It may be the Greyfriars brand of humour. I'll squash him!"

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"I suppose he's made a mistake. He's idiot enough!" said Jimmy. "Let's get back, anyway. After all, it was a nice walk."

"Oh, blow the walk!"

"I'm tired!" said Tubby Muffin plaintively.

"Oh dear! Both the old castle—and there isn't a castle at all, either! Wow!"

"Br-r-r-r!" said Lovell.

The juniors walked back along the footpaths, and reached the road at last.

The caravan stood where they had left it, and as Bunter was not to be seen, he was apparently inside.

From the van, as they approached it, came a deep, resonant sound—the sound of a powerful snore.

Billy Bunter was apparently asleep.

Lovell looked into the van.

Bunter lay fast asleep, snoring as if for a wager. There was a smear of jam on his fat face, which was very shuiny.

And there were the remnants of a feast to be seen—only the remnants.

The caravan larder had been cleared, and several empty tins showed that Bunter had "done himself" not wisely but too well.

Lovell's face became fixed and simply terrific in expression as he looked. He could scarcely believe his eyes.

"What on earth's the matter, Lovell?" called out Jimmy Silver, quite alarmed by the expression on Arthur Edward's face.

Lovell could not speak; he pointed.

The caravanners peered into the van. There was a wail of anguish from Tubby Muffin.

"Yow-ow-ow! The awful beast! He's scoffed the grub!"

That dismal howl awakened the Owl of Greyfriars.

He sat up, set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked at the caravanners genially.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter is Indignant!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. stared at Bunter speechlessly.

They understood now why the Owl of the Remove had sent them on a wild-goose chase in search of a non-existent Norman castle.

While they were gone he had "scoffed" the total provision supply.

The larder was in the same state as Mrs. Hubbard's celebrated cupboard.

Bunter blinked at them, grinning, but with a lurking uneasiness in his fat face.

"Hallo, you fellows! Got back?" he murmured.

"You fat villain!" gasped Lovell, finding his voice.

"You Hun!" wailed Tubby Muffin. "You horrid Prussian!"

"I say, you fellows, you don't mind my having a snack while you were gone, did you?" murmured Bunter. "I generally have tea about this time."

"You—you've had tea?"

"Yes. There wasn't quite enough for me, but I don't mind. I can rough it with anybody!"

"Oh crumbs!"

There had been supper for six, breakfast for six, and other supplies, and the whole amount had been net quite enough for Billy Bunter's tea!

The marvel was where he had put it.

Evidently he had put it somewhere, and it was not surprising that he looked shiny and apoplectic, and breathed with some difficulty.

"After all, he's a guest, in a way," murmured Jimmy Silver. "Don't kill him. Get his bike down, and let him go."

"I say, you fellows, we may as well get on a bit farther before supper," said Bunter. "I sha'n't be hungry for an hour or two!"

"I shouldn't think you'd ever be hungry again!" gasped Raby.

"I suppose you've got something for supper?" added Bunter anxiously.

"We had," said Jimmy. "We haven't now!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bunter, in dismay. "Something will have to be done, then."

"Look here, I'm not going to stand this, Jimmy Silver!" roared Lovell. "The fat beast spoofed us into going away while he raided the grub. I'm going to slaughter him!"

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"There wasn't a Norman castle, and you know there wasn't!" shouted Lovell.

Bunter grinned feebly.

"D-d-d-did you find it?" he muttered. "You know we didn't, as it wasn't there!"

"I—I think I—I made a mistake," murmured Bunter. "Now I come to think of it, it—it's in a different part of the country."

"You were pulling our leg, you fat Hun! Now you're going to be scalped!"

Lovell collared the Owl of Greyfriars, and bumped him out into the road.

Billy Bunter gave a yell of wrath and indignation.

"Yaroooh! Leggo! Help! Murder! Fire!" "Get on your bike, and buzz!" roared Lovell. "I'm going to kick you till you do! Like that!"

"Yaroooh!"

"And like that!"

"Yooop! Help!"

Jimmy Silver rushed at his excited chum, and dragged him back.

"Hold on, Lovell!"

"I'm going to slaughter him!" raved Lovell. "Yaroooh! Keep him off!" roared Bunter.

"Look here, if this is what you call—yow-ow!—hospitality—"

Bunter staggered to his feet, keeping a wary eye on Arthur Edward Lovell, who was being restrained with difficulty.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get off!" snapped Raby.

"I'm going!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I decline to remain in your company any longer than is absolutely unavoidable! I may say that I despise you! After pressing me to join you—"

"What?"

"I told you plainly that I wasn't accustomed to travelling with a turn-out of this

NEXT TUESDAY!

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By OWEN CONQUEST.

sort!" said Bunter. "I mentioned that it would be awkward for me, if any of my nobby friends saw me with such a show. I may as well say plainly, too, that I don't think much of Rookwood manners! Not quite up to the Greyfriars' standard, I can assure you!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Lemme get at him, Jimmy, you idiot!" roared Lovell.

"I've been treated with discourtesy!" said Bunter warmly. "I'm sorry now I let you over-persuade me into coming with you. Unluckily, it's too late for me to leave you, you know; I can't get home in the dark. I shall leave you after breakfast to-morrow morning."

"Look here—" gasped Newcome. Bunter waved a fat hand.

"It's no good, Newcome; it's too late now! I'm going!"

"I tell you—"

"Too late! I refuse to remain after breakfast to-morrow morning!" said Bunter firmly.

"You fat owl!" yelled Newcome. "I was going to say—"

"You needn't say anything. I decline to have anything more to do with you! If it wasn't so late, I'd go at once!" said Bunter.

"You'll go now, late or not, or I'll squash you!" shouted Lovell.

"Easy does it!" murmured Jimmy Silver. "I dare say the blind owl can't get home in the dark, Lovell."

"Let him go to Jericho, then!"

"There's no lamps on my bike," said Bunter. "It's against the law to ride without lights. Some fellows are not particular about breaking the law. I happen to have some scruples!"

Lovell almost choked. Jimmy Silver burst into a laugh.

"Keep smiling!" he said. "After all, we knew Bunter, and we ought to have kicked him out when he joined us. He's got to stay with us till morning."

"Quite against my will, I assure you!" snorted Bunter. "I'm not accustomed to such company!"

"Let him stay, and be blowed!" growled Lovell. "But bear this in mind, Bunter. You're starting in the morning as soon as the sun's up, and I'm going to start kicking you as soon as it's time for you to start!"

Bunter sniffed.

But there was no mistaking the deadly earnestness of Arthur Edward Lovell. He meant every word he said.

"I decline to keep up this conversation," said Bunter, with dignity. "These are not the manners I'm used to!"

And with that he climbed back into the van. The caravanners moved on.

The sun was setting, and twilight reigned, and it was necessary to look for a camping-place.

There was little hope of getting fresh supplies for supper.

They had the happy prospect of going supperless to bed, and starting in the morning minus breakfast.

Their feelings towards William George Bunter of Greyfriars were positively Hunnish. But they were not more Hunnish than Bunter's feelings towards them.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious !

"THIS will do," said Jimmy Silver at last.

It was dark, now, and stars were twinkling in the sky.

A stretch of open grass by the roadside offered a camping-place, and the caravanners were tired, and ready to rest.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"RIVALS ON TOUR!"

They were hungry, too, but for that there was no remedy.

Bunter had cleared out the caravan larder almost to the last crumb.

Jimmy Silver led Robinson Crusoe from the road, and the caravan bumped on the grass.

Billy Bunter blinked out of the van, his eyes gleaming behind his big spectacles.

The ventriloquist of Greyfriars had a little scheme all ready for discomfiting the Rookwood caravanners.

"Going to stop here, Silver?" he called out.

"Yes," snapped Jimmy.

"Got anything for supper?"

"No."

"Hadh't you better keep on, then?"

"Rats!"

"May come to a village, you know, or a farmhouse, and get something for supper," urged Bunter anxiously.

"Oh, dry up!"

"If you call that civil, Silver—"

"Rats!"

Even Jimmy Silver's patience was worn out, the fact that he was very hungry probably having something to do with it.

"Better get off," said Raby uneasily. "He may be gone for the police. I suppose this is private land, as he says."

"Some rotten land-hog!" grunted Lovell.

"Well, we're not out to solve the land question," grinned Raby. "Let's get off before there's a row. Can't argue with hobbies."

Jimmy Silver nodded.

"Better!" he agreed.

Lovell grunted, but he assented. The horse was led into the road again, and the caravan rumbled on. A fat chuckle was heard from within the vehicle.

"That fat Greyfriars beast thinks it's funny!" muttered Lovell, breathing hard through his nose.

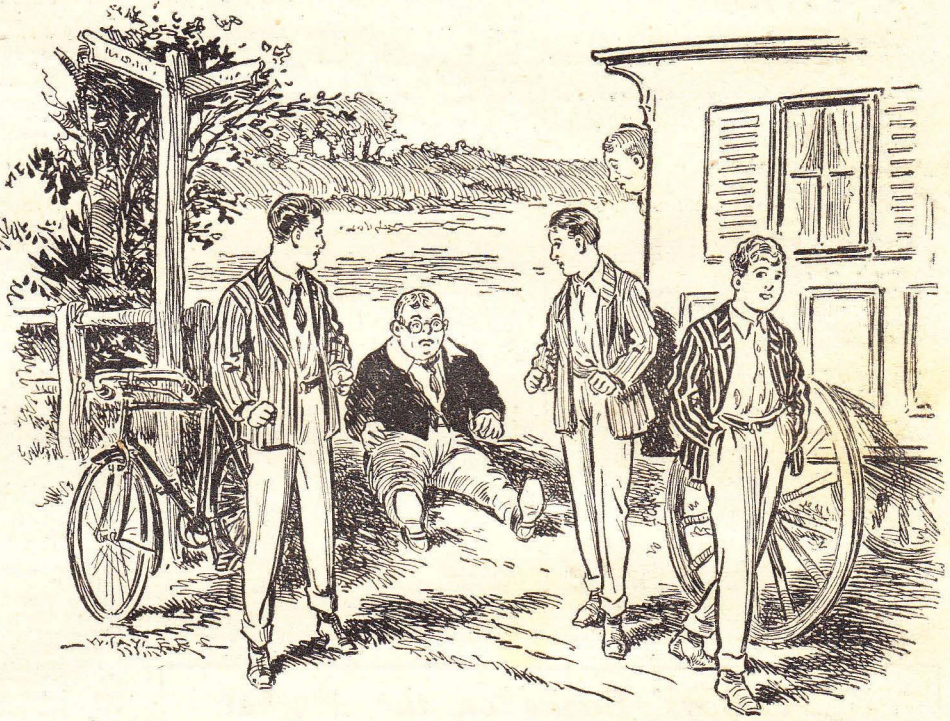
"Oh, never mind him!"

The tired caravanners marched on. Tubby Muffin was in the van with Bunter now, but the Fistical Four were walking.

The road ran on between dark woods, and there was no camping-place to be found for several weary miles.

"I think this will do," Jimmy Silver said at last.

It was a cross-road, with a signpost stand-



GETTING RID OF BUNTER!—Billy Bunter was rolled over on the grass till there was no breath left in his fat carcass. Then the caravan swung out into the road, and Bunter sat up in the grass. He blinked after the caravanners in speechless wrath. (See Chapter 6.)

The van bumped on over the grass, and stopped not far from the road. Round the grass patch nothing was to be seen but trees and bushes.

From the shadows a deep, gruff voice suddenly proceeded.

"Now, then, you gipsy vagabonds, get out of this!"

Jimmy Silver started, and looked round.

"Hallo, who's that?"

"I'll show you who I am if I have to come to you!" came the gruff reply. "You're on private land. Get off, or I'll fetch the police!"

"Oh, what rotten luck!" groaned Lovell.

"Look here, why can't we camp here?" exclaimed Jimmy Silver warmly. "Come out and show yourself, anyway."

"I've warned you!" was the gruff reply.

"Who are you?" demanded Lovell.

There was no answer; the man apparently was gone. Billy Bunter drew his head back into the van grinning.

The caravanners looked at one another.

"Let's stop here," said Lovell indignantly. "We're doing no harm. Why can't the man show himself if the place belongs to him?"

ing in the centre, surrounded by a wide patch of grass.

The caravan was turned from the road upon the grass-patch. There was plenty of room for it, and it was out of the way of traffic.

It was not an ideal camping-place, by any means, but the caravanners were too tired to care much about that.

Moreover, there was no need to light a fire, as there was no supper. They had nothing to do but to turn in.

Bunter's big spectacles glimmered from the van.

"I say, you fellows, ain't you going on?" he asked.

"No!"

"Suppose that bobby comes along?"

"It wasn't a bobby; and I don't care a rap whether he comes back or not!" hooted Lovell.

"I don't think you'd better stop here, Lovell. You see—"

"You can think what you like, you fat toad! We're stopping!"

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"Shut up!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 184.

ANOTHER GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS.

By OWEN CONQUEST.

Lovell dragged out the tent, and the juniors began to set it up beside the van.

Billy Bunter watched them morosely. He would gladly have kept the caravan going all night in the faint hope of getting fresh supplies for supper.

Marvellous to relate, Bunter was getting hungry again. But the caravanners were evidently resolved to halt there for the night.

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you don't want me to sleep in the tent?" said Bunter, as he watched the juniors at work. "This van isn't up to much, but I can manage with it."

"You needn't sleep at all, for all I care!" snapped Lovell.

"Well, I'm staying in the van."

"Stay, and be blowed!"

"Move on, there, you vagabonds!" came a gruff voice from the shadows.

Lovell glared round in great exasperation.

"There's that chap again!" he exclaimed. "By gad, if I could get near enough to hit him—"

"It must be some blessed tramp having a lark with us," said Jimmy Silver, in perplexity. "If it was a bobby he'd show himself."

"Bobby or not, I'll give him a prize nose if he comes near enough!" said Lovell, between his teeth.

"Are you going to move on?" demanded the gruff voice.

"No!" yelled Lovell.

"Then I'll run you in!"

"Come and do it!"

The owner of the gruff voice did not accept the invitation. He was heard no more and the tent was erected.

Tubby Auffman had already turned in, in one of the two bunks in the caravan, the other being left for Billy Bunter.

But the Owl of Greyfriars seemed in no hurry to retire. He watched the Fistical Four through his big spectacles till the tent was finished and they were ready to go to bed.

"By Jove, I shall sleep like a top to-night, supper or no supper," yawned Jimmy Silver. "We'd better be up early, before folks begin to pass by. You can go to bed in the van, Bunter."

"What about supper?"

"There isn't any supper, you owl! You've scoffed all the grub, haven't you?"

"If you call this hospitality, Jimmy Silver,

I—"

"Oh, dry up!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. went into the tent. As the tent-flap fell into place the gruff voice was heard just outside:

"Here they are, officer! Pull the tent down, and take the whole gang into custody!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Haunted!

"MY hat!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver. He tore open the tent-flap again. Lovell grasped a pillow and rushed out, breathing wrath.

"Where are you, you rotter?" roared Lovell, staring about him.

"Show yourself, you beast!" hooted Newcome.

But there was nobody to be seen. Billy Bunter blinked out of the caravan.

"I say, you fellows, what's the row?" he asked.

"Did you see anybody here?" asked Raby. "Eh? No."

"There's somebody hanging about."

"Hadh't you better move on?" suggested Bunter. "We may come to a place where we can get some grub—"

"Shut up!" shrieked Lovell. "If you say another word about grub I'll come and pillow you!"

Jimmy Silver blinked round him into the darkness in utter perplexity.

Unless the caravanners were being worried by some tramp with a misplaced sense of humour, Jimmy could not understand it at all.

"Well, the fellow's gone," he said at last. "Let's get to bed."

"Don't I wish I could catch him!" murmured Lovell. "I'd give a term's pocket-money to give him one good cosh!"

But the desired "cosh" could not be given, and the caravanners went into the tent again. They turned in, and Jimmy Silver blew out the candle.

G-r-r-r-r-r!

Lovell sat up suddenly in his blankets.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

"A blessed dog nosing about outside," yawned Jimmy Silver. "Let him nose. He can't get in here."

Gerrh!

"Shoo!" shouted Lovell. "Get away, you beast! Shoooooo!"

A deep growl outside answered him.

It was followed by a bark, and then another bark and a growl, and then growling went on incessantly.

Lovell jumped up.

"I can't sleep with that thumping row going on!" he exclaimed.

"Drive him off!" murmured Raby sleepily.

Lovell grasped his pillow, and cautiously peered out of the tent.

Arthur Edward was always kind to animals, but just then he wanted to give that dog a terrific "cosh" with the pillow.

But there was no dog to be seen.

"The brute's gone!" growled Lovell. Gurrhrrh!

"Oh, my hat! There he is again!" Lovell dashed out of the tent.

The growling was going on in the deep gloom, and it seemed to recede towards the

caravan, and Lovell followed it up, with the pillow ready.

Gurrhrrh!

"He's under the van!" called out Bunter's voice. "I say, you fellows, you might drive that dog off. How's a fellow to sleep?"

"I'm driving him off, you fat fool!" snorted Lovell.

Grrrrrrrr!

Lovell peered under the van, where the dog had apparently taken refuge. It was dark there—too dark to see anything but the faint outline of the wheels.

"Shoo! Gerraway! Shoo!"

Gurrhrrh!

"My hat! I'll simply smash the beast!" gasped Lovell. "Where's something I can poke him with? Oh, thunder! I'll smash him!"

Lovell snorted, and threw down his pillow.

"There's a stick in the van, Bunter; chuck it out!" he called out.

"Certainly!" purred Bunter.

"Buck up, lazybones!"

"Here you are!"

Whiz!

"Yaroooooh!" roared Lovell, as he caught the stick—with his head. "You clumsy idiot! What are you bunging it at me for?"

"You told me to chuck it out!"

Lovell grasped the stick, and rushed towards the van. Bunter promptly backed out of sight.

The growling under the caravan had ceased for some moments, but it recommenced now, and Lovell turned his attention to the unseen dog again.

He leaned down by the wheels, and thrust the stick savagely under the van.

"There, you beast! There, you brute!" he gasped, as he prodded away fiercely into the darkness.

The growling ceased, and there was a low whine, as of deep anguish.

Lovell suddenly ceased to prod.

Whine!

That sound of pain smote Lovell's conscience, and his wrath evaporated at once.

He had not really meant to hurt the dog, but the agonised whine seemed to show that he had hurt it very much indeed.

"Oh, I say, you brute!" exclaimed Bunter, from above. "You've knocked his eye out, very likely!"

"Shut up!" panted Lovell.

"Listen to the poor animal!" said Bunter, with virtuous indignation.

Whine!

"Oh dear!" Lovell dropped the stick and peered under the van. "Good doggie! Good old doggie! Poor old doggie!"

The whine, faint and agonised, answered him.

"Jimmy Silver!" shouted Lovell.

"Hallo!"

"Bring your flash-lamp here. I—I'm afraid I've hurt the poor beast!" stammered Lovell.

"Oh dear!"

Jimmy Silver emerged from the tent, with his electric lamp in his hand, followed by Raby and Newcome.

Lovell's face was troubled.

"I—I didn't really mean to hurt him!" he faltered. "I just shoved under the van with the stick to clear him off. I—I must have hit him somewhere. Listen to him!"

Jimmy Silver's face was very grave as he heard that low, miserable whine under the van.

Bunter's glasses glimmered down accusingly. "You've knocked his eye out, Lovell," he said. "You've hurt him badly. It's too bad! This will have to be reported to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I'm sorry, but it's my duty—"

Lovell hurled his pillow, and Bunter broke off with a yell.

"I can't hear him now," said Jimmy Silver, flashing his light under the van. "Blessed if I can see him, either! Where is he, Lovell?"

"Blessed if I know! He's there somewhere."

"Well, where?"

The juniors stared under the van as the electric light showed up every dark recess, and showed it to be vacant.

"There was no dog to be seen. Lovell rubbed his eyes.

"Is the blessed place haunted?" he muttered.

Jimmy Silver shook his head. "The whole affair puzzled him utterly. "I can't make it out," he said. "It must be somebody having a lark with us, somehow. I'm going to bed."

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THE POPULAR.—No. 134.

NEXT TUESDAY! "RIVALS ON TOUR!"

ANOTHER GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS.
By OWEN CONQUEST.

The Fistical Four, with a curiously uneasy feeling, returned to the tent. Barely had they turned in when a deep growl was heard outside.

"That dog again!" shrieked Lovell. "Oh, let him rip!" growled Jimmy Silver. "I'm going to sleep!"

"He doesn't seem to be hurt now." "Oh, bother him!" The growling continued, but the Fistical Four did not heed it, and it ceased at last. But it was close on midnight when the Rookwood caravanners were safe at last in the arms of Morpheus.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

"WAKE up!" Bright and early in the morning, Jimmy Silver shouted into the caravan.

Tubby Muffin yawned, and Billy Bunter snored on. It had been late before Jimmy Silver & Co. slept the previous night, but they were up early enough in the sunny summer morning.

They were conscious of an aching void within, and they wanted to get on the road and scout for breakfast.

Tubby Muffin woke up hungry, too, and he turned out of the van.

But Bunter was still sleeping when the tent was struck and Robinson Crusoe harnessed.

Lovell yanked Bunter's bike down, and stuck it against the signpost.

"Now that fat boulder's coming out!" he said. "Bunter! Bunter! Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, you can start!" came a sleepy voice from within the van. "I'm not accustomed to getting up as early as this. Don't mind me! I can sleep while the van's moving!"

"You may be able to, but you're jolly well not going to!" answered Lovell. "I give you two minutes to get out. Then I'm coming in for you!"

"Oh, really, Lovell—"

"Time's going!" said Lovell grimly. Lovell's voice showed that he meant business, and Billy Bunter turned out. He looked very discontented.

"I say, you fellows, what about breakfast?" he asked.

"You've got your breakfast under your waistcoat!" growled Lovell. "There's your bike!"

"I can't start without breakfast!" hooted Bunter.

"Suit yourself!" answered Lovell. "You can take root here if you like! We're going, anyhow!"

"I say, you fellows, I'd better come on with you till you get some grub," said Bunter. "I know you ain't hospitable—I don't expect common decency from fellows like you, but—"

"Come up!" said Lovell, addressing the horse.

"Am I coming with you for brekker?" hooted Bunter.

"No!"

"Well, of all the rotters—"

"Good-bye!"

"Look here, Silver, let Bunter come with us, and don't be a pig!"

Jimmy Silver spun round towards Raby. "What's that, Raby?" he exclaimed.

"What's what?" asked Raby.

"If you want Bunter—"

"I don't want Bunter!"

"Then what do you mean by calling me a pig?" demanded Jimmy Silver wrathfully.

"Eh! Who called you a pig?"

"You did!"

"I didn't!"

"I suppose I know your voice!" snorted Jimmy Silver. "And I jolly well think—"

"I tell you I didn't speak!" shouted Raby.

"Oh, don't be an ass, I heard you!" said Newcome warmly.

"So did I," said Tubby Muffin.

"I didn't! I heard somebody—"

"You didn't!" yelled Raby. "I didn't! You silly asses, are you all potty? I never said a word!" Raby turned away to the horse, and as he did so his voice went on: "You're a set of liars!"

Jimmy Silver jumped after him, and caught him by the collar.

"Hallo! Leggo!"

"Are you out of your senses?" shouted Jimmy angrily. "Liars, by Jove!"

"Do you mean to say I said that?" hooted Raby. "It was somebody else. I heard it, but I didn't speak."

"You did!"

"I didn't! Lovell, perhaps—"

Arthur Edward Lovell uttered a sudden yell.

"I've got it!"

"Eh! What have you got?" demanded Jimmy Silver gruffly.

Lovell rushed at Bunter. He grasped the fat junior of Greyfriars by the collar, and shook him forcibly.

"Bunter!" he roared.

"Yaroo! Leggo! It wasn't— I didn't— Yaroo!"

"I've got it now!" raved Lovell. "That chap speaking last night, and never showing himself, and the dog, and the rest of it! It's Bunter!"

"Bunter!"

"Yaroo!"

"Don't you remember?" howled Lovell. "He played tricks at Rookwood once. The beast is a ventriloquist!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, a light breaking upon his mind.

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled Bunter, as Lovell shook him like a fat jelly. "Leggo! Don't you shake me, you b-b-beast— Yow!"

"Shake! Shake! Shake!"

"Bunter all the time!" exclaimed Raby. "Of course! I'd forgotten—"

"So had I!" said Jimmy Silver. "I remember now! The fat beast was going to make us quarrel before he left us, if he could!"

"Squash him!"

"Bump him!"

"Slaughter him!"

"Yaroo! I say, you fellows!" howled Bunter. "Can't you take a j-j-joke? I—I was only doing it to—to amuse you, you know! Yaroo! Leggo! Look here— Oh, my hat! Yooop!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter descended upon the earth with a heavy concussion.

Then he was rolled over in the grass, till there was no breath left in his fat carcass, and he was left sprawling and spluttering.

The caravan swung out into the road, and Billy Bunter sat up in the grass, groped for his glasses, and jammed them on his nose, and blinked after the caravan in speechless wrath.

By the time he had recovered breath sufficiently to limp to his bike, the Rookwood caravan was out of sight.

"I don't think we shall see Bunter again!" smiled Jimmy Silver, as the caravanners sat down to breakfast at a wayside inn.

And Jimmy was right!

Even Billy Bunter did not feel inclined to join the Rookwood party again, and Jimmy Silver & Co. cheerfully reconciled themselves to the loss of his fascinating society.

THE END.

(Don't miss reading next week's grand, Long Complete Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., on their Caravan Tour.)

A Long, Luxurious Railway Journey! By a RAILWAY EXPERT.

All about the Famous Engine which forms the Subject of Our Grand Free Plate.

THE Argentine is a wonderful country, and an immense country. Its railways, also, are wonderful and immense. The biggest of the fine railways is the Buenos Ayres and Great Southern—B.A.G.S., as it is irreverently called here, or Ferro-Carriles del Sud in the vernacular, which accounts for the initials "F.C.S." on the fine locomotive colour-plate presented with this issue of the POPULAR.

We have already said that the B.A.G.S. is the biggest railway in the Argentine Republic. Its length of track is getting on for 4,000 miles. The gauge is 5 ft. 6 ins., so that the engines can be big in all directions. This wide gauge means that the passenger carriages and goods wagons are big also, and that great power is required of the locomotives consequently.

When we mention that the main line extends from Buenos Ayres nearly across South America—at any rate, to the eastern side of the Andes at Neuquen, a total distance of 850 miles—with several branches each between 300 and 400 miles in length, our readers will recognise the great importance of the Buenos Ayres Great Southern Railway.

The F.C.S.'s extremely handsome and big station in Buenos Ayres is not to be equalled

in this country, from an architectural viewpoint. It is called the Plaza Constitucion terminus, and from it express trains run to the chief cities of the Province of Buenos Ayres. These trains are made up of fine sleeping saloons, restaurant cars, and second-class saloons. The 5 ft. 6 in. gauge enables all the vehicles to be of liberal proportions. The sleeping-berths, which are placed across the compartments, are 6 ft. 8 ins. long, and there is a corridor down the coach 2 ft. 8 ins. wide, making the internal width of the carriage 9 ft. 4 ins. The speed is not great, as we reckon it. About 27 hours would be spent on the 850 miles' journey; but this includes long stops at various stations en route.

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The modern express engines, such as No. 3953, are of the 4-6-0 type, with six-coupled wheels 6 ft. in diameter, and actuated by cylinders 22 ins. by 26 ins. The heating surface amounts to 1,204 sq. ft. in the tubes and 1,359 sq. ft. in the fire-box. The superheater area is 800 sq. ft., and the

grate area 25 sq. ft. Working pressure is 160 lb. per square inch. The total weight of the locomotive is 67½ tons, of which 50 tons are carried on the coupled wheels. The tender weighs 45½ tons, and carries 305 cubic feet of fuel and 3,500 gallons of water. The total length of engine and tender is 57½ ft., and the height of chimney from rail level is 14 ft. 7½ ins.

But the passenger traffic on the B.A.G.S., although important, is small, compared with the immense number of sheep, cattle, and horses conveyed by the railway. In an average year, as many as about 7,000,000 animals will be carried, and over five million tons of goods, largely grain for English consumption.

B.A.G.S. is an English concern, English capital, English directors, and English officers. One of its troubles is the supply of coal for its six hundred and eighty-five locomotives. It owns a fleet of steamers, which in normal times ply regularly between Great Britain and Argentine ports with coal for its engines.

When the engines such as No. 3953 are sent out, room for them is often found on the F.C.S. steamers.

THE POPULAR.—No. 184.

ANOTHER GRAND TALE OF THE ROOKWOOD CARAVANNERS. By OWEN CONQUEST.

NEXT TUESDAY!

"RIVALS ON TOUR!"

24 **FREE Coloured Plate of a Famous South African Locomotive Next Week!**

A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Address: The Editor, The "Popular," The Fleetway House, Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

THE MOST POPULAR!

Undoubtedly the most popular gifts of to-day are the magnificent photos and plates which are being given away with the Companion Papers. Readers from all over the world are looking upon them with pleasure, for they are worthy of placing in the most prized albums.

The "Magnet" Library" which is now on sale is giving away to every reader TWO GRAND REAL PHOTOS of Tom Cairns, of Glasgow Rangers, and Sam Chedgoy, of Everton. Do not miss these splendid football photos, for they will make a fine addition to your collection. Next week, in the same paper, there will be a splendid action photo of J. G. Cock, the famous International centre-forward of Chelsea.

The "Boys' Friend," which is also on sale at all newsagents, is presenting to all readers, FREE, a magnificent Real Photo of Eugene Criqui, the wonderful little French champion boxer. Next week there will be another grand series of "Rising Boxing Stars."

In this issue you will have received a splendid Coloured Engine Plate, depicting a fine locomotive of the Buenos Ayres and Great Southern Railway, the up-to-date Argentine railway. The POPULAR Engine Plates are sought after as much for their accuracy in colour and detail as for their general appearance and interest, and I am pleased to say

that they have proved an enormous success with the readers of this famous four school-story paper. In next week's grand issue there will be another plate for your wonderful collection, which will depict a Giant Express Engine of the South African Railway. Keep a look-out for this.

The "Gem" Library, our mid-week Companion Paper, is also giving readers photos of famous footballers, and this week's FREE REAL PHOTO will be of C. M. Buchan, of Sunderland and England, in action on the field of play. Next week, in this same paper, you will find Two Real Photos of famous footballers.

That sums up the nature of the Splendid Gifts this famous batch of periodicals—the Companion Papers—are presenting to every reader this week and next. And if you wish to participate in these wonderful photos and plates you must place your order for issues of the above-mentioned papers at your newsagents at once.

OUR STORIES FOR NEXT WEEK!

There will again be four long, complete school stories in next week's issue of the POPULAR, the first of which will deal with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the famous Chums of Greyfriars. The story is entitled

"COKER'S FUND!"

By Frank Richards.

As the title suggests, the Great and Only Horace of the Fifth Form is a very prominent figure in this splendid story. Horace is struck with a brain-wave. The brain-wave is a relief fund for the benefit of the sufferers of the recent shipwreck in Pegg Bay, and Coker gallantly undertakes the job of collecting donations from fellows all over Greyfriars. The juniors respond to his appeal, but not in the way Horace Coker anticipates.

They— But that's for you to find out when you read next week's story of Greyfriars.

The long complete story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, is entitled

"RIVALS ON TOUR!"

By Owen Conquest,

and will deal further with the amusing adventures of the cheery Classical and Modern caravanners on tour.

A story of Frank Richards & Co., the Chums of the Cedar Creek school, entitled

"CHECKMATING 'POKER PETE'!"

By Martin Clifford,

will be included in the splendid programme of stories, and this will be followed by another new, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, under the title of

"A CYCLING COMEDY!"

By Martin Clifford.

Our grand four-page supplement, "Billy Bunter's Weekly," will be found in the centre of the paper, and will be a Special Photograph Number. Need I say that it is one of the funniest issues of the "Weekly" ever published?

There will also be a simple competition for Big Money Prizes, and another thrilling instalment of our Amazing New Serial of Adventure in the South Seas, entitled "The Pearl Poachers!" by the famous Sidney Drew. I might add that this wonderful story is the most-talked-of serial of the day.

Make sure of your copy of the POPULAR by ordering next week's bumper issue well in advance!

Your Editor.

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DO NOT SEND IN YOUR SOLUTIONS YET. There will be six sets in all, and when the sixth and last set appears you will be told when and where you are to send your sets.

The **FIRST PRIZE** of £10 will be awarded to the reader who succeeds in sending a set of solutions exactly the same, or nearest to, the set now in the Editor's possession. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit.

It must be distinctly understood that the Editor's decision is final in all matters concerning this contest, and entries will only be accepted on this condition.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are NOT eligible to compete.

THE POPULAR.—No. 184.

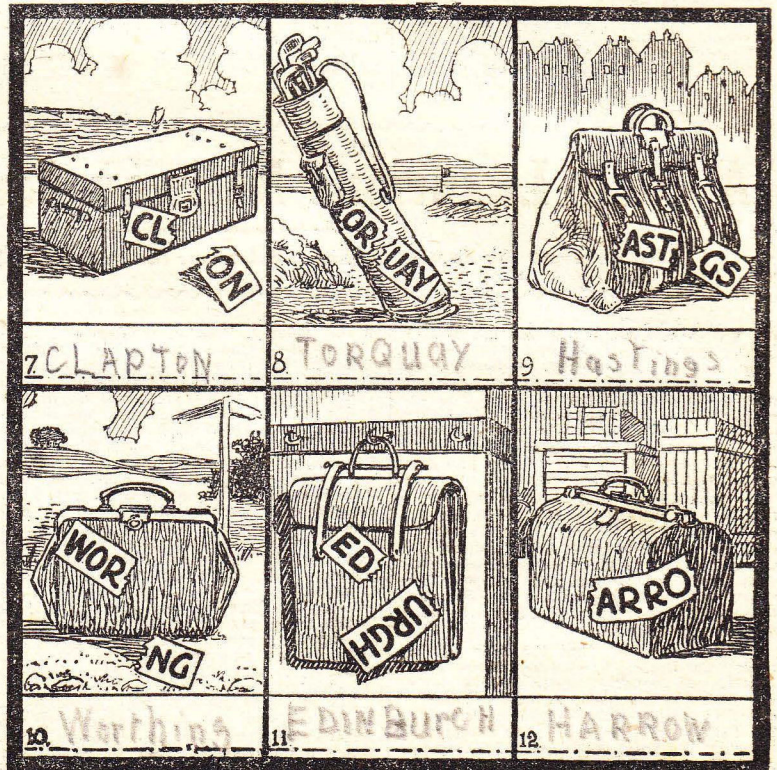
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TUESDAY!**

"A CYCLING COMEDY!"

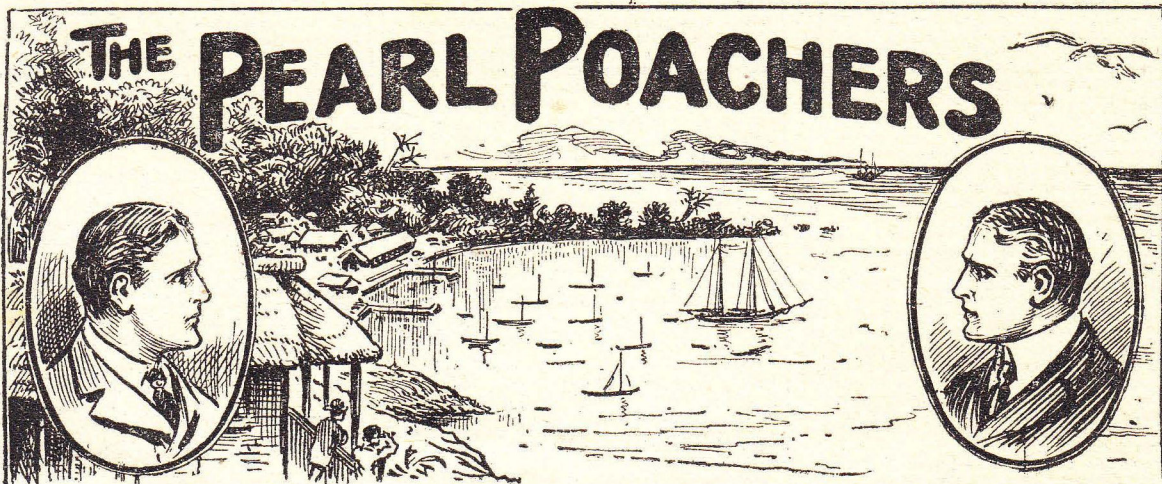
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By SIDNEY DREW

(Author of "Gan Waga's Island.")

INTRODUCTION.

A meeting between Bruce Donelan and Harper Blaise, the mysterious pearl raider takes place in the manager's bungalow on Ferrers Lord's pearling-station the day before the arrival of the millionaire. Donelan, the manager of the station is struck by the amazing resemblance between Ferrers Lord and Blaise, and he unfolds a daring scheme for raiding the strong-room on board the Lord of the Deep. Blaise is to impersonate Ferrers Lord, get away in the yacht, then after taking the thousands of pounds of pearls and gold from her, sink the yacht in the lagoon. The plan is successful. Ferrers Lord is kidnapped; then Blaise sets sail on the Lord of the Deep. On board the yacht Harper Blaise

comes to the conclusion that Rupert Thurston is a dangerous man, so he drugs him one day at dinner, and Thurston is laid up on the sick-list, in his cabin, unable to move.

Soon after Ferrers Lord's yacht leaves the station Ching Lung arrives, with Hal Honour and Gan Waga, in the prince's yacht. They hear of Donelan's daring scheme from Jimmy, the black. Donelan is taken prisoner on board the yacht, and they set sail with the view of combing the islands for Ferrers Lord. Jimmy, the black, tells Ching Lung that he has seen the mysterious raider, which is of enormous size.

(Now read on.)

Torpedoed!

"JIMMY'S eyes must magnify a lot," said Ching Lung. "She can't be much of a size or she'd be no use in these waters. I've worked it out in this way, Barry. If this fellow whom Donelan calls Harper Blaise pulls off his big bluff, he'll bring the Lord of the Deep back to the reef with all the gold he can manage to collect. Then he'll wreck the yacht, scuttle her, and get away with the loot in his own craft."

"And a very purty little programme," said Barry, "so purty that ut sames a shame to spoil ut."

Though many keen eyes were watching as the yacht skirted the island, nothing was seen to suggest that any human being was there. None of the pearlers came out so far. The water was too deep for an anchor to find bottom, and there was a strong inshore current making towards the reef. They cruised about till sundown, and then put out seawards at low speed. Then Barry O'Rooney paid Donelan a visit.

"Perhaps you'd loike to come on deck and stretch your legs, chum?" said Barry. "Ut's noise and cool now wid the breeze blowing. How goes ut?"

"It wasn't going so badly till you showed up," said Bruce Donelan. "The sight of a white man who can work for a dirty, yellow Chink sickens me."

"Then, bedad, ut doesn't make you sick, my lad," grinned Barry. "Pr'aps you'll recover whin Oi tell you Oi don't work for any yellow Chink. As you're a prisoner, I can't punch your head for talking of the prince in that insulting way as Oi'd loike to do, so come out of ut."

Barry told the Chinaman on guard that

he was not wanted, and took Donelan on deck. They paced up and down together in the star-light. For Donelan, Barry O'Rooney had no particular dislike. Barry could appreciate a big enterprise just as Ching Lung appreciated it, in spite of its rascality.

"How do you reckon your chances now, Donelan?" asked the Irishman, after they had talked of other things. "Not too rosy, phwat?"

"By thunder, I'm not chucking up the sponge yet!" said Donelan. "They're not so rosy as they were before you came along, but I don't think I'm quite beaten. An hour or two ago I was thinking quite differently. Now you've got the hang of it, what's your opinion of this little stunt?"

"Great stuff!" said Barry O'Rooney. "Av course, it's a blackguard's thrick, Donelan, but ut was a big notion. But whoy not spake out?"

"Oh, if that's all you want, I don't know where Ferrers Lord is," said Donelan. "I'm telling you that to save myself from being pestered to death. I haven't set eyes on him since the night the Lord of the Deep sailed, or seen the men who took him away. They've shoved him on one of the islands, I suppose, for they wouldn't want to entertain him. He looked pretty sick, but he was alive, and that's all I know about it."

"Bedad, he must find it very amusing and exciting," said Barry, and laughed.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Bruce Donelan.

"Oi was laughing at you," said Barry. "Something tickled my fancy, and you were mixed up wid ut. You're not a sailor, are you, Donelan?"

"No."

"Then Oi'll bid you good-night," said Barry.

He whistled for the sentry, and Bruce Donelan was escorted back to his cabin. Ching Lung rose from his deck-chair and joined the Irishman.

"He doesn't know where the Chief is, sir," said Barry O'Rooney. "He's on wan of the oislands, but they're as thick as plums in a Christmas pudding."

"Then we must map them out and take a bunch of them at a time and explore with the launch," said Ching Lung. "We'll try to get an anchorage at daylight. There's sure to be some place where we can lie up safely under the lee of one of them. You haven't got much confidence in your pilot, have you?"

"Niver a bit," said Barry. "He moight pilot a canoe, and he moight be all right wid the launch, but Oi wouldn't trust him wid the yacht."

Hal Honour was lying back in his deck-chair, pipe in mouth, looking up lazily at the glistening stars. It was an unusual pose for Ferrers Lord's engineer, for he was one of the most energetic people in the world. In the ordinary course of things, the only time the engineer was not working was when he was asleep. As a matter of fact, though his big muscular body was at rest, his brain was active. He was not thinking of Ferrers Lord, but of a new reversing gear for Ching Lung's turbine engines. Honour had a great respect and affection for his Chief, but he was not suffering the anxiety Ching Lung suffered. His confidence in Ferrers Lord's ability to look after himself in any emergency was quite unshaken.

"Big feller boss come quick," said a husky voice, and Hal Honour turned his head and saw Jimmy, the black.

Jimmy pointed down over the rail. Immediately below was Donelan's cabin. The porthole was open. Honour saw the flare of a wax-vesta and two hands. One hand held the lighted match and the other one a book. For an instant or two the book masked the light, and then Donelan jerked it aside. Evidently he was trying to signal to someone. As the nearest island was six miles away, Donelan seemed to be wasting his time.

"Try fetchu out ghost boat, big feller boss," said Jimmy. "Try tellie ghost boat you gotta, Donelan. Try fetchu Sharkin Billy and Kanaka Bliff."

The match burnt out, and Donelan lighted a second one. Hal Honour asked a question, with a subdued grunt.

"Know Kanaka Bliff," went on Jimmy, in a low, hoarse voice. "Bad black feller Kanaka Bliff, only clever black feller. Bliff tella how steer ghost-boat. Bliff tella all channels and rocks. We catch Kanaka Bliff soon find good feller big boss. Shee-coo! Looka quick, boss!"

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NEXT TUESDAY!

"COKER'S FUND!"

A SPLENDID TALE OF THE JUNIORS OF GREYFRIARS. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Far away over the sea a light winked once and then was gone. Donelan had seen it, for he shut the porthole. Jimmy and the engineer remained listening.

The sea was perfectly calm, and the yacht's engines were not working, though steam was up. In such deep water and on such a clear night it was palpably safe to let her drift. And out of the silence came a faint throbbing sound. The engineer did not stir, but his hand went up to shade his eyes.

"Boats coming, Barry," shouted Gan Waga's voice from the bridge. "Motor-boats coming. Wake up, old sleepiness."

"Ghost ships, big fella boss," said Jimmy, staring towards the dim islands with his great yellow eyes.

A bell clanged and orders were shouted. The only arms on board were rifles and revolvers, for Ching Lung had not the extraordinary privilege of Ferrers Lord, who was permitted to carry a powerful gun. The prince was below, but he came up at a run and joined Barry O'Rooney on the bridge. The engine of the unseen vessel was rattling and clattering away like a machine gun. They could not see her, but they could see her wake streaming out behind her in a creamy smoother. Her pace was terrific, but nothing was visible of the vessel herself. Rifles were being served out.

"Surely she can't mean to attack us," said Ching Lung. "She can't mean that."

"Bedad, av we had a gun on board Oi wouldn't wait to ax the question!" said Barry. "And Oi'm not waiting now! Have at her, Oi say!"

He sprang to the wheel himself and signalled full speed ahead. The nose of the yacht swung round to meet the roaring shadow that was tearing down on her, a mere patch of mist on her camouflage. The Chinese sailors were firing at her, though no orders to fire had been given. O'Rooney clenched his teeth. If he could only manage to ram the raider, he was not afraid of the result, for she could only be a shell packed with machinery that the yacht would crumple up and ride over with little damage to herself.

And then suddenly, as the yacht gathered speed, a wall of smoke appeared, jet black and impenetrable. It billowed towards the yacht, rolled over her, and enveloped her. Shrieks of fear broke from the Chinese crew that were silenced as they dropped their rifles and pressed their hands over their mouths and nostrils, for they had heard of an explosion, and the yacht shook and shivered. For an instant a red flame pierced the pall of smoke, and then a deluge of water descended on the deck and the mysterious vessel went roaring past into the night.

"Torpedoed, by jabbers!" said Barry O'Rooney.

A Warm Corner!

UNDER a star-gemmed sky, with her pumps working and a drunken list to starboard, the stricken yacht, Kwai-hal limped towards the islands. She had been badly holed, but luckily, the torpedo had missed her engine-room. It was astonishing that none had been killed; but there had not been even a minor casualty. The yacht, however, was doomed. She was making water faster than the pumps could clear it, and it was threatening to reach the furnaces and swamp the fires. The only hope was to beach her. She grounded in the channel between the islands, and blew off her steam just in time to save her boilers from exploding, for they had been badly shaken. She lay there firmly enough, almost too firmly to please Harold Honour.

When the dawn came it showed a coral island on either side, with snow-white beaches and clumps of palms. With tropical swiftness the brief dawn suddenly flushed into rosy day. Gan Waga uttered a shrill cry, and

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took a header overboard into the blue water and swam towards the island on the port side. Barry O'Rooney and Ching Lung forgot their wrecked yacht and all their sorrows, for a man was standing on the white beach, his arms folded and a big mushroom hat on his head. Plunging ashore, Gan Waga ran up the coral beach and dropped on his knees before the motionless figure.

"You're a good lad, Gan Waga," said the castaway. "And you needn't cry, you should laugh."

For the first time in his history, except, perhaps, in the days of his childhood, when his father or mother had corrected him with the shaft of a harpoon or the flat side of a canoe-paddle, Gan Waga was blubbing. A grin quickly followed his few tears of joy.

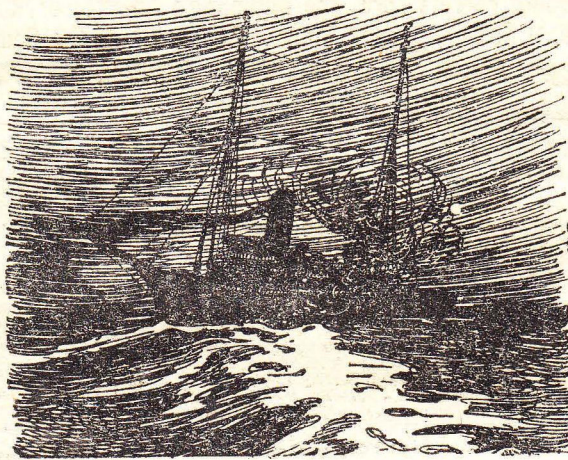
Then a boat was lowered, and Ching Lung bounded out of it, and ran up to the millionaire with both hands outstretched.

"By Jove, Chief, I scarcely knew you with that beard on you!" he cried. "But it is you, so nothing else matters—nothing else in the world!"

"Except a razor, Ching!" said Ferrers Lord. "You seem to have been getting into mischief. Why did they torpedo you?"

"It's a long story, Chief, and I'll tell you when we get aboard," said the prince. "We have an acquaintance of yours in custody—that dirty traitor Donelan."

Ferrers Lord shook hands with Harold



A wall of smoke appeared from the side of the raider, jet black and impenetrable. It billowed towards the yacht—

Honour. They might have met the day before, for anything in the shape of surprise or emotion the engineer betrayed outwardly, for Honour did not wear his heart on his sleeve. He went away at once to inspect the damage and to discover what the prospects were of repairing the yacht and salving her.

Barry O'Rooney greeted his Chief in quite a different fashion, and his voice was actually husky.

"A shave first, and I must borrow some of your clothes, O'Rooney," said the millionaire. "After that, Ching, I shall be heartily glad of a square meal!"

As he took his meal, Ferrers Lord gave Ching Lung a brief account of his adventures. Since he had escaped from Sharkin Billy and Kanaka Bliff they had not been very exciting. He had made several attempts to reach the reef, but as he knew the outlaws were looking for him, and only dared to sail at night, he had got lost in the myriads of channels.

"And that is rather a pity!" he said smiling. "I knew you were here, and I should have put off to you last night, but those rascals had their launch quite close to me, and I could not stir. I had a couple of matches in reserve, but it was too risky to light a fire as a signal, for if they had kidnapped me a second time they would have looked upon me with more respect, and taken good care of me. The result was rather unfortunate."

"Shockingly unfortunate!" said Ching Lung.

"Supposing you had got out to us, what would you have done then, Chief?"

"I should have borrowed your yacht, and gone to Gan Waga's island," said Ferrers Lord. "After capturing my double, I should have come back and rounded up this gang of pearl-pochers. We may be able to carry out the programme still, if you are not too badly holed or too firmly aground."

He glanced up as the engineer entered. He was not the bearer of good tidings, for he helped up both hands, and shook his head gloomily.

"Ten days, Hal?" asked Ching Lung.

"Weeks!" grunted the engineer.

"Thank you!" said the prince. "You always were a cheerful sort of chap, Hal. Ten weeks—eh? Ten weeks to patch up that hole, surely not?"

"Engines shaky, boilers leaking, hard on rock!" growled Harold Honour. "Full of water."

For Honour to have said so much all at once it was plain that the yacht was in no enviable position.

Ferrers Lord drank a glass of wine, and asked Ching Lung for a cigarette. He smoked it with the enjoyment of a man who has been long deprived of a luxury.

"You have a launch, Ching?"

"Oh, yes, of course I have a launch!" said the prince. "What's wrong now, Honour? Why chip in with that surly grunt?"

"As big as that!" said the engineer.

He indicated that the petrol-launch had a hole in her as long as his arm, and the engineer had a very long arm.

Ching Lung whistled.

"I think you had better attend to the launch first, Honour," said Ferrers Lord. "We'd be a good deal safer ashore than here. This yacht of yours is a handsome affair to lose, Ching, and I don't think these fellows will let us alone. And, if there's any serious fighting, what about your men?"

"Well, you know as well as I do, Chief!" said the prince, shrugging his shoulders. "Please don't ask me!"

This was always a sore point with Ching Lung. He was as brave as a lion himself, but his men were not exactly heroes and to be relied upon in an emergency. They did not like gunpowder.

Ferrers Lord, who knew the topic was not a palatable one, hid a smile, and changed the subject.

"I have had plenty of time for thinking during my solitude," he said, "and I must admit I have been anxious about Rupert Thurston. Though my double may be—

I almost said 'must be'—the most admirable actor in the world, it's hard to believe that he could hoodwink Thurston all the time."

"It is hard to believe, but it could happen. If I were in Thurston's place, and saw no real change in your appearance, I might think you acted strangely, or that your voice and mannerisms weren't quite the same, but I'd never dream that it was not you. Such a suspicion would not enter my head."

"Exactly!" said Ferrers Lord. "You're right, Ching, you couldn't suspect. But that adds to the danger. Were I the impostor, I'd always be suspecting that you did suspect. This fellow Donelan calls Harper Blaise knows nothing, or little or nothing, about me. You do, of course; Thurston does. Whatever the topic of conversation may be, Blaise must feel himself in danger of being trapped by Thurston. He can evade Prout or the others, but he can scarcely avoid being in constant contact with Rupert. Yes, I'm anxious. He may do Rupert some harm. Such a scoundrel might not shrink about using poison!"

Ching Lung gave a shiver.

"Don't say that, Chief!" he said. "You give me the creeps! I'd thought about it, too, worse luck, so you're not actually springing it on me. He might do it."

"Have you wireless?"

"No; I couldn't see that it was any use," said the prince. "Even Donelan grinned when I mentioned it. And now I suppose our wireless is smashed up."

Ferrers Lord stood up, and paced the saloon, his hands behind his back.

"Well, strange things have happened since I arranged to meet you over here, Ching," he said, after a pause—"things I never anticipated. We have had an amazing run of bad luck, but we cannot blame ourselves for any of it, for it was just bad luck, and nothing more. And these are very unhealthy quarters. That one-eyed rogue I left marooned with the Kanaka rascal cannot be at all fond of me. They built a fire and put up a big smoke after I had seized their boat, so I fancy they have been rescued. They must have got suspicious of you. You hung about too long."

"Honour tells me that he caught Donelan signalling to them," said the prince. "They must be fond of Donelan to fire a torpedo into us when he was on board!" he added, with a laugh.

"Judging from the two samples of those I encountered, they are hardly likely to study Donelan," said Ferrers Lord. "I presume I must have met at least three of them, but Mr. Harper Blaise was too quiet in his attentions to enable me to introduce myself. It must be an interesting experience to meet one's double, Ching, an experience that I hope is only being deferred. A brainy fellow with startling original ideas, this same Harper Blaise."

"I believe, though he is too wise to boast about it, that Donelan claims to be the originator of the idea of kidnapping you and letting Blaise impersonate you."

"I dare say, for Blaise could not have known that we carried gold and that more was to be obtained on Gan Waga's island," answered Ferrers Lord. "He must have heard that from his predecessor who was employed on the island until the cold climate upset him. But who is this double of mine? Where did he build his boat and enlist his cut-throat crew? It's more likely than not that his boat came from Japan, and he gathered his crew where he could amongst the islands."

After his bath and shave, the millionaire looked spruce and neat again, and O'Rooney's suit of white duck did not fit him badly. The yacht had grounded at half-flood, but she was so water-logged that the tide did not lift her when it was at the full. The hole in her did not trouble Hal Honour very much, for he could patch that up, but he disliked the condition of the beautiful engines, he had put in her. She lay head and stern on between the two islands, with open water to east and west. A big gale from either direction would have made her position a desperate one, for the coral rock under her was nearly as hard as granite. Luckily it was not the season for gales.

"If your electric plant hasn't collapsed, you had better fit a searchlight fore and aft, Ching," said Ferrers Lord. "You are a tempting prize and these rogues must find it hard to kill time while they are waiting for Blaise, so they'll be ready for any mischief. And the wireless, what about that?"

Ching Lung's wireless had received such a rude shock, that it had gone completely out of action. In the operator's room there was half a fathom of salt water. A splinter of steel, torn from the hull by the explosion, had perforated the side of the motor-launch, and that, like the motor-launch, was also out of action.

But the sun was shining, and the sea was calm and of a perfect blue, and the islands with their shining white beaches, feathery palms, and masses of shrubs, covered with gorgeous tropical blooms looked restful and peaceful. It was difficult to imagine any danger or strife there or anything to do harm, except when a great shark came gliding through the channel and made a tour of inspection round the stranded yacht.

The few boats they carried in addition to the motor-launch had not been injured.

"Honour looks a bit more cheerful, Chief," said Ching Lung, as the burly engineer came striding towards them.

Hal Honour had a sheet of paper in his hand. He gave the paper to the millionaire, and went on lighting his pipe as he went.

"A plan of defence," said Ferrers Lord. "Honour has a useful knack of making things plain when he uses a pencil. Not a bad suggestion, eh?"

Ching Lung glanced at the pencilled plan and nodded. All Honour wanted was to be allowed to get on with his work in peace.

Honour's suggestion was that a couple of earthworks should be thrown up on the extreme end of the islands, where rifle-fire could

be opened on the raider if she attempted to enter the channel. He further suggested two lines of floating mines, made out of petrol-tins as another precaution.

"Crude, but sensible!" said Ferrers Lord. "A couple of decent guns would be more effective, but as we have no guns we must do without them."

There were plenty of explosives on board. Two gangs of men were landed with picks and shovels to throw up breast works. More men were summoned to load up the petrol-tins. The careless way they handled the stuff on the deck was too much for Barry O'Rooney, and he stopped it.

"They'll blow us skoy-hoigh," he said. "It might be a lot of harmless coal-dust the way the ignorant spalpeens chuck it about. Bedad, we'll all go up in the air and be doing flying stunts and looping the loop over the top of them palm-trees. Av that job isn't done ashore Oi'll resign av Oi have to walk home."

So the mine-loaders were sent ashore to blow themselves up if they chose, without damaging other people. Then, with all the impudence in the world, a canoe, paddled by three natives, came round the point of one of the islands. A paddle, to which a white

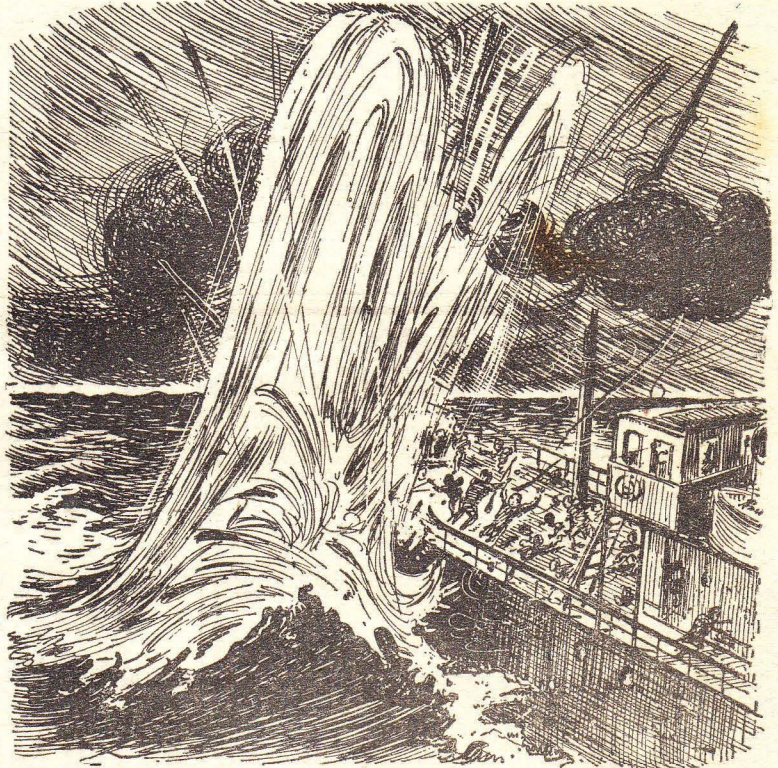
"Then you're thinking of coming aboard?" answered Ferrers Lord.

"Sure!" said the one-eyed man. "We're running short of stuff, and you look able to supply it. You couldn't have got yourself in a worse 'ole, could you, not if you'd done it on purpose? I'm an agreeable, easy-going cuss, boss, and I don't want to kill a lot of Chinese or be unreasonable, but my chums are getting hungry and smacking their lips over the idea of loot, and I give you my word some of 'em ain't so gentle as me, so do we walk in or do we fight in?"

"All prospects point to a fight," said Ferrers Lord quickly.

Sharkfin Billy grinned again. "Well, you're mighty good at that, Mr. Lord," he said, "and I don't grudge telling you that, for my ribs still ache and Kanaka Bliff is still in hospital after that rock you slung at him. But this ain't going to be a fair fight, for we've got you bottled and corked. Be sensible and call a deal."

"Clear out!" said the millionaire. "You have come here as a spy, and I'm quite entitled to shoot you, but I'll leave you to the hangman."



—there came the roar of an explosion, and the yacht shook and shivered. For an instant a red flame pierced the pall of smoke, and then a deluge of water descended on the deck, and the mysterious vessel went roaring past into the night. "Torpedoed, by jabbers!" cried Barry O'Rooney. (See Page 26.)

rag was tied, was waved. The canoe stopped as Ching Lung drew his revolver and fired a bullet into the air as a warning to come no closer, and the millionaire laughed.

"My one-eyed friend who passes under the charming name of Sharkfin Billy, I fancy, Ching," he said. "Let us see why he is honouring us with this visit."

A boat was swinging alongside. Ching Lung and the millionaire stepped into her, and four Chinamen pulled them out to the canoe. Sharkfin Billy welcomed Ferrers Lord with a grin and a nod, and the three natives looked curiously at the strangers.

"So here we are again," said Sharkfin Billy, "and I hope everything is nice and friendly this time. I just called round to see how you was getting on. Seems to me you've got on and ain't likely to get off quite so easy. Nice yacht, too, to crumple up on the coral. She's as good as busted, ain't she? When can we come aboard?"

Sharkfin Billy nodded cheerfully with the confidence of a man who thinks he holds the upper hand.

"The hemp that's going to hang me ain't been growed yet," he said. "And them Chinks of yours won't fight, that's where you're unlucky. I know the cowardly skunks, for I've got a bunch of 'em myself. With a good stiffening of whites they'll put up a scrap, but without they ain't got the pluck of rabbits, and you'll know all about it a bit later on. I guess, when we get moving, you'll soon be hoisting the white flag. You and your Chinks! You're unlucky, you are!"

To show his contempt for Chinamen, Sharkfin Billy spat into the sea. As the paddles dipped, he waved his sun-browned hand to the prince and Ferrers Lord.

"The ugly rascal," said Ching Lung, his hand on the butt of his revolver. "Wasn't it a mistake to let him go, Chief?"

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"It makes very little difference. As a hostage he would have been no protection to us, for I think the gang care as little for Sharkin Billy as they do for Donelan. The unfortunate part of it is—"

Ferrers Lord was about to say that Sharkin Billy's remarks about the crew of the yacht contained some unpleasant truths, but to spare Ching Lung's feelings he left the words unspoken. The boat had just been made fast, and the prince had followed Ferrers Lord on deck, when the first shell came. It came shrieking over the tops of the palm trees, high above the island on their starboard side, and dropped into a tangle of tropical shrubbery on the other island. The shell exploded with a crushing roar, flinging up a shower of branches and dust. Ferrers Lord compressed his lips, and Ching Lung's hands clenched, as they saw the gang of Chinamen fling down their tools, rush in a frantic mob towards the sea, plunge in and swim towards the yacht.

Signs of Mutiny.

THERE was no more firing, but Harper Blaise's vessel had proved by that single shell that she could make matters very uncomfortable without exposing herself even to such a comparatively harmless thing as rifle-shooting. None of the scared Chinamen were permitted to board the yacht. The levelled revolvers of Ching Lung, O'Rooney, Harold Honour, and Ferrers Lord turned them back. They swam ashore, and, after a lot of jabbering together, they went on with their work.

"Arrah, phwat rubbish! The cowardly yellow rats!" growled Barry O'Rooney, in vast disgust. "Phwat do you think of them, Gan, you fat villain?"

"Phew! I too jolly hotness to think of anything else, Barry," sighed the Eskimo. "I never morer hotness in all my life. This a rotten places, old bean!"

"Bedad, you spake the solemn truth, bhoy!" Barry agreed. "Ut's very noice to

look at, but Oi'd put up wid uglier scenery to be well out of it. Av the spalpeens chuck more shells across this lovely landscape we shall have bushels of trouble wid the Chinks. Ut is a rotten hole, Gan, and Oi wish Oi'd never seen ut!"

Then Barry went ashore to hustle more energy into the Chinamen. Fortunately for Barry, very few of them understood English, or probably one of them would have brained him with a pickaxe or scalped him with a shovel, for Barry not only told them his personal opinion of them, but also said most unflattering things about their families and ancestors. All the same, it seemed a waste of labour, for it was most unlikely that Harper Blaise's vessel would show herself within range of the rifles; and even then it was highly improbable that such wretched marksmen as the Chinks would register a single hit except by a fluke.

"Bethter kape the rubbish busy, anyhow," thought Barry O'Rooney, "though ut's mighty little good Oi can make out of ut."

He walked down the beach to where the other gang ought to have been filling the petrol-tins with explosives. They had given it up. They were lying about, very scantily clad, with their clothes spread out in the sunshine to dry. Again Barry O'Rooney used his tongue and brandished a threatening revolver. They went back to work, but very sullenly, and the slanting eyes that were turned on the burly Irishman were angry and threatening.

"That's wan thing about this canary-coloured crowd—they haven't got the pluck to mutiny," he muttered. "Bedad, they'd be up to any low trick that hadn't much risk in ut! Av Oi don't kape a watch on the brutes they'll play some low trick on us. We must kape an oie on the boats, or they'll be missing."

Harold Honour worked like a galley-slave. Darkness came with one end of the channel still unmined, but the two searchlights were in position, pouring their glowing shafts into

the gloom. With the searchlights in play, even a canoe could not have crept into the channel unseen.

At intervals the searchlights swept the two islands, as from either of them an attack might be made, for there was ample cover in the thick shrubberies to hide a landing-party. Ferrers Lord did not anticipate anything of the kind, for even a successful attack from the islands would cost many lives.

"As a sort of picture-show, it's very pretty indeed, Barry," said Ching Lung; "but I wish we had that other string of mines down."

Barry O'Rooney watched the palms and shrubberies leap into view out of the darkness as the beam of the searchlight swept over them.

"Bedad, sor, av Oi was a betting man, Oi wouldn't lay odds about the things going off av anything hit 'em!" he said, rather gloomily.

"You're telling me they're badly constructed, and not likely to explode, I suppose?" said Ching Lung.

"No, Oi'm not saying they won't explode. Ut's astonishing some of 'em didn't explode afore," said Barry. "To spake the very laste of ut, they didn't load up them tins wid any delicacy. They might have been handling a lot of harmless sawdust, the way they ramm'd the stuff in. Oi don't loike ut."

"Why not?"

"Oi'll tell you, sor," answered Barry, resting his arms on the rail of the bridge. "Ould Hal Honour has good oideas, and safe oideas, no man better—Oi'm willing to grant that; but Oi don't reckon any great shakes of moines all on a string loike beads on a necklace. There's a powerful strong tide running through the channel. Av that rope parted, or the rogues sneaked in and cut ut, we'd have the whole bunch of foireworks sailing down on us."

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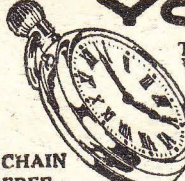
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