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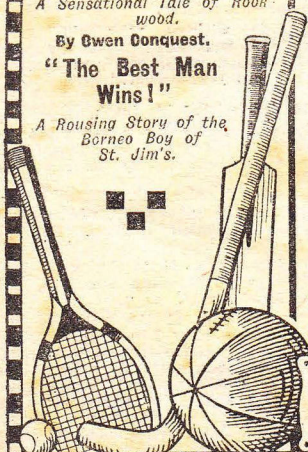
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When the Sea-Bandits come to Greyfriars there's some excitement!

By FRANK RICHARDS

(Author of the Famous School Tales of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, appearing in the "Magnet" Library.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Prisoners!

FRANK NUGENT, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, were alarmed and uneasy.

It was nearly midnight, and they were out in the cold, damp air of the night. For Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry had mysteriously disappeared.

They had not turned up at call-over, and bed-time had found them still absent. Therefore their chums' anxiety.

As a matter of fact, both Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were far beyond help from the outside world, never mind their chums at Greyfriars. The two juniors were prisoners in the hold of a ship belonging to a Russian named Captain Markoff—a gentleman who had very peculiar ideas regarding property and property-owners.

Harry Wharton and Bob had discovered what Nugent & Co. had yet to find out—that Markoff and his gang meant to rob Greyfriars—"redistribution of wealth," as he called it.

Hours—it seemed like days or weeks—had passed, and Harry Wharton and his chum still remained in the noisome darkness of the hold.

There was no glimmer of light in their prison, and they did not know how the time passed.

Round them was a noisome smell of bilgewater and the scampering of rats.

Once they mounted the ladder; but the hatch above was fastened, and there was no possibility of escape.

They resigned themselves to wait. Bob Cherry fumbled in his pockets for matches, and presently discovered a loose vesta.

He struck it, and the juniors surveyed their prison.

The match went out.

"I've got two more," said Bob, feeling in his pockets. "We'll keep them in case they're needed. I say, Harry, this is an awful scrape!"

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"Those rotters shall pay for it!" he said. "Anyway, they won't get anything out of us! That's settled!"

"Blessed if I've heard anything like it!"

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said Bob. "There were burglars at the school once, but they were common or garden burglars. I'm blessed if I ever thought of anything like this! But it's a cute dodge, all the same. If they clear out the school, they can get away in this steamer without leaving a trace. I wish they'd picked on Highcliffe instead!"

"Highcliffe's farther inland, and wouldn't be so easy to get at, or to get away from," said Harry. "There is a big haul for them, too, at Greyfriars if they can manage it. But I can't think they'll succeed."

Bob rubbed his nose thoughtfully. "I don't know. There's a whole gang of them, and they looked tough customers. If they chose to use force, who's to stop them—a dozen men with weapons in their hands—if they're determined? Police-constable Tozer wouldn't have much chance, and he's all the police force there is nearer than Courtfield."

Wharton laughed a little. "It's possible, Bob, if they have the nerve. That fellow Markoff says he has done the thing before on the French coast."

"I shouldn't wonder. It only needs nerve, if they're rascals enough. They seem to be the same kind of chaps as the Houndsditch murderers and those chaps in Sidney Street," said Bob. "Blessed foreign Anarchists, very likely, with the police looking for them in half the countries in the world. If they get a good haul at Greyfriars, they can clear right off across the water—"

"But this steamer will be hunted for!"

"If they made a big haul, it would pay them to run it ashore, and clear off on land somewhere. Or they could repaint it and change the name, or perhaps sell it and get a new craft," said Bob. "Piracy on the giddy high seas is played out in these days; but burglary is still profitable, I suppose. We're in a bad box, Harry. That man Markoff doesn't look as if he will stick at much."

"All the same, we're not going to help him."

"No fear!" said Bob promptly.

The hours passed. The juniors remained standing, moving about restlessly. When they remained still, the rats scampered about them and over their feet, and the horrible contact filled them with loathing.

They began to long for the hatch to be opened, even if it was only to see the threatening face of Captain Markoff, and to face whatever he had in store for them.

The hatch was opened at last. The light of the lantern streamed down upon the white faces of the juniors as they looked up.

Captain Markoff descended, followed by the mate, who was bearing the lantern.

The dark, bearded face of the Russian Anarchist was very grim. His eyes glittered as they were fixed upon the Greyfriars juniors.

"It is time!" he said abruptly. Wharton set his lips.

"Time for what?" he asked. "Time for you to do what I have asked. You have been here five hours. It is time that you should have come to your senses," said the Russian harshly.

The juniors were silent.

"I can do without your aid," said Markoff, "but you could make my work easier. I ask you again, will you show us how to get into your school?"

"No!"

The Russian gritted his teeth.

"You understand that you are wholly in my power here. If you were dropped into the sea, to be taken out by the tide, who would be the wiser?"

The juniors did not speak.

The mate, scowling savagely, whispered to the captain in harsh Russian. Markoff seemed to hesitate.

The juniors knew that the mate was urging him to adopt stern measures, and they waited anxiously.

They were utterly at the mercy of this gang of sea-thieves. The only restraint upon the rascals was the fear of punishment that might follow a desperate deed. And that fear evidently weighed lightly upon the mate. He half drew a revolver from his pocket, and the lantern-light glimmered upon the metal. But Markoff shook his head.

"Listen to me," he said at last. "You are obstinate, and your lives are in my hands if I choose to take them."

"There is a law in England to punish murderers," said Harry, as calmly as he could. The captain made a gesture.

"To-morrow morning I shall be far from England. But no matter! Do as I ask, and you shall have your liberty within a few hours, safe and sound."

The juniors did not answer.
"Refuse, and I take you to sea when I go, and I shall land you on some desolate shore to get rid of you," said Markoff. "You can take your choice."

"We have taken it," said Bob. "We can't help you to commit a robbery. We hope that you will be caught."

"Mind, I mean what I say! If I leave you here, you will never see the light of day again till you are taken out to be marooned on some rock in the Atlantic."

He waited for a reply.
The faces of the juniors were very pale. But their minds were made up. They made no reply, and the Russian, with a gesture of impatience and rage, turned away.

The two men left the hold, and the hatch was closed again.

Bob Cherry grunted.
"That's a cheery prospect, Harry!"
"Better than helping a gang of thieves," said Wharton.

"Yes, I suppose so; but how on earth are we going to get out of this scrape?"

"Goodness knows!"

"And we can't stop them," said Bob. "With or without our help, they're going to Greyfriars to-night, Harry, and—"

Wharton clenched his fists.

"Oh, if we could only get out to give a warning—"

"But we can't!"

"Let's try!" said Harry desperately. "There may be some way out—it's possible. Anyway, it's no good doing nothing."

"Right—ho!"

Stumbling in the darkness, the two juniors commenced the search for an outlet from the hold; but the hours passed, and their search was in vain, and at last they gave it up in sheer fatigue and despair. And while they were seeking vainly in the hold of the tramp-steamer for an avenue of escape, their thoughts were at the old school. What was happening at Greyfriars?

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

In the Dead of Night!

GOSLING, the porter, woke suddenly.

Knock!
Gosling sat up in bed and yawned.
Knock!

The porter rubbed his eyes in amazement. If he had heard a ring at the bell at that time of night he would have turned over and gone to sleep again. But this was a knock at the door of his own lodge—within the walls of Greyfriars.

Gosling grunted, and turned out of bed.
"Somebody ill!" he growled. "Wot I says is this 'ere—I don't see why they can't send Trotter for a doctor, if that's wot's wanted! That's what I says! Huh!"

And he pushed up his window, and put his head out and blinked down into the darkness beneath.

"Wot's the matter?" he demanded.
"Come down!" said the voice in the shadows below—a voice Gosling had never heard before.

"Who are you?" demanded the porter, in surprise. "Ow did you get in 'ere?"

"The house is on fire!" said the voice hurriedly. "Quick!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Gosling jumped into his trousers, jammed his boots on without lacing them, and ran downstairs. He opened the door of the lodge, and dashed into the Close, his glance going at once in the direction of the School House. All was dark and quiet there, and there was no trace of a fire.

"Why, what," ejaculated Gosling—"what the— Oh! Leggo! I— Groogh!"

Two pairs of hands had closed upon his arms, and another hand was jammed over his mouth as he opened it to utter a startled yell. The yell died away in a gurgle. Then it seemed to Gosling as if his blood had turned to ice, as a round metal rim was pressed to his temple.

"Silence!" said a deep, threatening voice.
"Groogh!"

"One cry, and you are a dead man!"
"Oh, lor'!"

Dark and shadowy forms had started up from the gloom round him. The school porter was surrounded.
A heavily bearded man held the revolver pressed to his temple, while two others of the gang grasped him in a grip of iron.

"Silence! Do you understand?"
"Groogh!"

The hand was removed from Gosling's mouth, but he no longer thought of shouting for help. The revolver-muzzle at his temple was enough for him. He did not intend to risk the trigger being pulled.

He blinked at his captors with startled, terrified eyes.

There seemed to be quite a crowd of them, and the porter gazed in terror at the dark, threatening faces and glistening eyes around him.

"Who—who—who are you?" he panted.
"We are burglars!" said the bearded man calmly. "We have come here to rob the school."

"Oh, lor'!"

"If you give us any trouble, you will be killed like a dog! We are desperate men!"

"I—I ain't goin' to give no trouble!" gasped Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—I'm paid for openin' and shettin' that bloomin' gate, and not for fightin' burglars, at my time of life! That's wot I says!"

"Good!"

An order was muttered in Russian, and Gosling's hands were secured behind his back. The porter made no resistance.

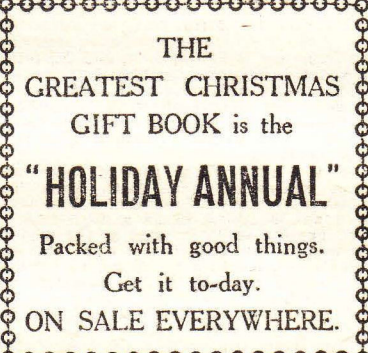
"Now," said Captain Markoff, "we want to get into the house—do you understand?—without any alarm being given. Come!"

"But I says—"

"You are to let us in."

"I—I ain't got no keys to the School 'ouse," stammered Gosling. "You'll have to call down somebody. Sides, the door's chained inside."

"Very good! You must call down somebody to open the door!"



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"Wot I says—"
"I shall keep you covered with my revolver. If you attempt to betray us, I shall fire instantly!"

"Oh orikey!"

"Come!"

Gosling was marched across the Close towards the School House. The last light had been extinguished in the great building now. All was dark and silent.

The porter wondered whether he was dreaming.

A burglary in the ordinary way would not have surprised him, but to be roused out of his bed by a gang of armed ruffians—that was quite flabbergasting, as he would have called it. He almost wondered whether he was on his head or his heels as he was marched across the Close, with a hard grip on either arm. But he had his wits about him sufficiently to know that he had better not resist. The revolver had been removed now, but Gosling could still feel the cold contact of the metal rim on his temple. He was not likely to forget that sensation in a hurry.

"Whom will you call?" asked Markoff, as they halted before the School House.

"I—I—I—"

"Take care that there is no alarm, that is all! Your life is at stake."

"Oh, you awful villain!" gasped Gosling.

"I—I mean, all right, sir. I s'pose I'd better call Mr. Quelch."

"Make haste, then."

"Throw somethin' up at the winder," said Gosling. "E won't 'ear me if I call from 'ere. Throw up a stone."

"Which window?"

Gosling indicated the window of the Remove master's room.

Clink!

A pebble struck the pane of glass with a loud sound.

The rascals were crouching out of sight

in the deep shadow of the wall. Captain Markoff stood close to the trunk of a big elm, the revolver in his hand.

Gosling was left alone in the moonlight under the window. He gave one glance round, and caught a glimmer of a revolver-barrel under the tree, and resigned himself to his fate. The revolver was levelled, and he had no doubt whatever that the thief would keep his word.

The window above was pushed up. The clink of the stone on the glass had awakened the Remove master.

Mr. Quelch looked out, the moonlight glimmering upon his surprised face.

"Gosling! Is that you, Gosling?"

"Yessir!" stammered Gosling.

"What is the matter?"

"The—the matter, sir!"

"Yes. Why have you awakened me?"

The Remove master peered down suspiciously, the thought crossing his mind that Gosling was intoxicated. Gosling was devoted to the cup that cheers, and sometimes he imbued not wisely, but too well.

"I—I— Will you come down a minute, sir?" said Gosling helplessly.

He heard a faint click under the tree close at hand, and his very heart turned sick with fear.

"For what reason?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sharply.

"There—there's something wrong, sir."

"What! Have you received some news of Wharton or Cherry?"

Gosling caught at the pretext.

"That's jest it, sir. There—there's been an accident. Will you come down, sir, and I'll explain?"

"One moment!" said the Remove master. He disappeared from the window.

A second later a light gleamed out. The Remove master dressed himself hurriedly.

Gosling waited in palpitating anxiety. He had no doubt that if the door were not opened, he would feel a bullet searing its way through his body. And Gosling's personal safety was of much more consequence to him than the safety of the school. Perhaps that was not unnatural.

A light glimmered in the hall. Mr. Quelch had turned on the electric light, and Gosling heard him moving the chain inside the door.

"E—e's coming!" he panted.

"Silence!"

Captain Markoff and the mate moved quickly into the shadowy porch.

The door swung open, and a blaze of light came out into the shadows. Mr. Quelch came hurriedly from the house.

"Now, Gosling, why—what—"

In an instant the Remove master was seized.

He glared in astonishment and anger at the two men whose iron grasp had fallen upon him. He jerked back his head involuntarily as he felt the touch of a cold barrel.

"What does this mean?" he panted.

"Skuse me, sir," said Gosling. "They 'ad a pistol at my 'ead, sir. I couldn't go for to refuse, sir. I 'ad to call you, sir—"

Gosling had no time to say more. He was seized, his feet were tied, and he was tossed to the ground, a helpless prisoner. And as Mr. Quelch, surprised and enraged, would have struggled, his hands were drawn behind him and fastened.

"What does this mean?" he shouted.

"Who are you?"

"It means that you are a prisoner," said Markoff coolly. "Are you the headmaster?"

"I am not! I—"

"Then you are useless!"

And Mr. Quelch was bound, and left on the School House steps. Gosling was dragged into the lighted hall.

"Where is the headmaster's room—quick?" said Markoff, in a low tone of menace.

"I—I— Wot I says is this 'ere—"

Markoff jammed the revolver to his head.

"Answer me, or—"

"Old on!" stammered Gosling. "I'll—I'll show you where it is. I'll tell you at once, I will. Wot I says is—"

"The headmaster's room—and quick, you fool!"

"The headmaster is here!" said a deep, quiet voice

Markoff swung round.

"You are the headmaster?"

"Yes."

"Then you are the man I want. I am here for all the valuables the school contains, and you must show me where they are. Do you comprehend?"

The good old doctor stood firmly, facing

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the rascal. His face was pale, but he did not flinch from the threatening weapon of the Russian Anarchist.

"I shall do nothing of the kind!" he said quietly and steadily.

"Do you value your life?" said the Russian harshly.

Dr. Locke folded his arms. "There is no time to waste," said the Russian savagely. "Listen to me. We are desperate men. If there is resistance, blood will be shed!"

"I shall not raise a finger to help you," said the doctor, his voice trembling with anger. "I cannot resist you, but that is all. Do your worst, you scoundrel!"

The rascal's eye gleamed along the revolver, but he did not fire. He rapped out a hasty order to his men, and the Head was seized. In a minute more the desperadoes were spreading over the house.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.
In the Hands of the Raiders.**

"GREAT Scott! What's that row?" Vernon-Smith sat up in bed in the Remove dormitory. The other fellows were mostly awake, too.

From below came sounds of hurried footsteps, of voices—cries of alarm.

Light gleamed under the door of the dormitory. The electric light had been turned on in the passage.

Then suddenly came a more terrible sound that awoke every echo of the old school. Crack!

It was the report of a revolver! A loud and agonised yelp followed—the cry of a stricken animal.

"That's Gosling's mastiff!" exclaimed Tom Brown.

"Somebody has shot him!"

"My hat!"

The Removites tumbled out of bed in hot haste.

Something extraordinary was evidently proceeding downstairs, and they intended to know what it was.

Tom Brown was the first to reach the door, and he tore it open, and the electric light from the passage streamed into the room.

But Tom Brown did not rush out as he had intended.

Before the doorway stood a burly form in rough sailor clothes, and a dark, threatening face met the startled gaze of the New Zealand junior.

Tom Brown started back, staring at the man in bewilderment.

"Who are you?" he gasped.

The man did not speak, but his right hand came up, with a revolver in it, and he made a threatening gesture with the weapon.

His action was enough. He was evidently posted there to see that the occupants of the dormitory did not get out.

Tom Brown cast a glimpse along the passage, and saw another man, weapon in hand, at the door of the Fourth Form dormitory. He caught a glimpse of the white face of Temple of the Fourth at that doorway.

"What is it?"

"What's the row?"

"What does it mean?"

"Great Scott!"

"Sure, it's a drama intoirly!"

Vernon-Smith hurried to the door. The Boulder of Greyfriars was quite cool—the only fellow there who was cool just then. He looked at the foreign seaman inquiringly.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The man made a threatening gesture with his weapon, but did not speak.

"He's a foreigner," said Vernon-Smith.

"Can you speak English?"

A shake of the head.

"Have the giddy Germans landed at last, and started on Greyfriars?" said Peter Todd.

"This chap isn't a German. It must be a burglar that's going on, but they're making plenty of row about it," said Vernon-Smith.

"Well, we can't get out," said Russell.

The Boulder shrugged his shoulders.

"Not without arguing with this chap's pistol," he said; "and I don't care to do that. We'd better stop here."

"They must be robbing the school!" said Penfold excitedly.

"I don't suppose they've come here for fun, certainly!"

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "This

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beats the band, my dear fellows! Suppose we rush this chap, and go to the rescue?"

"He's got a revolver, fathead!"

"And there's a gang of them," said Peter Todd.

"Shut up, Mauly, you ass! We can't do anything!"

That was only too clear. With an armed ruffian stationed at the door of the dormitory, the juniors certainly could not interfere in what was going on below. Gosling's mastiff had evidently tackled the invaders, with terrible results to himself.

Some of the juniors, looking from the

Head's study, and, the Head's keys being found, the safe was opened.

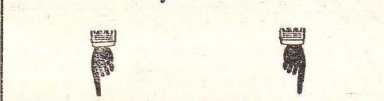
In three minutes the historic silver of Greyfriars School was transferred to a sack. Money and other valuables were added. The Head's desk was rifed; each of the masters' rooms was gone through. Money, banknotes, even watches were taken—all was grist that came to the mill of the raiders.

It was a big haul—if the rascals succeeded in getting away safely with it.

And what was to stop them? There was no building close to Greyfriars, and the raiders had taken care that no one should get away to give the alarm. Markoff's plans had been laid with the greatest care. Since the raiders entered the precincts of Greyfriars no one had got out of the school.

But in the Remove dormitory the wakeful and excited fellows noticed the absence of Nugent and Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull. But the raiders, of course, knew nothing of that, and they proceeded with their work of spoliation and looting, unconscious of the fact that the alarm had already been given.

LOOK, BOYS!



**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
The Flight of the Raiders.**

F RANK NUGENT and his companions had been more fortunate than they had hoped to be.

They had heard mutterings—heard the word "Greyfriars" spoken by men who looked like scoundrels—heard the word "Loot."

And that was all they wanted to hear to know that these men were out for an evil purpose—out, in fact, to rob Greyfriars.

They had followed the raiders to the school, and had seen them climb the wall, and through the bars of the gate they had seen the seizure of Gosling.

That was enough for them.

That it was a raid on the school—a bold and unheard-of robbery by force of arms—they realised only too clearly.

They drew back into the shadow of the trees beside the road, and held a hurried consultation.

"We can't do anything here!" Nugent whispered. "Those rascals are too strong for anybody in the school. We've got to get help."

"Friardale's no good," said Johnny Bull. "There's only two bobbies there—"

"We must get help from Courtfield."

"But the time—"

"Nothing else to be done. Look here, I'll cut over to Courtfield as fast as I can go with Inky, and you go down to Pegg and rouse up the fishermen and the coastguards. These rotters have come off the steamer in the bay. If they get away from the school, they may be stopped as they go back to their ship."

"That's a good idea!"

"Buzz off, then!"

It was evidently the best thing to be done. Johnny Bull started for Pegg, and Nugent and Hurree Janset Ram Singh ran as hard as they could go for Courtfield.

It was a good distance to the town, but they ran as they had never run on the cinder-path in their lives.

Breathless and excited, they burst into the police-station at Courtfield.

Inspector Grimes was there, and the juniors knew him personally; but the inspector stared blankly at the story they had to tell.

He made them repeat what they had seen, and stared more than ever; but the juniors were evidently telling the truth. And when Mr. Grimes realised how matters were at the school, he took his measures promptly.

Nugent and Inky started back to Greyfriars, assured that help would come as quickly as the inspector could contrive it. They were anxious to know what was going on at the school. They reached the gates of Greyfriars, and found them open.

The raid was over.

Captain Markoff and his men were retreating, several of them laden with sacks and bundles containing their loot.

The raid had been a complete success—the school had been looted; and it only remained for the raiders to reach the shore and get back to their steamer. Steam was up already on board the Seamew, and it would not take long for the raiders to get to sea. In a very short time the darkness of the North Sea would have swallowed them up and baffled pursuit.

"They're finished, the rotters!" exclaimed Nugent, with a quick backward glance up the Courtfield road. "When will the police be here?"

Wingate was chafing furiously in his room. But, as Loder had truly said, there was no arguing with pistols. And the enemy were in force. A pitched battle, with deadly weapons on one side and bare fists on the other, was out of the question. The Greyfriars fellows could do nothing.

Meanwhile, Markoff was not losing time. While most of his men were securing the masters, and locking them in their rooms, or watching the boys, Markoff and two or three more were searching the House for the valuables.

Gosling was forced to guide them to the

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Clatter, clatter, clatter!
 "Here they come!"
 It was the beat of a horse's hoofs on the hard road.
 A mounted constable came in sight, riding fast. Behind him came five or six more. The raiders looked in alarm along the road.
 Captain Markoff gritted his teeth.
 It was evident that the alarm had been given. He did not know how. But the police were upon him.
 He shouted to his men, and the raiders broke into a run, and disappeared in the direction of the wood.
 The horseman drew rein outside the school gates. Nugent sprang out of the shadow of the trees.
 "They're gone!" he shouted.
 "Which way?" called out Inspector Grimes.
 "They're heading for the wood. They want to get to the shore."
 "Right!"
 The mounted constables dashed in pursuit.
 In the road the juniors stood, looking after them anxiously. The horsemen vanished into the shadows of the trees.
 From the distance came a hoarse shout, and a yell of defiance. Then came the rapid detonations of a revolver.
 "They're firing!" exclaimed Nugent, white to the lips.
 "The scoundrels!"
 Crack, crack, crack, crack!
 It seemed like a horrible dream to the juniors as they stood there, with thumping hearts, listening.
 A riderless horse came dashing back along the road, frantic, with stirrups swinging loose. Where was his rider?
 The juniors ran down the road.
 In the moonlight a dark form lay, and stirred and groaned. Nugent bent over him. It was the inspector.
 "I've got it in the arm!" muttered Mr. Grimes. "The scoundrels! They'll get away!"
 It looked like it.
 The raiders had disappeared into the wood, and the mounted constables had lost track of them.
 With desperate haste the rascals were pressing on towards the shore.
 They came out on the beach, but the village of Pegg was wide awake now. Johnny Bull had alarmed the place.
 A crowd of fishermen and longshoremen were on the shore, and lanterns were gleaming, voices calling.
 Markoff halted, with the surf whitening round his boots, and gave a signal whistle.
 From the darkness of the sea a boat glided into view, and bumped on the shingle.
 In hot haste the raiders crowded into it.
 There was a yell along the beach.
 "There they are!"
 "After them!"
 Footsteps ground the shingle.
 But the boat was pushing off now, and Markoff stood upright, revolver in hand, and a savage gleam in his eyes.
 It would have gone hard with any of the pursuers who had reached the boat in time to lay hands upon it.
 But the raiders were too quick. The crowded boat danced away upon the water, and the crowd stumped knee-deep in the surf, baffled and shouting.
 Markoff rapped out a sharp order. The foreign seamen pulled as if for their lives, and the boat fairly flew over the water towards the steamer out in the bay. On board the Seamew the engines were already throbbing.
 The boat bumped against the side of the steamer.



CALLED UP AT MIDNIGHT! Mr. Quelch looked out of his window, the moonlight glimmering upon his surprised face. "Gosling! Is that you?" he cried. "What is the matter?" "—I— Will you come down a minute, sir?" said Gosling helplessly. "There's—there's something wrong!" (See Chapter 2.)

The steamer glided out of the bay, out into the glimmering moonlit sea, leaving the straining boats far behind.
 And deep down in the hold of the rocking, throbbing steamer two schoolboys heard the noise, the confusion, the tramping of feet, the pulsing of the engines, and knew that they were being carried out to sea—whither?

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
 After the Raid.

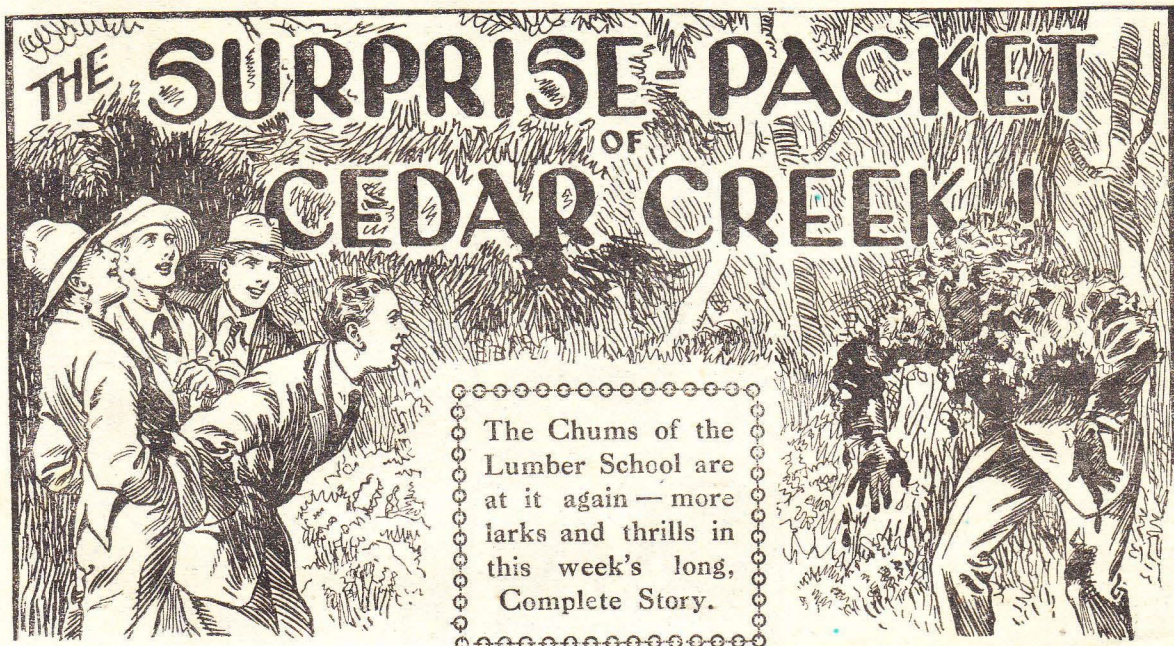
GREYFRIARS was ablaze with lights, humming and throbbing with excitement.
 The departure of the raiders had been the signal for a wild commotion.
 All the fellows had crowded down from their dormitories.
 Masters and boys were in utter confusion. The happening was so utterly unexpected, so unprecedented, that it seemed like a dream. Even yet they could hardly realise that it had really happened.
 Gosling was found, and released from his bonds. He was dazed and speechless. Dr. Locke seemed stunned.
 The school had been looted, but, fortunately, beside the breaking of locks and the looting of valuables, no further harm had been done. Dr. Locke, fearful for the safety of the boys under his charge, had sternly commanded that there was to be no resistance. It would have been a hopeless struggle. In the Close lay the dead body of the mastiff, shot by one of the raiders.
 "Well, this beats the band!" said Coker of the Fifth, for the twentieth time. "Who'd have thought it?"
 Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came into the crowded quad. They were carrying Mr. Grimes.
 They met the Head as they were bringing the wounded inspector in.
 "Good heavens! What is this?" exclaimed Dr. Locke. "You boys—where have you been?"
 "We gave the alarm at Courtfield, sir," said Nugent. "Mr. Grimes is hurt."
 "Bless my soul!"
 "Bull's gone for the doctor, sir."
 "Quite right—quite right! Bring Mr.

Grimes in. Wingate, help them, please. Put him into a bed at once."
 "Bring him into my room," said Wingate.
 The inspector, who had fainted, was placed in Wingate's bed. Johnny Bull arrived with the doctor from Friardale.
 Fortunately, the inspector's wound was not serious; but he had to remain in bed. Mr. Quelch, who was much cooler than the Head, set about the difficult task of restoring order in the school.
 But there was, of course, no more sleep that night.
 Greyfriars was buzzing like a hive of bees. Dr. Locke did not return to bed that night. A mounted policeman arrived from Pegg, with the news that the raiders had escaped, and had put to sea in a steamer.
 When morning came the school was still buzzing with excitement.
 As a matter of fact, the juniors were not exactly displeased at what had happened. The unprecedented happening had furnished them with enough excitement to last the rest of the term.
 "And they are bound to be caught," said Vernon-Smith, with conviction. "They can't possibly get away. There'll be gunboats looking for them all over the North Sea and the Channel before this."
 "But where's Wharton and Bob?" said Nugent gloomily.
 The Bounder nodded.
 "This explains what's become of them," he said. "They must have fallen foul of this gang somehow; perhaps found out that they were going to raid the school."
 "Yes; and—" Nugent paused, not caring to put the black thoughts into words. But the Bounder shook his head.
 "They wouldn't hurt them if they could help it, I should say. They don't want to put ropes round their necks."
 And all Greyfriars waited eagerly for news of the Seamew.
 The Head was constantly at the telephone. Telegrams arrived incessantly, but the news was vague.
 Another search was made for the two missing juniors, but Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry had vanished!

THE END.
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Look Out for this Story in Next Week's BUMPER ISSUE—"For Life or Death!"

THE NEW MASTER! Beneath all his absurd peculiarities there is real old British pluck—and British pluck will tell in the long run. The true character of Mr. Shepherd, the new master of the lumber school, is revealed at last!



The Chums of the Lumber School are at it again—more larks and thrills in this week's long, Complete Story.

By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Gunten's Little Game!**

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Shepherd, the new master at Cedar Creek, looked round rather suspiciously as he heard that shout of laughter in the corner of the playground.

A number of the Cedar Creek fellows were gathered there, and they were evidently greatly entertained by something.

Mr. Shepherd, being a somewhat lackadaisical young man, with affected manners, had not earned much respect among the hearty Canadian boys, and it had lately dawned upon him that he was more or less an object of ridicule.

Why that should be so he did not appear to understand, but the painful fact had been borne in upon his mind.

The discovery had made him somewhat tart in temper.

As it happened, the group of schoolboys were not looking towards him, and did not appear to see him at all; but, like the gentleman in the old play, Mr. Shepherd suspected that he was the subject under discussion, because the fellows were laughing.

He strode towards the group with a knitted brow.

Kern Gunten, the Swiss schoolboy, was the centre of the group, and he had a paper in his hand, which he thrust hastily out of sight as the master approached.

"Good-morning, sir!" he said meekly, as Mr. Shepherd came up.

"Good-mornin'!" said Mr. Shepherd.

"Fine mornin', sir!" said Chunky Todgers, imitating Mr. Shepherd's way of speaking.

"Yaas, Todgers. What is it you have there, Gunten?" asked Mr. Shepherd.

"Where?" asked Gunten.

"You had a papah in your hand," said Mr. Shepherd, who was apparently a little sharper than Gunten supposed.

"Oh, no, sir!" answered Gunten.

"I saw it!" said Mr. Shepherd severely.

"Kindly show me that papah at once, my boy!"

"Really, sir—"

"Do as you are told!" snapped Mr. Shepherd.

Gunten, with a scowl, fumbled in his pocket.

Evidently Mr. Shepherd, who had been the victim of a number of practical jokes already,

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suspected that Gunten was planning another, and meant to make sure about it, at all events.

The other fellows looked on with bated breath.

Gunten was the only fellow there who would have told a lie to the master, but he had told it without hesitation.

There was a clatter of hoofs outside the gates as Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, and Vere Beauclerc arrived.

They led their horses into the corral, and then, spotting the crowd in the school ground, came towards it, to see what was on.

Gunten was still fumbling in his pocket as they came up.

Mr. Shepherd looked more and more suspicious at the reluctance of the Swiss to produce the mysterious paper.

"I am waiting for you, Gunten," he said. "I shall not wait much longah!"

Frank Richards & Co. looked on, wondering what was the matter.

Kern Gunten's hand came out of his pocket at last, and he held out a small handbill to the master.

Mr. Shepherd took it, and gazed at it in surprise.

It was an advertisement, and it ran, in large type:

"THE THOMPSON PRESS!

25 CENTS!

READ IT!

THE THOMPSON PRESS IS 'IT'!"

It was one of the handbills which Mr. Penfold, the enterprising editor and proprietor of the local paper, occasionally flooded the town of Thompson.

Certainly there was no harm in that handbill.

Mr. Shepherd looked perplexed.

"Is that the papah you had in your hand, Gunten?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Begad! Is that what you were laughin' ovah?"

"Yes, sir."

"Nothin' to laugh at in that papah, surely?"

"No harm done, I suppose?" said Gunten sulkily.

"No, certainly not!" said Mr. Shepherd.

"Heah is your papah."

He handed the bill back to the Swiss, and walked away towards the log school-house.

Gunten grinned mockingly as he disappeared.

"I guess I wasn't going to show him the paper!" he said. "Luckily I happened to have the handbill in my pocket. Anything is good enough to stuff up a silly jay like Shepherd!"

And Gunten felt in his pocket, and took out again the paper he had hidden there, and which he had been very careful not to show to Mr. Shepherd.

He held it up for the schoolboys to see, and there was another howl of laughter.

Frank Richards & Co. stared at it in amazement.

It was written in what appeared to be a feminine hand.

Kern Gunten had very great skill in the imitation of handwriting—a dangerous gift, which was likely to land the unscrupulous Swiss in trouble some day.

The letter ran:

"Beloved Horatio,—I have seen you but twice, but my heart has gone out to you. Why, oh, why did you come hither with your fatal beauty?"

"Horatio, I pine for you! Sleeping or waking, your noble face is ever before my eyes!"

"Dearest Horatio, will you grant me even a few words from your dear lips? To hear you speak will make me happy.

"I dare to hope that you will grant me this request. In hope and longing, I will wait for you this evening in the Red Deer glade, only a few minutes' walk from your school, under the old oak.

"Come—oh, come!

"ANGELINA."

"Is that a letter sent to Mr. Shepherd?" asked Bob Lawless, in wonder. "How did you get hold of it?"

"Easily enough. I wrote it, I guess!" answered Gunten coolly.

"You wrote it!" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc.

"Yep!"

"And—and you're going to send it to the Gentle Shepherd?" shouted Bob Lawless.

"Correct!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

"But—but even the Shepherd won't be idiot enough to be spoofed like that."

"Won't he?" grinned Gunten. "Isn't he the most conceited jay that ever stepped into the Thompson Valley? Haven't you seen him eyeing Miss Meadows, even? The

"Anything happened, sir?" gasped Bob. "Gug-gug! There is nothing to laugh at!" spluttered Mr. Shepherd. "I am—gug-gug!—cowed with horrid tar! Grooogh!" "Ha, ha! Sorry, sir! Ha, ha!" "I have been the victim of an outrage!" gasped Mr. Shepherd.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Shepherd gave the almost hysterical schoolboys a furious and tarry glare, and rushed on frantically towards Cedar Creek. The schoolboys, yelling, followed him. Mr. Shepherd was too good to be lost sight of just then.

"What will Miss Meadows say?" gasped Frank Richards. "Ha, ha, ha!" Miss Meadows met the tarry gentleman as he rushed in at the gates, with the yelling mob at his heels.

She was speaking to Mr. Slimmey there, and both of them stared, petrified, at the new master as he appeared.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the schoolmistress. "What—what—who is that?"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Slimmey, blinking at the weird figure over his gold-rimmed glasses. "I—I think it is Mr. Shepherd! I—I recognise his—his clothes! Bless my soul!"

"Groogh! Gug-gug!" "Mr. Shepherd! Is that you, Mr. Shepherd?"

"Groogh! Yes, Miss Meadows!" "I've ever did you get into that dreadful state?" exclaimed the schoolmistress.

"I am the victim of a practical joke!" spluttered Mr. Shepherd. "Groogh! Oh dear! I am smothered! Groogh! I am poisoned with tar! Ooooch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Silence!" exclaimed Miss Meadows, with a stern look at the Cedar Creek fellows.

"Silence at once! Who has done this?" "Nobody knows, ma'am," said Kern Gunten meekly. "We saw Mr. Shepherd suddenly on the trail in that state."

"Who did this, Mr. Shepherd?" "I do not know!" gasped the wretched Romeo. "I was standing under a tree, when this awful stuff—groogh—game down on my face—ooooch!"

"This must be inquired into!" exclaimed Miss Meadows sternly. "It is a practical joke, of course, and I fear that some boy here is concerned in it. Did any of these boys induce you to stand under that tree, Mr. Shepherd?"

"No!" gasped Mr. Shepherd. "I—I—I was—was there to—to—"

He stuttered and stopped. It had dawned upon Mr. Shepherd by this time that "Angelina" was responsible for the tarring and feathering, whoever Angelina was.

He comprehended at last that the letter from Angelina was intended only to draw him within reach of the tar and feathers; and that it was not his fatal beauty, but his fatal vanity, that was the cause of the disaster.

Not for his life would he have confessed the facts or have shown that absurd letter to Miss Meadows.

He rushed away to his cabin to rub and scrub, and scrub and rub—which was really what he chiefly needed now.

"Gunten," rapped out Miss Meadows, "do you know anything about this?"

"I, ma'am?" exclaimed Gunten, with an air of injured innocence.

"Yes, you! There is tar on your hands!" Gunten started.

"And on your clothes, too!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"I—I— Mr. Shepherd brushed against me on the trail, ma'am!" stammered Gunten. "I guess I got it from him."

Miss Meadows gave him a severe look, but the matter had to drop. There was no getting the truth from the Swiss.

Cedar Creek School started for home that evening howling with laughter. And there was much laughter in the farmhouses in the district when the story was told there.

It was quite a merry evening for the Cedar Creek fellows.

But it was not merry for the unhappy Horatio.

All that evening, with intervals for rest, he was rubbing and scrubbing to get rid of the tar.

But, with all his efforts, he could not rid himself of all of it; and the next morning, in class, he presented a somewhat piebald appearance, which evoked smiles on all sides.

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THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Gunten's Revenge.

"ANGELINA" remained undiscovered. No. one was punished for the outrage upon Mr. Shepherd.

No one could be found guilty without the Gentle Shepherd making all the facts public; and that he was not likely to do.

But during the next few days Kern Gunten came in for some unusual severity from the new master.

Mr. Shepherd could prove nothing, but he had his suspicions.

He was aware that Gunten had been spotted with tar that afternoon, and he remembered the incident of the mysterious paper which Gunten had been so unwilling to show him in the playground.

He had little doubt, now, that the Swiss was the originator of the letter from Angelina, and that it was that letter, and not the handbill, that the schoolboys had been laughing over when he inquired.

He could prove nothing, but his suspicions amounted to certainty, and in consequence Kern Gunten found himself in hot water.

As Gunten was the worst boy in the school, and addicted to all kinds of rascalities, it was easy enough to find occasion for punishing him, when Mr. Shepherd set his mind to the task.

And so, for a few days, Gunten had to pay for his sins, indirectly, and his feelings towards Mr. Shepherd became almost homicidal.

After morning lessons one day Gunten was found playing poker with Keller in the old corral, and was caned by Miss Meadows.

It was the Gentle Shepherd who found him. Gunten came out after his caning with glittering eyes.

SPECIAL NOTICE!
NEXT WEEK'S
FREE REAL
PHOTO
IS A RIPPER!

He did not stay for dinner at the lumber school that day.

He was free to go home to Thompson to dinner if he liked, and that day he did so.

But the other fellows guessed that he had not undertaken that long ride simply to have his dinner at home for once, and when he came back, a few minutes before afternoon lessons began, he was questioned.

"What have you been up to?" Chunky Todgers asked him.

Gunten gave an evil grin. "I guess the Gentle Shepherd is going to be sorry for getting me into trouble," he answered. "I've been to see Bunchy Fives."

"Bunchy Fives?" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "What on earth do you want to see that bulldozer for?"

"He's coming here to see the Gentle Shepherd," grinned Gunten.

"What?" The schoolboys stared at Gunten. "Bunchy Fives" was the man in Thompson who gave the sheriff most work to do.

He was a "bulldozer" of the first water, the kind of ruffian who prided himself on the fact that he would rather fight than eat, and who boasted that at home in Oregon he was accustomed to kill a man before breakfast every morning.

Bunchy had seen Mr. Shepherd in Thompson, and had been heard to remark that he would handle the "dude" for two cents, taking Mr. Shepherd's extreme neatness and elegance of attire as an insult to himself.

"He's coming here!" repeated Frank Richards. "What is that ruffian coming to see Mr. Shepherd for?"

"Guess!" sneered Gunten. "Dudes ain't popular in Thompson. Bunchy's said a lot of times that he would bring him up with a round turn. Well, I've asked him to come and do it where we can see the fun. I've

stood him a dollar for drinks, and he will be along after lessons to-day."

"Look here, you rotter!" exclaimed Frank hotly. "The Shepherd can't tackle that hulking ruffian. If he touches Mr. Shepherd, we'll stop him fast enough."

"If Shepherd hides behind schoolboys, he's welcome to," sneered Gunten. "I guess that would set him down more than a licking."

"It's too rotten!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers. "Why, Bunchy will simply smash him up—that dude!"

"That's what I want!" answered Gunten coolly.

The bell rang just then, and the boys had to go in to lessons.

But Frank Richards & Co were feeling worried that afternoon.

The Gentle Shepherd was an absurd fellow, and they did not respect him; but they felt very strongly on the subject of his being "handled" by the worst ruffian in the Thompson Valley.

After lessons, the chums did not go for their horses as usual.

"I guess we're staying on a bit," Bob Lawless remarked. "If that bulldozer comes humping along, we're going to be here, you fellows."

"Certainly!" said Vere Beauclerc quietly. "It's a cowardly trick of Gunten's, and it's not going to succeed. If Bunchy Fives goes for the Shepherd, we'll go for him—a dozen of us can handle even that hooligan."

"What-ho!" said Frank Richards, with emphasis.

"Hallo! There's the galoot!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers.

Bunchy Fives was already on the scene. He had been leaning on the gate, smoking a short, black pipe, and waiting for the boys to come out of school.

As the Cedar Creek fellows streamed out of the log schoolhouse, Bunchy detached himself from the gate, and strode into the playground.

He was a huge fellow, over six feet in height, with huge, muscular limbs, and fists that looked like legs of mutton.

His face was hard and brutal, and half covered with a bristly beard.

"What is he?" he roared.

"What do you want here?" demanded Bob Lawless disdainfully.

"I guess I'm arter that dude!" roared Bunchy Fives. "What is he? What is the galoot hiding? Hiding behind the school-marm—hay? What is he? You sarch him out, and you tell him that Bunchy Fives is on the warpath!"

Miss Meadows stepped out of the porch. "Go away at once!" she rapped out.

"How dare you come here and make a disturbance? If you do not leave immediately, I will have you arrested!"

"Whar's that dude, marm? Ain't he man enough to show himself when a galoot's asking for him, hay? Whar's the Gentle Shepherd? I'll shepherd him! Whar is he?"

There was a step behind Miss Meadows, and Mr. Shepherd came out.

He glanced curiously at the hulking ruffian.

"Is anything the matter, Miss Meadows?" he asked quietly. "Is this man troubling you? Now, then, get off, my man!"

The schoolboys simply blinked.

This was not the way they had expected the Gentle Shepherd to address the terror of Thompson.

Bunchy Fives seemed taken aback, too. He stared at the young man.

"Aire you the dude?" he roared. "Yep, I know you! I've seen you strutting on the street at Thompson, b'iled shirt and all, and store clothes, and shiny boots! I know you."

"Have you any business with me?" asked Mr. Shepherd.

"I guess I have!" grinned Bunchy. "I guess I've come hyer to show you that dudes ain't wanted in this hyer valley! I guess, my boy, that I'm going to make you into a picture! You hear me yamp!"

Mr. Shepherd looked at him calmly.

To the amazement of all, including Miss Meadows, he showed no sign of fear.

Perhaps Mr. Shepherd's absurdities were only skin-deep, after all.

"Kindly remember that you are in the presence of a lady, and moderate your voice, my man!" he rapped out.

"What!" gasped Bunchy.

"And leave this place at once!"

"Waal, carry me hum to die!" ejaculated

Bunchy Fives. "This hyer dude is talking to me—me, what has killed a man before breakfast every morning when I'm at home in Oregon! Carry me hum to die!"

"Shall I remove this man, Miss Meadows?"

"Please do not attempt anything of the sort, Mr. Shepherd!" exclaimed the school-mistress.

"I guess he better not!" roared Bunchy.

"Miss Meadows," said Mr. Shepherd quietly, "you can see that this man is bent upon making a disturbance. I beg of you to retire indoors while I deal with him!"

"We'll help you, sir!" exclaimed Bob Lawless.

"I do not require your help, my boy, and you will kindly stand back!"

"Oh, by gum!" murmured Bob.

The Gentle Shepherd drew Miss Meadows back, and waved the boys aside. He threw aside his coat with a hasty movement, and faced the man from Oregon.

"Now, my man," he said quietly. "You are not wanted here. Either you will leave these premises immediately, or I shall eject you! Which is it to be?"

"I guess I'm dreaming!" murmured Bob Lawless to Frank "Pinch me, Franky, and wake me up!"

Frank Richards chuckled.

"There's stuff in the Gentle Shepherd, after all, Bob," he whispered. "He's an ass, but he's got pluck. And he's a public-school man, you know. He has learned how to use his hands. I wouldn't bet on Bunchy Fives, after all."

"He's a regular surprise-packet!" smiled Beauclerc.

"Look out! There he goes!"

Bunchy Fives had stood blinking at the young master for some moments, too taken aback to realise how matters stood.

But as he understood that Mr. Shepherd actually meant what he said—that he was going to eject him from the school grounds if he did not go quietly, the ruffian's wrath knew no bounds.

With a bellow like an excited buffalo he rushed at the young master, and all Cedar Creek looked on breathlessly.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Pluck Will Tell.

MR. SHEPHERD stood up steadily to the attack.

To the breathless schoolboys it looked as if he must be overborne and swept away by that terrific charge of the heavy, muscular ruffian.

But it did not happen.

Mr. Shepherd gave ground a little, and swerved aside, but he was attacking all the time, and his right came home unexpectedly on the side of Bunchy's head, with a crash that rang across the playground.

There was a muffled roar from Bunchy Fives as he staggered under the drive.

Before he could recover, the young master was upon him, with both fists crashing out, and both landed in the ruffian's undefended face.

Backwards went Bunchy Fives, helplessly, with a crash to the ground.

There was a buzz of deep-drawn breath as the giant went sprawling on the ground, Mr. Shepherd standing unhurt.

Gunten looked on like a fellow in a dream. Frank Richards pressed Bob's arm ecstatically.

"He's the man, Bob! Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" roared Bob.

"Well hit, sir!" exclaimed Vere Beauclerc.

Miss Meadows gazed at her new assistant-master in blank astonishment.

She had never dreamed that such strength lay hidden in the graceful form of the "dude" of Cedar Creek.

Her feelings towards him had been tinged with contempt hitherto. She did not admire dudes.

But it was evident now that Mr. Shepherd was something more than a dandy.

His weaknesses were on the outside. Inside, there was the good old British stuff.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Slimmey, who had hurried on the scene with a vague idea of rendering help. "My dear sir, this is—is amazing! You astounish me!"

Mr. Shepherd smiled.

"I think I can handle the brute, my dear boy," he said. "I came neah winnin' the public-schools championship once. I rathah



A SURPRISE FOR CEDAR CREEK! Mr. Shepherd threw aside his coat and faced the man from Oregon. "Now, my man," he said quietly. "You are not wanted here. Either you will leave these premises immediately, or I shall eject you! Which is it to be?" (See Chapter 4.)

think that ruffian does not know very much about boxin'."

Bunchy Fives sat up.

He blinked round, with an air of stupefied astonishment that made the onlookers grin.

"By gosh!" he stuttered. "Whar's that mule that kicked me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Bunchy realised that it was not a mule that had kicked him, however, and he scrambled to his feet with a deadly gleam in his eyes.

"You knocked me down—hay?" he gasped.

"I did," said Mr. Shepherd tranquilly; "and I shall repeat the performance, my dear man, unless you retiah at once!"

"By gosh!" stuttered Bunchy Fives.

He came on again like a charging buffalo.

To some extent Mr. Shepherd had taken him by surprise in the first onset, and so had an advantage.

But Bunchy Fives no longer underrated his antagonist, and from his second attack it was a hard fight.

In size and strength the ruffian had an enormous advantage, but in science he was nowhere.

And science, backed by pluck, was more effective in the long run than weight or brute strength.

But the fight was hard.

Once Mr. Shepherd went down under a terrible blow, but he was up again like a jack-in-the-box.

Pluck he had in plenty, that was clear.

He fought on without turning a hair, though both his eyes were growing dark and his nose was streaming red.

But by that time Bunchy Fives' bearded face was simply a study in damages.

Both his eyes were half-closed, his nose was swelling, his lips were cut, his hairy cheeks thick with bruises.

He could scarcely see as he came on again and again with blind ferocity.

"The Shepherd's winning!" murmured Bob Lawless. "Why, he's got his man beat! No more jokes on the Shepherd, Franky. He's a man, after all!"

"And a good man and true!" said Frank

Richards. "You're dishd, after all, Gunten, you worm!"

And Gunten scowled savagely; he was already aware of that.

Bunchy Fives went down again, landed on his back by a terrific upper-cut that almost lifted him off his feet.

He lay on the ground, feebly clawing at his jaw, and groaning.

Mr. Shepherd panted as he looked down on him.

"Are you satisfied, my man?" he asked.

"Yow-ow-ow!" came dismally from Bunchy Fives. "Yow-ow! I guess I've woke up the wrong passenger! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Well, do you want any more?" demanded Mr. Shepherd.

"Sir," gasped Bunchy Fives, blinking feebly at him, "I'm a man, I am. I ain't no hog, and I know when I've had enough! Yow-ow-ow! I'm going! I'm real sorry I came! Ow, ow, ow!"

And he went.

Bunchy Fives had come for wool, and was returning shorn.

The terror of Thompson had met his match at last!

Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, he had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof!

"I am suah, Miss Meadows, that you will excuse this exceedin' disagreeable scene in your presence, undah the peculiar circumstances," said Mr. Shepherd, evidently very particular on that point.

Miss Meadows smiled.

"Certainly. Please go and attend to your injuries, Mr. Shepherd," she said. "I am afraid you are very much hurt."

"Not at all, my dear lady!" gasped Mr. Shepherd, and he limped away.

And from the Cedar Creek fellows a roar of cheering followed him.

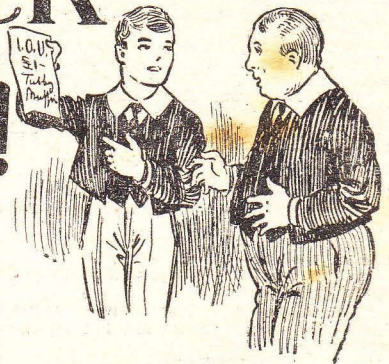
Cedar Creek had learned to respect the new master at last.

THE END.

(There will be another grand long complete story of Cedar Creek next week—a story full of thrills. Order your copy of the POPULAR NO. 9.)

THE SNEAK'S REVENGE! There is one fellow at Rookwood whom Leggett, the Sneak of the Fourth, hates more than anyone else—and that person is Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Lower School. In this week's story Leggett gets his revenge on Jimmy Silver, and the latter finds himself in a very unpleasant position!

The SHYLOCK OF THE FOURTH!



A Gripping Tale of School Life and Adventure by one of your favourite authors

By OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Tubby in Trouble.

"Oh dear!"

That ejaculation, in the most dolorous tones, struck upon the ears of the Fistical Four of Rookwood, as they sauntered through the old stone archway into Little Quad.

"Oh dear! Oh!"

Jimmy Silver & Co. looked round. They knew the fat tones of Tubby Muffin of the Classical Fourth.

To judge by his lamentations, Tubby was in trouble—not an unusual experience for the fat Classical.

Tubby Muffin was seated on the old oaken bench near the archway, under a big beech.

His chubby hands were driven deep into his pockets and his eyes were fixed on his boots, his whole expression one of deep woe.

The chums of the Fourth grinned as they saw him.

They were not unsympathetic; but they knew Tubby's kind of troubles of old.

"Oh dear! What am I going to do? Oh, goodness gracious!" mumbled Tubby, unconscious of the four juniors close at hand.

Arthur Edward Lovell woke him up, as it were, with a clap on the shoulder, and Reginald Muffin jumped and yelled:

"Yow! Yah! You silly ass!"

"What's the row, fatty?" asked Lovell.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Well, that's a row, and no mistake!" remarked Raby. "Don't do it, Tubby; you're frightening the rooks!"

"I say, Jimmy—" began Tubby, rubbing his shoulder where Lovell's too hearty clap had fallen; and fixing a doleful look on Jimmy Silver. "How would you like to be flogged by the Head, Jimmy?"

"Not the least little bit," said Jimmy, laughing.

"Well, that's what I'm booked for, unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless I can raise a quid!" said Tubby.

The Fistical Four stared at Tubby Muffin. They had fully expected a request for a loan of a shilling or eighteenpence, but this rather surprised them.

"You want to raise a quid, to get off a flogging!" said Jimmy Silver. "Are you to tip the Head a quid to let you off?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Co.

"Tain't that, you ass! I—I owe the money—"

"You've been running up an account at the tuckshop, you fat boulder!"

"No, I haven't! Old Kettle won't trust me," said Tubby sadly. "That's really how I came to borrow the money. You fellows must have noticed how thin I've got."

"Fading away!" said Lovell. "Nearly disappearing! Only a ton or two of you left, poor old chap!"

"A little more, and you'll be gone from our gaze like a beautiful dream!" remarked Raby sadly. "When you've lost another fifteen stone—"

"It's all very well for you to poke fun at a chap," said Tubby. "But I've signed a paper for a quid."

"You crass ass!" said Jimmy Silver. "But what do you mean? A moneylender wouldn't lend you money!"

"I tell you I've signed it!"

"Then who lent you the money?"

Muffin was silent.

"We'll have this out," said Jimmy Silver grimly. "I think I can guess. I know that Leggett of the Modern Fourth lends fellows money, and charges them interest on it, like a rotten Shylock. Is it Leggett?"

"I—I agreed not to tell you!" faltered Tubby.

"Well, you needn't tell me; I know. You owe Leggett a pound, and you've given him a paper. What's that got to do with the Head?"

"Leggett only lent me fourteen shillings, altogether," mumbled Tubby. "The rest is interest. It's piled up, you know. Leggett keeps the accounts."

"Don't pay him a penny!" said Lovell.

"Then he'll go to the Head."

"Ha, ha! I think I can see him.

"But he says he will—and he's going to show the Head my paper, to prove that I owe the money!" gasped Tubby. "He says the Head will flog me if I don't square. And—and I can't, you know!"

"You utter idiot!" said Jimmy Silver, in disgust. "Do you think Leggett would dare to let Dr. Chisholm know of his rotten game? He'd give all the money he's squeezed out of fellows this term to keep it dark from the Head."

Tubby Muffin brightened up.

"Do you think so, Jimmy?" he asked.

"I know it, fathead!"

"Fancy that!" ejaculated Tubby. "Leggett said the Head would give me a flogging."

"He was frightening you, you fat booby!" growled Lovell. "If you'd had any sense you'd have punched his nose!"

"B-b-but—"

"That cad Leggett has got to be stopped!" said Jimmy Silver angrily. "It would serve him right to let the Head know; only we can't do that! The prefects ought to spot him; but he's so jolly deep! But he's not going on like this."

"I—I say, Jimmy, I'd rather you lent me a pound to pay him," mumbled Tubby Muffin.

"I'll lend you a thick ear!" growled the captain of the Fourth. "You won't pay Leggett any of his precious interest, Tubby. If you do, I'll wallop you!"

"But he'll go to the Head!" wailed Tubby.

"He won't, you ass! He dare not!"

"But—but—but—"

Tubby Muffin was evidently in an unhappy state between hope and fear.

Leggett's threats had had a deep effect upon his far from brilliant mind, and he dreaded the result of the cad of the Fourth carrying them out.

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows.

"You'll pay Leggett his fourteen bob if you've borrowed it, and you can take your time about it," he said. "If you pay him any interest, I'll squash you! I'll see Leggett about it!"

"Oh, I say—"

"And you'll come with me," said Jimmy Silver, taking Muffin by one fat arm. "Leggett's going to hear some plain English."

"I—I say, Jimmy—" stammered Tubby. "Dry up, and come along!"

And Tubby Muffin, in great trepidation, was marched along with the Fistical Four into Big Quad, in search of Albert Leggett of the Modern Fourth.

And, judging by the looks of Jimmy Silver & Co., there was not a pleasant time in store for the Shylock of Rookwood when they met.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Rough Justice.

"THERE'S the cad!"

Leggett of the Fourth was spotted under the beeches in Big Quad.

The Modern junior had his hands driven in his pockets, and a deep wrinkle in his brow, as if he were engaged in some very deep calculation.

Probably he was. But if so, he was not destined to finish that calculation.

The Fistical Four surrounded him under the beeches, and Leggett stared at them. And then, as he noted that Tubby Muffin was with the Co., he looked rather uneasy.

Leggett was a good deal of a rascal, and he had few scruples; but he carried on his rascalities under difficulties at Rookwood.

There was always danger of masters or prefects spotting him, though Leggett was very careful indeed to keep his proceedings from the knowledge of the powers that were.

Leggett made a movement to walk away as the Fistical Four surrounded him; but a shove from Arthur Edward Lovell stopped him abruptly.

He turned round quickly, and another shove from George Raby stopped him again. And then Leggett stood where he was.

His narrow eyes glittered spitefully at the Fistical Four.

"What do you want, you Classical rotters?" he muttered sullenly.

"I—I say, Leggett," squeaked Tubby Muffin, alarmed by the lowering look of the cad of the Fourth. "I—I didn't ask these chaps to interfere—I didn't really, you know! I never told Jimmy anything! Did

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There's Thrill, Fun, Drama, and Breathless Excitement in Next Week's Tale of Rookwood!

I, Jimmy? He guessed, you know! Fancy that, Leggett!"

"Shut up!" said Jimmy Silver. "Leggett, you've been lending Muffin money!"

"Is that your business?" sneered Leggett.

"Yes, if you charge interest on a loan, like a rotten moneylender!" said the captain of the Fourth. "It seems that you lent Muffin fourteen bob, and it's mounted up to a pound."

Leggett gave the fat Classical a deadly look.

"I—I say, Leggett, he—he guessed that, you know!" gasped Tubby. "Fancy that, old chap!"

"I've told Muffin he's not to pay you any interest," added Jimmy. "We're going to thrash him if he does."

"What-ho!" said Lovell. "And we're going to thrash Leggett, anyhow, ain't we, Jimmy?"

"Hold on a minute, old top! You've got an I O U signed by Muffin, Leggett?"

Leggett gritted his teeth, and did not answer.

"Now," continued Jimmy Silver, "you're going to set a match to that I O U, here, in our presence, and burn it. Tubby will pay you the fourteen bob when he chooses; you took your risk about that. Out with the paper, sharp!"

"I won't!" howled Leggett.

"You've got to stop your money-lending tricks, Leggett. Are you going to burn that paper?"

"No!"

"Then you're going through it, you cad!" Leggett made a desperate rush to escape.

But the Fistical Four grasped him at once, and he was hauled back, gasping, and struggling furiously.

"No, you don't!" grinned Newcome.

"Let me go!" shrieked Leggett. "I'll yell for help!"

"If you bring a prefect on the scene, old nut, you know what to expect," said Jimmy Silver. "Please yourself!"

"Bump him!" said Lovell impatiently.

"Oh! Ah! Owl!"

Bump!

"Hallo! Here come the Modern rotters!" said Raby. "Never mind! Get on with Leggett!"

Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern Fourth were coming up at a run.

Much as they despised Leggett, he was a Modern, and the three Tommies did not mean to see a Modern handled by Classics without interfering.

Bump!

"Rescue, Moderns!"

Dodd and Cook and Doyle came up with a rush.

"Let go Leggett!" shouted Tommy Doyle.

Bump!

Albert Leggett smote the ground again with a fiendish yell; and the next instant Classics and Moderns were "scrapping" over him.

Tubby Muffin essayed to flee, but a rush of the combatants sent him spinning, and he sprawled over Leggett, and sat on him.

"Owl!" gasped Tubby, sitting, quite winded, on Leggett's neck. "Oh dear!"

"Groooh!" came from Leggett.

Crash!

Tommy Dodd and Jimmy Silver, struggling, stumbled over the fallen juniors, and rolled on them.

There was a shout from the distance:

"Cave!"

But the combatants were too excited to heed the warning.

The battle was still raging when Mr. Bootles, the master of the Fourth, came whisking up, his gown streaming behind him.

"Boys!" gasped Mr. Bootles.

"Oh, my hat! Bootles!" ejaculated Lovell.

The combat ceased as if by magic.

Classicals and Moderns backed away from each other, glaring breathlessly.

Jimmy Silver and Tommy Dodd staggered to their feet. But Tubby Muffin, in a dazed and winded state, was still sprawling on Leggett, and Leggett, with all the breath knocked out of him, gasped feebly under Tubby's weight.

Mr. Bootles frowned grimly at the gasping juniors.

"Silver! Dodd! I will not have these incessant disturbances!" he exclaimed. "I

shall punish you all severely! What were you disputing about?"

"Ahem!"

"Muffin, get up at once!"

"Owl!" gasped Tubby. "Oh dear!"

"Leggett! Dear me! Leggett appears to be hurt—"

"Oh, he's all right, sir!" said Tommy Dodd. And he dragged the gasping Leggett to his feet.

"Now, Silver, I insist upon knowing the cause of this disturbance!" said Mr. Bootles sternly. "From what I have observed, Dodd and Cook and Doyle were to blame. I saw them rush here—"

"Ahem! We were bumping Leggett," said Jimmy. "They only chipped in."

"Then you began it, Silver?"

"Um! Yes."

"And for what reason, Silver, were you bumping, as you term it, Leggett?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "Have I come upon a very bad case of bullying, Silver?"

Jimmy crimsoned.

"Certainly not!" he exclaimed.

"Are you hurt, Leggett?"

"Ow, ow! Yes!"

"Silver, unless you were ill-using Leggett entirely without cause, I demand to know the reason!"

Jimmy Silver was silent.

Rascal as Leggett was, Jimmy did not intend to betray him to the school

authorities, which would have meant a flogging, at least.

Leggett was looking alarmed now.

He was the most anxious of all that the truth should not come to light.

"If—if you please, sir, I—I don't mind!" he stammered. "I—I—"

"Nonsense! You say you are hurt."

"It—it's nothing, sir."

"I do not agree with you, Leggett. I demand to know the cause of this unruly outbreak. So far as I can see, five Classical boys were assailing one Modern," said Mr. Bootles sternly. "I shall investigate this matter. Dodd and Cook and Doyle may go. The rest of you will follow me to my study."

Mr. Bootles whisked away angrily.

"Oh dear!" groaned Tubby Muffin. "We're in for it now, Jimmy Silver, and it's all your fault!"

"Oh, dry up!" growled Jimmy.

And in a dismal mood the Fistical Four and Leggett and Tubby Muffin followed Mr. Bootles to his study.

—

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Shock for Mr. Bootles.

MR. BOOTLES blinked at the juniors over his glasses, with his most masterful air, as they filed in.

Mr. Bootles was in a mood of stern justice.

Jimmy Silver & Co. certainly had nothing

to fear from justice, but their lips were sealed regarding Leggett.

They could not betray him, that was certain, and he was certain not to admit the truth himself.

It looked as if the heroes of the Fourth would be condemned for what looked like a very bad case of bullying.

"Now," said Mr. Bootles, holding up an admonitory forefinger, "it is my duty to ascertain the facts of this case. Five Classical boys have—"

"I—I say, sir—"

"Well, Muffin?"

"I—I hadn't anything to do with it, sir," squeaked Tubby anxiously. "Jimmy Silver will bear me out in that. Leggett knows, too! I asked Jimmy not to interfere. Didn't I, Jimmy?"

Grunt from Jimmy Silver.

"To interfere?" repeated Mr. Bootles.

"Yes, sir! I told Jimmy I'd rather he lent me the pound."

"The—the pound!"

Mr. Bootles blinked at the fat Classical in blank amazement.

"I—I mean—I don't mean the pound!" gasped Tubby Muffin, realising that he was giving away a little too much. "D-d-d-did I say the—the pound, sir?"

"You did, Muffin."

"I—I meant to say there—there wasn't a pound—nothing of the kind, sir."

"What do you mean, Muffin?"

"J-j-just what I say, sir! I never asked Jimmy to lend me a pound to pay Leggett, sir; that's what I really meant to say. C-c-can I go now, sir?"

"No, Muffin, you cannot go!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles sternly. "You will explain yourself first, Muffin. Do you owe Leggett money?"

"Oh dear!"

"Was that why you attacked Leggett, with these juniors?"

"I—I didn't, sir!" gasped Tubby. "I—I wanted to bunk."

"What, what?"

"I—I mean to scoot, sir," gasped Tubby.

"Only I was pushed over! I wasn't fighting anybody. I asked Jimmy not to interfere, because if the Head knew—"

"If the Head knew what, Muffin?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"There appears to be more in the matter than I suspected," said Mr. Bootles grimly. "It seems, Muffin, that you owe Leggett a pound."

"Oh dear!" groaned Tubby, as he met Leggett's furious look. "I—I don't know how you guessed that, sir. It's no good glaring at me, Leggett; I can't help Mr. Bootles guessing things. I don't know how he does it, do I?"

"Leggett, you are making signs to Muffin!" thundered Mr. Bootles.

"I—I—"

"I insist upon knowing the facts of this case!" exclaimed the Form master angrily.

"Muffin, you say that Leggett lent you a pound."

"Oh, no, sir!"

"What! How can you owe him a pound if he did not lend it to you?"

"The interest, you see, sir!" gasped Tubby Muffin.

"The what?" thundered Mr. Bootles.

Tubby jumped.

"I—I mean—not the interest—certainly not the interest!" he stammered. "I—I don't know what made me say interest! What I really meant was—was—was—"

"Well?"

"I—I mean, I—I've got some lines to do for Bulkeley, sir!" gasped Tubby. "C-c-can I go now, sir?"

Is it possible, Muffin, that Leggett has lent you money, and charged interest on the loan?" demanded Mr. Bootles, in a terrifying voice.



"I—I say, Leggett, I don't know how Mr. Bootles guesses these things," groaned Tubby. "It's no good pinching my arm, you—"

"Stand away from Muffin, Leggett!" Leggett moved away, with a face like a demon.



"And so," rumbled Mr. Bootles, "we are getting at the truth. This bad and wicked boy lends money at interest among his Form-fellows, then! Was that why you interfered in the matter, Silver?"

"Ahem!" murmured Jimmy.

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THE FAMOUS FISTICAL FOUR OF ROOKWOOD SCHOOL
 IN ANOTHER REAL GOOD THRILLER NEXT WEEK
"SAVED BY HIS FORM MASTER!"
 By OWEN CONQUEST

Look out for it Chaps!

"Saved By His Form Master!" is a Top-hole Yarn! Owen Conquest Writes the Real Goods!



A COLLISION IN THE FOG! Jimmy Silver landed on his feet, and his head smote on the Head's buttoned overcoat. Dr. Chisholm staggered back, and almost sat down. There was a gasp of horror from the juniors. (See Chapter 5.)

"I asked him not to, sir!" exclaimed Tubby Muffin eagerly. "I did really, sir! He'll tell you so. I said I'd rather he lent me the pound. Didn't I, Jimmy? I'd rather have paid Leggett and got my IOU back."

"Bless my soul! You have an IOU from Muffin, Leggett?"

"No, sir!" muttered Leggett desperately. Tubby blinked at him.

"Have you lost it?" he exclaimed. "If I'd known you'd lost it, I needn't have worried."

"Place that IOU on my table at once, Leggett," said Mr. Bootles sternly.

"I—I haven't got one, sir. It's all—lies!"

"Turn out your pockets!"

"Oh!"

There was no help for it. Leggett had to turn out his pockets, even to the lining.

Mr. Bootles's voice broke in suddenly.

"Give me that paper you are trying to slip into your sleeve, Leggett!"

"Oh!"

The paper was handed over.

Mr. Bootles's very spectacles seemed to glitter with angry scorn as he read it.

The paper was in Tubby Muffin's sprawling writing, and it undertook to pay Leggett a shilling a week until the loan was cleared off.

That paper was much more dangerous to Leggett than to Tubby, if it came to light; but Leggett had never dreamed of its coming to light.

It was good enough to frighten the obtuse Tubby with, and that was all he wanted.

Now it was in the Form master's hands, and Albert Leggett was likely to get a good deal more than he wanted.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "Silver, I understand your action now. You four juniors may go—I certainly excuse you. I understand your contempt of this boy's baseness."

"C-can I go, too, sir?" gasped Tubby.

"No, Muffin, you may not! You will come with me to the Head, and Leggett also."

"Oh dear!"

"Follow me at once, both of you!" Mr. Bootles rustled out of the study.

Tubby Muffin, with a groan, followed him.

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Leggett paused to give Jimmy Silver a bitter look.

"You've landed me now, you rotter!" he said, between his teeth.

"Your own fault!" said Jimmy Silver.

"You intended—"

"Oh, shut up! You know I never meant to say a word, and wouldn't have. But I'm not sorry Tubby's let it all out—it serves you right! And if you're turned out of Rookwood, all the better for Rookwood!" growled Jimmy Silver.

"Leggett!" came Mr. Bootles's voice from the passage.

The Rookwood Shylock left the study.

Arthur Edward Lovell whistled softly.

"Well, the game's up with Leggett now," he said. "Serve him jolly well right! It was a paying game, I suppose; but it was a jolly risky one, as it turns out!"

"It's a flogging, at least!" said Jimmy.

"Serve him right!"

And when the news spread in the Lower School that Leggett was "up before the beaks," and that his weird financial transactions had come to light, the general verdict was the same as that of the Fistical Four—"Serve him right!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Lesson for Shylock.

QUITE a little army of juniors gathered at the corner of the corridor while Leggett and Tubby Muffin were in the Head's study.

Mr. Bootles was there, too; and the closed door hid what was undoubtedly an interesting scene from the curious eyes without.

"I don't envy Leggett," remarked Mornington of the Fourth. "Tubby may get off cheap, but Leggett—"

"Yarooooooh!"

A sudden howl came from the Head's study.

"That's Tubby!" said Erroll.

"Tubby's sweet voice, and no mistake!" grinned Lovell. "But it's not a flogging; Mack hasn't been sent for. I suppose old Bootles hasn't hoisted Tubby?"

"He couldn't!" chuckled Flynn.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loud sounds of anguish came from the

droad apartment, and the chuckle died away among the juniors.

Tubby Muffin seemed to be going through it.

The door of the Head's study opened suddenly, and Tubby Muffin came out, the door closing after him.

He squeezed his hands, and grunted as he came rolling along the corridor.

"Had it bad?" asked Conroy.

"Yow-ow-ow! A w f u l!" growled Tubby. "Two on each hand, you know! Fancy that! It wasn't my fault Leggett charged me interest on a loan! Yow! I'm sure I didn't ask him to! Yow!"

"And what's Leggett got?" asked Oswald.

"I've got to take word to Mack. Leggett's going to be flogged!"

"Oh!"

"Serve him right, I think!" said Tubby. "He's an unscrupulous beast! Yow-ow-ow! Blessed if I know what the Head camed me for! Bad temper, I suppose!"

And Tubby, still grunting, rolled away to carry his message to Mack, the porter.

In a few minutes old Mack appeared on the scene.

He passed the crowd of juniors in the corridor, and disappeared into the Head's study.

"Now for the circus!" murmured Mornington.

The "circus" was not long in beginning. There was a sound of steady swishing from the Head's study, and it was soon accompanied by loud yells.

Tubby had been camed for his share in the moneylending transaction; but his punishment was a joke to Leggett's.

Of Leggett's conduct the Head took a very serious view, naturally enough; and the flogging was a very severe one.

By the time the swishing ceased, Leggett's yells had died away into quivering sobs.

Jimmy Silver & Co. moved quietly away. They did not wish to listen to that; it was painful enough to hear.

Richly as the rascal of Rookwood deserved his punishment, the chums of the Fourth could not help feeling some slight compassion for him in his ordeal.

Five minutes later Leggett crept out of the Head's study, with a white face, and tramped away dismally to his own House.

He went up to the dormitory on the Modern side, and threw himself on his bed.

He was aching and quivering from the castigation, and it was likely to be some time before he recovered from it.

Anger and malice and all uncharitableness ran riot in his breast as he lay and mumbled with pain.

His hatred of the Head, who had inflicted that severe but just punishment, was bitter; but it was upon Jimmy Silver that most of his malice was concentrated.

But for Jimmy's meddling, as Leggett called it, he would not now be quivering with pain and humiliation.

Somehow, anyhow, he would make Jimmy Silver sorry he had interfered—he was savagely determined upon that.

The dormitory door opened, and Tommy Dodd came in.

Leggett gave him a sullen look as Tommy stood gazing down on him with a grim expression.

"So you're here!" grunted Tommy.

"Owl" was Leggett's reply.

"You've had enough," said Tommy Dodd. "I can see that! If you hadn't, you worm, I'd give you a thumping good licking! If I'd known what those Classics were handling you for, I'd never have chipped in!"

"Owl!"

(Continued on page 17.)

OUR SPECIAL GOLF NUMBER!

BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

Greyfriars

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.

St. Jim's

Rookwood

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A GOLF MATCH IN THE STONE AGE.

By Tom Brown.

THE little fishing-village of Blackfriars-on-Thames—which has since grown into the mighty City of London—was agog with excitement.

Verily, 'twas a great occasion! For the final of the Open Golf Championship of Ancient Brit was to be played.

From the conversation of a couple of pedestrians, clad in goatskins, we shall learn something about the two finalists.

"Say, O my brother, what dost think of the chances of Ned Niblick?"

"Methinks he will be licked!"

"Say not so, good brother."

"Ay, but I'm sure on't. Ned Niblick, good golfer though he be, cannot hold a candle to Mike Mashie."

"Dost consider that Mike will lift the stone cup?"

"Yea, he will lift it, even if he hath to brain his opponent in the process! For many moons Mike hath pined to be the open golf champion of Ancient Brit. And to-day, mark my words, he will have his heart's desire!"

"Tut, tut! Out upon thee for a fatuous optimist! Ned Niblick is no novice at the game. He will wield his trusty stone club to advantage. Didst see him beat Dan Driver in the semi-final? He battered Dan's skull at the seventeenth hole, because he was having the worst of the play. Then, with his opponent out of the way, he finished the course at his leisure, and won hands down. Od's-bodikins, but Ned Niblick will render a good account of himself this day!"

"He thinks the sandal will be upon the other foot! But we shall see. Let us toddle along to the links, my good brother."

Thousands of people were already flocking towards the golf-course—which at the present day is the Thames Embankment.

It was a very picturesque course, with the great river gliding silently by. Huge boulders of stone had been placed at regular intervals. These were the bunkers.

The club-house consisted of a large cave. Out of this cave stepped a lusty giant of enormous height and girth. A goatskin flapped upon his hips. A dragon was painted upon his chest. His long hair straggled about



NED NIBLICK'S FAMOUS FIGHT FOR BRITAIN'S GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP!

his shoulders. The light of battle glowed in his eyes. He carried stone clubs in a stone bag.

The crowd cheered him to the echo.

"Mike Mashie hath arrived!"

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Mike!"

Shortly afterwards there was a fresh cheer from the crowd.

Ned Niblick came striding on to the golf-course. He was similarly equipped to his opponent.

"Play up, Ned!"

"Lay about thee right lustily!"

"Smite, and spare not, forsooth!"

Ned Niblick went up to his opponent.

"We will toss a flintstone to decide who takes first whack," he said. "If the flat side cometh down uppermost, I take first whack, and if the round side is uppermost, you don't!"

By this cunning ruse Ned made sure of winning the toss.

"Good!" he ejaculated, as the flintstone alighted on the ground with the round side uppermost. "You don't take first whack. That privilege is mine. Methinks I will make a start."

Amid thunders of applause, Ned Niblick placed his stone golf-ball upon the stone tee.

Ned then selected his stoutest club, with which he had bludgeoned many good men and true.

"If only I can clear yonder bunker," he muttered, "everything in the garden will be lovely!"

So saying, Ned made a terrific swipe at the ball.

Sparks flew in all directions. The stone ball broke into fragments, which flew into the faces of the onlookers.

"Gadzooks!"

"Oh, my nose!"

"Verily, I am blinded!"

Ned Niblick grieved.

"Methinks I shall want a new ball!" he said calmly. "That one had a flaw in it somewhere."

Ned's caddy darted off to the club-house. He returned with a new stone ball, and placed it in position on the tee.

He then took another mighty swipe, and the ball sped along the ground like a live thing. But, alas! it kept low, and failed to clear the bunker.

"Marry but 'tis bunkered that I am!" groaned Ned. "Never mind! Mike Mashie may fare no better!"

Mike, however, made a truly wonderful drive. The ball not only cleared the first bunker, but also all the other bunkers ahead of it. It had been such a tremendous hit that the ball was carried right on to the green.

Ned Niblick looked decidedly gloomy as he went to dig his ball out of the bunker. He realised that unless a miracle happened, his opponent would walk off with the golf championship of Ancient Brit.

Ned extricated his ball from the bunker. And it was now Mike Mashie's turn.

Mike was in a good position on the green, and he ought to have holed out in one. But he overshot the mark, and his ball went whizzing past the hole.

This gave Ned Niblick another chance. Ned drove his ball with savage ferocity, and it travelled so far and so fast that nobody, except Ned himself, was able to mark its flight.

"Egad!"

"Where did that one go to?"

Ned Niblick knew that his ball had landed on the outskirts of the green. He had made a wonderful recovery after a shaky start. Even so, Mike Mashie's ball was nearest the hole, and it seemed only too probable that Mike would win.

There were twenty holes altogether, but these golfing giants had cleared nineteen of them, so powerful had been their driving. And this was the last hole. If Mike Mashie's next stroke was successful, he would win the championship.

Ned Niblick realised that he was in a tight corner. But he was a master of strategy, and a brilliant inspiration had already occurred to him.

"Tell me, friend Niblick," said Mike Mashie, "where thy ball went. I failed to mark its flight."

Ned pulled a long face.

"Alack-a-day! It went into the river!" he said.

groaned. "Before taking thy next stroke, wilt help me to find it?"

Mike hesitated.

"Come, be a sport!" urged Ned. "I cannot play on until my ball is found."

Now the river ran alongside the green, and the two golfers walked to the water's edge and peered over.

This gave Ned Niblick the opportunity he wanted. He gave his opponent a sly push, unseen by the crowd, and Mike Mashie turned a complete somersault into the river.

Splash!

At that time the River Thames was infested by sea-serpents, octopi, and various other slimy denizens of the deep.

To the horror of the onlookers, a sea-serpent suddenly reared its ugly head out of the water, and with a diabolical grin on its hideous face, it splashed its way towards Mike Mashie.

We will draw a veil over the painful scene which followed, and content ourselves with remarking that the sea-serpent enjoyed its afternoon tea.

When all the excitement which followed the tragedy had died away, Ned Niblick calmly walked to the outskirts of the green.

"By the Lord Harry!" he cried in tones of well-feigned astonishment. "My golf-ball was here all the time!"

There was a loud murmur of amazement from the crowd.

"Now that my opponent hath gone west," said Ned, "it only remaineth for me to hole out, and the golf championship of Ancient Brit is mine!"

With a dexterous flick of his wrists, Ned Niblick hooked his ball into the hole.

Then, amid volleys of applause, the Lord Mayor of Blackfriars-on-Thames came riding on to the links in his chariot, in order to present Ned Niblick with the stone cup.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By Baggy Trimble.
(Temporary Editor.)

My dear Readers,—Many years ago, when I was a small boy, it used to be said that golf was a game for doddering old jossers with the gout.

Public opinion has now changed, however. Not only do we find young men playing golf, but there are actually golf championships for boys.

There is more in golf than meets the eye. You'd think it was the easiest thing in the world to hit a little white ball into a hole, wouldn't you? But when you come to try it, you will be lucky if you mannidge to hit the ball at all.

Golf is not very popular at St. Jim's just at present, but as soon as the school gets its own golf-links everybody will go crazy on the game. I have already made up my mind to win the junior championship. I shine at golf just as much as I shine at football and cricket—in fact, I am what they call a plus-too man.

It was my own idea that we should have a Special Golf Number. Such a brane-wave would never have occurred to Billy Bunter.

Don't you agree with me that this paper has improved out of all noldidge since Billy Bunter vacated the editorial chair? The fact is, I'm a real, live, first-class editor, and Billy Bunter is only a second-hand one!

I know of many fellows who never used to read the "Weekly" when Bunter ran it. But they are so keen on the paper now that they sleep with it under their pillows. Which is exactly as it should be.—Yours sincerely,

BAGGY TRIMBLE.

ODE TO A BUNKERED GOLF-BALL!

By Mr. Paul Prout.

(The Grey riars Golfer.)

Why art thou hid from human sight?

In what queer spot didst thou alight,

After I struck with all my might

My golf-ball?

Art thou beneath some grassy mound,

Or in the babbling brook, half-drowned?

O, tell me where thou canst be found,

My golf-ball!

Art thou a mile away from here,

Or art thou lurking very near,

Griming at me from ear to ear,

My golf-ball?

Art thou in some remote retreat,

Or nestling at my very feet,

Thou lump of treachery and deceit,

My golf-ball?

In smiting thee I broke my club

(Behold, the caddie starts to blub!)

Where can I find thee—there's the rub,

My golf-ball?

I've hunted here, I've hunted there,

I've poked and prodded everywhere,

Until I'm plunged in deep despair,

My golf-ball!

In which odd corner of the links

Art thou enjoying forty winks?

My heart is heavy, and it sinks,

My golf-ball!

Thou truant ball, come back to me,

That I may take a swipe at thee,

And do the course in seventy-three,

My golf-ball!

No time to waste—
make a dash to your
newsagent's and get
a copy of

"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL!"

To-morrow might be
too late — go to-day!

A BIG BUMPER BUDGET
of Stories, Articles, and
Wonderful Coloured Plates!

—B.T.

[Supplement II.]

Rollicking Fine Stories and Articles in this Supplement Every Week!

HOW TO PLAY GOLF!

By **JIMMY SILVER**

(Of St Jim's).

I know lots of fellows who are keen on golf, but they complain that they lack the facilities for playing it.

These fellows point out that they have no links (I'm not referring to cuff-links!). They also point out that they have no clubs (I don't mean Indian clubs!).

These little difficulties, however, can soon be overcome. If you haven't any golf-links, make some! If you haven't any golf-clubs, make some! It is quite simple.

When I formed the Rookwood Golfing Society, I said to my pals:

"We shall want some links to play on. What price the Head's garden?" The proposition was seconded, and carried unanimously.

The Head's garden has been converted into a ripping miniature golf-course, somewhat to the detriment of the plants and flowers and the glass roof of the greenhouse!

Tommy Dodd then pointed out that we had no clubs.

"You can't play golf without clubs," quoth Tommy, "any more than you can play footer without a football!"

"True, O King," I agreed.

"And golf-clubs cost money," said Lovell.

"Then we must make our own."

"Eh?"

"It's easily done," I said. "What's wrong with broom-handles, with small pieces of wood screwed on to the end? They won't be ideal clubs, but they'll have to serve the purpose of driver, cleek, mashie, and niblick rolled into one. But they'll cost nothing to make."

Accordingly, we paid a visit to the woodshed, where Mack the porter keeps his brooms, and we beheaded a number of them. Then we screwed pieces of wood to the ends of the broomsticks, and our clubs were ready for active service!

Newcome then called my attention to a serious deficiency.

"We've got no golf-balls, Jimmy," he said.

"In that case, we must borrow some billiard-balls from the masters' billiard-room."

"Good wheeze!"

Having obtained all our impedimenta, we adjourned to the "links," where we dug holes with our heels at regular intervals.

A thrilling match then took place between Classicals and Moderns, and, needless to state, the Classicals won. (I'm a Classical!)

Our golf cost us absolutely nothing, you see. So those fellow who complain that they lack the facilities for golf will know how to proceed in future.

Of course, there was a terrific row afterwards about the borrowed billiard-balls, the beheaded brooms, and the broken glass of the Head's greenhouse. The whole lot of us got a swishing, but we agreed that our game of golf was well worth it.

Now, it is no use attempting to play golf unless you know the rudiments of the game.

I'm sorry I'm not an artist, or I would illustrate this article with diagrams showing how to hold a club, and how to address the ball. Many golfers address the ball in lurid language, which will not bear repetition. This is all wrong, of course. The ball should be addressed with the club, not with your tongue.

Your first stroke should be a powerful drive, and you should lift the ball so that it will clear the bunker. Once you get bunkered you may as well retire from the game and go and pick flowers.

Your main object must always be to get the ball into the hole, and you should keep this object constantly before you. It appears to be the object of many golfers to hit the club secretary on the nose, or to lay out the caddie with a ferocious backward sweep of the club.

People with violent tempers should never play golf. "Keep cool and calm and collected" is the motto of every wise golfer. Savage swipes at the ball will only cause you to uproot lumps of turf, and probably turn a somersault in the process.

Should you have the misfortune to lose your ball, you should on no account look for it, because—like Mr. Micawber's good fortune—it will never turn up. Next to a snake, a golf-ball is the most wily thing ever invented. It has a habit of disguising itself as a blade of grass, and flatly refusing to be found.

Don't forget that there is a special dress for golf, just as there is for every other outdoor sport. You should never play golf in footer togs, or a bathing costume, or a suit of pyjamas, or you will only make yourself an object of ridicule.

The ideal golfing attire consists of a pair of baggy trousers, which terminate midway down the calves, and are then relieved by thick woollen stockings. A pair of brown shoes, a golfing jacket, and a cap—which should overlap your right ear—complete the equipment.

It is useless to attempt to play golf unless you are a first-class walker, for in the course of an afternoon you will find it necessary to walk about twenty miles.

Don't run away with the idea that golf is a mug's game. It isn't. It calls for heaps of skill, patience, and endurance.

I should need a whole issue of BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY to describe in detail how the game should be played—how to make your stroke, how to hole out, and what not.

Any Rookwood fellows who happen to be interested can receive practical tuition from me. I only charge a bob a lesson. Intending pupils will, however, have to find their own golf-links, for the Head's garden is now out of bounds. They will also have to find their own clubs and golf-balls, as there are no more broomsticks or billiard-balls available.

One of these days I propose to publish a book entitled "Golf for the Beginner," and I'll ask the gentleman who illustrates the Rookwood stories to draw diagrams for me. It is impossible to cover all the ground within the compass of an article of this sort.

GOLFING TERMS EXPLAINED!

By **Dick Rake.**

A "bunker" is a fellow who clears off when he thinks he is going to be beaten.

* * *

A "good drive" is something you can never get in a Ford car.

* * *

"Halving a hole" is to half-fill the cavity with dirt.

* * *

A "caddy" is a receptacle for containing "tee."

* * *

A "good lie" is what George Washington told when he said he didn't.

* * *

An "iron" is what mother presses your soft collars with.

* * *

A "stroke" is what the peppery colonel usually misses. He then gets an apoplectic one!

* * *

"Green fees" are the price you pay for cabbages.

* * *

A "plus two" man is a player who has a caddy hanging on to each coat-tail.

* * *

"Lost bawl" means that the spectators have developed sore throats.

* * *

To "putt" is to take a pot-shot at the hole. This is also known as "Putt and take."

* * *

To "miss your tee" means that you haven't the price of a meal at the clubhouse.

* * *

To "chop your stroke" it is necessary to obtain a sharp axe.

* * *

A "bogey" is a thing that worries you at night when you've got a guilty conscience.

GET IT TO-DAY!

THE

"Holiday Annual!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 202.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF A GOLF BALL!

MONDAY:

I was sold in a box, with five of my companions, to Mr. Paul Prout, of Greyfriars. My name, by the way, is "Pimple." I was thus christened because there are little pimples all over my round form.

Mr. Prout seemed very pleased with us as he carried us back to Greyfriars.

"You are very good-looking golf-balls," he said, "and I hope to have some enjoyable games with you. You will receive some hard knocks, but you must not mind that."

At this, we chuckled to ourselves, because it's a well-known fact that Mr. Prout misses his stroke ninety-nine times out of a hundred. I pictured myself perched on a mound, with Mr. Prout frantically trying to swipe me off the face of the earth! Poor old Prout!

TUESDAY:

Mr. Prout had no opportunity of playing golf, so we spent an idle day in his study. He threatens to take us on to the links to-morrow.

WEDNESDAY:

Mr. Prout carried out his threat. He conveyed us to the links, and for about half an hour he swiped at each of us in turn, without being able to hit us. When at last he did get going, we led him a terrible dance. The whole lot of us were bunkered, and we camouflaged ourselves as parts of the chalky soil, so that Prout would be unable to find us. He spent the best part of the afternoon searching for us, but he searched in vain. When dusk fell, he actually fetched a lantern, and resumed the search. But we continued to lay low; and at last old Prout gave it up as a bad job, and went back to Greyfriars, fuming.

THURSDAY:

I was discovered by three Greyfriars youths—Tom Brown, Bulstrode, and Hazeldene. And what do you think the cruel brutes did? They used me as a football all the way back to the school! I was dribbled and passed along the road, and by the time I reached the school gates I was bursting with indignation! I was almost in half by the time Tom Brown & Co. had finished with me. I've a good mind to put the S.P.C.G.B.—Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Golf Balls—on their track.

FRIDAY:

A crowd of fellows were playing with me in the Remove passage, when who should come along but old Prout. He recognised me at once, and insisted on my being given up. I believed he had hopes of patching me up, and making a useful golf-ball of me once more. But I was far too gone for that; and, although Prout performed an operation on me, I never recovered.

SATURDAY:

I am now in two pieces, and those pieces are reclining, with other rubbish, in the dustbin. Woe is me!

THE POPULAR.—No. 202.

TRIMBLE THE TUCKLESS!

By Dick Brooke.

(Of St. Jim's.)
With apologies to the shade of
John Keats.

"Ah, what can ail thee, Baggy boy,
Alone and sadly loitering?
Thy face shows not a sign of joy.
What's wrong old thing?"

"Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so full of woe?
Hast thou received a sudden fright,
Or crushing blow?"

"I met a dame in yonder shop;
Her name is Mrs. Martha Taggles.
Whene'er I ask for ginger-pop,
She frowns and haggles."

"I asked her for a currant cake,
To gladden my despairing heart.
I asked her, also, if she'd make
A treacle-tart."

"I begged for doughnuts and cream-
buns.
'Give me a score of each!' I cried.
'Also, some jam-tarts (twopenny ones).
I've room inside.'

"She turned to me with frowning brow,
And said I'd better travel—quick!
'You're well aware I don't allow
A junior tick.'

"I did not budge; whereon the dame
Attacked me with a rolling-pin.
Reluctantly, away I came,
Empty within."

"And that is why I linger here,
Alone and sadly loitering.
I'm tuckless, and I greatly fear
I'll starve, old thing!"

OUR ADVICE:—

BAGGY TRIMBLE: "You'll be missing a fine feast of Fiction if you don't get the 'Holiday Annual' to-day!"

SAMMY BUNTER: "The Best ever, as good as a Tuck-shop feed. The 'Holiday Annual' now on sale!"

TUBBY MUFFIN: "You'll be mad with yourself if you miss this year's 'Holiday Annual'!"

FATTY WYNN: "There isn't a better Christmas Present than the 'Holiday Annual.' Get it Now!"

— — —
**FROM THE FOUR FAT
SUBS!**

GOLF AT GREYFRIARS!

By H. Vernon-Smith.

The Greyfriars cricket-ground has been temporarily converted into a golf-course, and it has recently been the scene of some stirring struggles. We have had a sort of Golf Week, and, although most of us cannot pretend to be anything more than novices at the game, the contests have caused great fun.

* * *

The masters' tournament was quite a serious affair. And Mr. Prout took it more serious than any of his colleagues. He was determined to show them what a really fine golfer he was, and he had no doubt of his ability to beat all comers. As things turned out, however, Mr. Prout was never in the hunt. The two masters to teach the final were Mr. Wally Bunter and Mr. Larry Lascelles, and the last-named defeated his portly opponent after a dour struggle. Mr. Prout afterwards remarked that if the course had been a full-sized one he would have won with ease. But we have our doubts.

* * *

Among the Sixth-Formers, Hammersley proved himself to be the best golfer. Wingate, who has no pretensions to be an expert at the game, failed badly. Hammersley's driving was quite a feature, and his putting was perfection. If he takes up the game seriously on leaving Greyfriars some of our amateur golfers will have to look to their laurels.

* * *

Of course, the Remove entered into the fray with great zest. In the absence of Harry Wharton & Co., it was anticipated that Peter Todd or Mark Linley would secure the honours. However, both were knocked out in the early stages, and the two finalists were Donald Ogilvy and Micky Desmond—"Scotland versus Ireland," as the crowd humorously expressed it. Desmond put up a fine fight; but Ogilvy, who, judging by his display, has handled a golf-club before, proved an easy winner.

* * *

Even the fags of the Second and Third participated in the sport. After a scrambling display of golf, young Tubb carried off the honours. The fags had no idea of driving, and their putting was atrocious. It was amusing to watch the youngsters wielding golf-clubs which were about a yard too long for them!

* * *

It is hoped that Greyfriars will take up golf quite seriously in future. It makes a welcome change from football, and it is a game—whatever its detractors may say to the contrary—which calls for marked skill and ability. Perhaps some benevolent gent will put up a silver cup for competition amongst the Greyfriars fellows. Now, Sir Timothy Topham, what about it?

[Supplement IV.]

"Billy Bunter's Weekly" Gets There Every Time—Sets the World Rocking with Laughter!

THE SHYLOCK OF THE FOURTH!

(Continued from page 12.)

"You've got what you wanted," continued Tommy; "and mind this, Leggett, if you begin the same tricks again, you'll get another dose of the same medicine—if not from the Head, then with a fives-bat in my study! So you can put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

And Tommy Dodd, with a last contemptuous look, walked out of the dormitory. Leggett groaned and mumbled.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Collision in the Fog!

LOOK out!"

"The Head!"

But it was too late. It was a couple of days after Leggett's flogging, and that matter had almost disappeared from the minds of Jimmy Silver & Co., who had other and much more important matters to think about.

A grey mist from the Chandel had rolled inland, and enveloped hill and dale, and Rookwood quadrangle.

Football was impossible, and it was not yet tea-time, and some of the Classical Fourth were amusing themselves with leap-frog on the gravel path between the School House and the gates.

Playing leap-frog in the mist was rather exciting, leading to a good many casualties, but the Rookwood juniors did not mind that; they were not, as Lovell expressed it, made of putty.

Indeed, the game became quite thrilling when Hansom of the Fifth came along, ignorant of the fact that leap-frog was proceeding, and Arthur Edward Lovell crashed into him and sent him spinning.

There was trouble with Hansom for some minutes, but the odds were too great, and the Fifth-Former was routed.

Then Jimmy Silver & Co. cheerily resumed their game.

Butting into Hansom of the Fifth was not a very serious matter—excepting for Hansom—and the juniors, in the excitement of the game, did not reflect that they were likely to butt into more important personages.

When the awful catastrophe came, it came too suddenly to be helped.

Jimmy Silver was coming along a line of bended backs, and had reached the last in the row, which was Lovell's.

As his hands lightly touched Lovell's back, and he rose to the leap, two or three voices called out in horror, as a majestic figure loomed up from the misty gloom.

"The Head!"

But Jimmy Silver was fairly flying over Lovell's back, and it was too late to stop.

Crash!

Dr. Chisholm was coming along from the House, muffled up against the cold.

The first he knew of the leap-frog was Jimmy Silver crashing at him from the mist.

The Head started back in alarmed amazement, and, fortunately, escaped the severe butting Hansom had received.

Jimmy Silver landed on his feet, and his chin smote on the Head's buttoned overcoat, but that was all.

It was enough, however.

The Head staggered back, and almost sat down. Fortunately, he did not quite sit down.

He recovered his balance just in time. Jimmy Silver stood frozen with horror.

The jar on his chin had jarred all his teeth, and hurt him considerably, but he was hardly conscious of it.

He was only conscious of the awful thing that had happened—that he had smote Dr. Chisholm on the chest and sent him staggering.

There was a sound of scattering footsteps in the mist.

The leap-froggers were vanishing on all sides, fleeing from the wrath to come.

They fled in consternation, with one exception—Leggett of the Fourth, who grinned as he ran.

It was rather agreeable to Albert Leggett to see Jimmy Silver booked for trouble.

And there was no doubt that he was.

"Silver!" gasped the Head, after an awful silence that seemed to poor Jimmy to last hours, but really lasted only a few seconds.

"Oh, sir!" stuttered Jimmy.

"You—you—you have—"

"I—I'm sorry, sir—"

"Silver, you have dared—"

"It was an accident, sir!" gasped Jimmy helplessly. "We—we were playing leap-frog."

"Playing leap-frog!" thundered the Head. "Playing leap-frog, on this path, in a thick mist?"

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Did you think you could do so without accidents happening, Silver?"

"I—I—I didn't think—"

"You must learn to think, Silver! Go to my study at once and fetch my cane!"

"Oh, sir!"

"I am waiting, Silver!"

Jimmy Silver tramped off to the House. Arthur Edward Lovell joined him as he went in, and caught his arm.

"What's happened?" he whispered.

"I've got to take out the old bird's cane!" said Jimmy dismally.

"Hard luck!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" came a very unpleasant voice.

Jimmy Silver did not trouble to look at

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Leggett; he went on to the Head's study for the cane.

A sound of scuffling and gurgling followed him, however.

Arthur Edward Lovell was busily engaged in rubbing Leggett's features on the quadrangle.

Jimmy found the cane, and took it out to the Head, waiting for him on the gravel path.

Dr. Chisholm took the cane from him, and Jimmy rubbed his hands apprehensively.

The interval of a few minutes, however, had somewhat calmed the headmaster's wrath, and he was no longer in a thunderous mood.

"Silver, you have acted very recklessly and foolishly," he said. "I shall punish you as a warning for the future. Hold out your hand!"

"Swish! Swish!"

"Oh! Ow!"

"You may take the cane back, Silver."

"Yes, sir!" mumbled Jimmy.

Dr. Chisholm walked on to the gates, and disappeared in the mist.

Jimmy Silver returned to the study with the cane, feeling that he had got off pretty cheaply, on the whole.

Had the cane been at hand when the collision took place, certainly the delinquent would not have escaped with two cuts.

"Not so bad," said Jimmy, when his chums met him with chummy inquiries. "Only two goes! The old bird isn't such a ruffian, after all, you know!"

"Are we going on with the game?" asked Raby.

"Fathead!" was Jimmy Silver's reply to that.

Jimmy had had enough of leap-frog in the mist, and so had his chums, on reflection.

They repaired to the end study, where a four-handed fencing-match proved exciting enough to enliven them till tea-time; and did no harm, excepting to the study furniture.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Culprit!

PAH!"

Dr. Chisholm uttered that low exclamation in tones of intense annoyance.

The Head had returned from Coombe, and was entering his study in the School House. As usual, he put his hand inside the door, after opening it, to switch on the electric light before entering.

But the light did not switch on. He pressed the button hard, but there was no answering flash from the electric lamps in the study.

Something evidently was wrong with the switch.

After expressing his feelings by that ejaculation, the Head entered the dark study, to feel Mrs. May across to his desk, where there was another lighting switch.

Then two or three persons who were within hearing of the Head's study were suddenly startled.

Crash!

"Oh!"

It was the sound of a heavy fall, followed by a sharp, loud cry.

"Oh! Ah! Oh! Good god! Oh!"

Mr. Bootles was at the end of the corridor, chatting with Monsieur Monceau, the French master.

At those startling sounds from the sacred precincts of the Head's study, Mr. Bootles spun round in alarm.

"Bless my soul! What has happened?" he exclaimed. "What—what?"

"Ze doctair he fall down viz himself," said Monsieur Monceau.

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Bootles rushed down the passage with whisking gurnow, greatly concerned, with the French master at his heels.

All was dark in the Head's study, as they arrived breathless in the doorway.

"Dr. Chisholm—"

"Pray be careful how you enter!" It was a grinding voice from the darkness within. "There is a cord stretched across the room. I have had a severe fall."

"Good heavens!" stammered Mr. Bootles. "Mon Dieu!" gasped Mossoo, almost dazed at the bare thought of such an outrage in such a quarter.

"Pray obtain a light, Mr. Bootles!"

"Certainly, sir—certainly! Bless my soul! But the electric light—"

"It will not work. I presume it has been tampered with. Pray get a lamp from somewhere!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Bootles rushed away. Monsieur Monceau remained in the doorway, blinking into the shadowed study, in great concern and distress.

From the darkness within came a sound of hard breathing.

The Head had been hurt; but after his first startled cry he gave no vocal indication of it.

Mr. Bootles returned in a few minutes with a lighted lamp.

The light gleamed into the study.

Dr. Chisholm was standing upright, just where he had picked himself up after his fall, not caring to move again, lest he should fall into another trap.

Across the study, fastened to screws driven into the wainscot, was stretched a taut cord, a few inches from the floor.

It was into that which the unsuspecting Head had walked—with the result of a startling and painful fall.

Dr. Chisholm's hands were bruised where they had struck the floor, and he was very much shaken.

"You—you are hurt, sir?" stammered Mr. Bootles.

"Not very severely, I am glad to say," said the Head calmly, though his eyes were glittering.

He moved to the door, and examined the light switch.

As he expected, he found the wire nipped through, to put it out of action.

"This was deliberate, Mr. Bootles," he said. "Whoever set this trap for my feet deliberately disconnected the electric light, so that I should enter in the darkness."

"Who—who—who could have done such a thing?" gasped Mr. Bootles. "It is—is—its incredible!"

The Head walked to his desk, where he found the lighting-switch in order, and switched on the electric light.

His face was very calm; but the glitter in his eyes told of the wrath within, and boded ill to the practical joker if he was discovered.

"Some—some foolish junior!" stammered Mr. Bootles.

"He will be discovered," said the Head quietly. "I shall make an example of him, Mr. Bootles. It may be difficult, but I shall certainly discover him. Pray help me search the study; the rascal may have left some trace behind of his presence here."

"Certainly, sir—certainly!"

"Mon Dieu! Vat is zat?" exclaimed Monsieur Monceau suddenly, pointing to a little object that glistened in the light near one end of the stretched cord.

No Nonsense about the Chums of Rookwood! They're All FINE SPORTSMEN!

"A pencil-case," said Mr. Bootles. He picked it up, and passed it to the Head.

It was a small silver pencil-case, and there was a monogram engraved on it, which the Head noted at once.

"I—I have seen that pencil-case before, sir," said Mr. Bootles, in very agitated tones. "It belongs to a boy in my Form. But surely—"

He broke off in dismay. "There is a monogram on the case," said the Head quietly. "The initials are 'J. S.' They are the initials of a boy in your Form, Mr. Bootles?"

"Silver, sir—the head boy in my Form." "This pencil-case, then, belongs to him?"

"I—I have seen it in his possession." "I think that settles the matter," said the Head. "Doubtless it slipped from his pocket while he was stooping to fasten the cord. He would scarcely dare show a light here, so he must have worked in the dark—the dusk, at least—and so did not observe that he had dropped the pencil-case."

Mr. Bootles nodded dumbly. It seemed clear enough.

"As it happens, I had occasion to punish Silver only a short time ago," said the Head, setting his lips. "This, doubtless, is his revenge for that punishment."

"But—but," stammered Mr. Bootles, "I can scarcely believe that—that Silver would—"

"You can see the evidence with your own eyes, Mr. Bootles," said Dr. Chisholm coldly.

"I could never have believed that he was a revengeful boy, sir, or that he was capable of this disrespectful—"

"You must believe it now, Mr. Bootles, since it is manifestly the case. Will you have the goodness to call Silver here?"

"Oh, yes, certainly!"

Mr. Bootles, in a very agitated frame of mind, left the study, and the Head waited grimly for the arrival of Jimmy Silver.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Sentenced!

CRASH! Smash! "Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Bootles, as he approached the end study and heard that sound of havoc and disaster.

Jimmy Silver's voice followed. "You ass, Lovell! There goes the clock!"

"Well, clocks were made to go, old chap," answered Arthur Edward, "and that one hadn't gone for weeks."

"It's gone now, and no mistake!"

Mr. Bootles tapped on the door, and opened it.

Four juniors, in their shirt-sleeves, with wooden foils in their hands, were in the end study, which wore rather a dishevelled look.

The clock was in the fender, in a dozen pieces, and two or three pictures hung awry on the walls—which also showed signs of damage.

"Hallo, who's that? Don't come in, fat-head!" said Lovell, without turning his head, as the door opened.

"Ahem!" "Oh, my hat!"

Lovell spun round, with a crimson face, as he heard his Form master's well-known cough.

"Oh! You, sir!" stammered Arthur Edward.

Mr. Bootles, however, did not bestow any attention on the confused Lovell. He fixed his eyes on the captain of the Fourth.

"Silver!" "Yes, sir?" said Jimmy, surprised by the Fourth Form master's grave look and tone.

"The Head requires your presence in his study, Silver. You will follow me at once!"

"Certainly, sir!" Jimmy Silver laid down his foil, and picked up his jacket to put it on. He could not present himself before the Head in his shirt-sleeves.

"I—I say, sir," ventured Raby "We—were only fencing, sir—not doing any harm, sir!"

"Only an old clock, too, sir," said Lovell. "You should not make so much noise in the study, my boys. But it was not in reference to this that the Head wishes to see Silver," said Mr. Bootles. "It is a very different and much more serious matter!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Lovell. "Are you ready, Silver?"

"Yes, sir." Jimmy Silver, surprised and a little alarmed, followed the master of the Fourth from the study.

His chums looked at one another. They were grave enough now.

"What on earth's the row?" muttered Lovell.

Raby and Newcome shook their heads. The answer to that question was beyond them.

Jimmy Silver was as perplexed as his chums as he followed Mr. Bootles, who did not speak a word on the way to the Head's study.

It was pretty clear that the matter, whatever it was, was serious. Mr. Bootles' expression was simply portentous.

"Here is Silver, sir!" said Mr. Bootles, as he entered Dr. Chisholm's study, and Jimmy followed him in.

Jimmy stared as he saw the cord stretched across the floor, and an overturned chair, which had been knocked over by the doctor in his fall.

He turned his startled eyes on the grim face of the Head.

"Silver!" The Head's voice was very deep. "Is this your property?"

He held out the pencil-case. "Yes, sir," said Jimmy blankly.

"How did it come in my study, Silver?" "In—in your study, sir?" stammered Jimmy Silver.

"In my study!" repeated the Head grimly. "I—I don't know, sir!" "Indeed? I can enlighten you, then!" said

the Head, with grim sarcasm. "You dropped it here, Silver, when you were fastening that cord for me to stumble over!"

Jimmy Silver jumped. "I—I did, sir?" he stammered.

"Do you deny it, Silver?" "Certainly I do!" exclaimed Jimmy hotly.

"I haven't been in the study before—at least, not since—" He remembered.

"Since when, Silver?" "Since you sent me here for your cane, sir, about an hour ago," answered Jimmy.

"I haven't been near the room since I brought the cane back."

"Possibly!" said the Head. "When you brought the cane back, doubtless, you laid this cowardly trap for your headmaster!"

"I—I did not—" "Your pencil-case was found close by the cord where it is fastened to the wainscot, Silver."

"I—I don't understand—" "Silver may have dropped it here when he came for the cane, sir," murmured Mr. Bootles feebly.

The Head gave him a glance. "Silver had to take the cane from my desk. There was no reason why he should go near that wall," he answered. "Moreover, he could scarcely have dropped the pencil-case from his pocket unless he was stooping down to the floor."

Mr. Bootles was dumb.

"It will not serve you to utter falsehoods, Silver," resumed the Head. "You have been guilty of a deliberate and wicked outrage upon your headmaster—in revenge, I presume, for the punishment I inflicted upon you a short time ago. I am shocked at this. Silver—shocked and grieved!"

"But—but I did not do it, sir!" gasped Jimmy. "I—I never dropped the pencil-case here! I didn't know it was here! I—I haven't seen it since yesterday! I left it in my study, I think—I believe—"

"That will do, Silver! I have said that it is useless to utter falsehoods. But for your previous good character, Silver, I should expel you from the school for this act of revengeful rascality!"

"But, sir, I—I—" "Taking your previous good character into consideration, Silver, and considering that this action was possibly the outcome of an impulse after your punishment, I shall not expel you. You will receive a very severe flogging in public before all Rookwood."

Jimmy Silver stared dazedly at the Head. He felt as if his head were swimming.

"To-morrow morning," said the Head quietly, "you will be flogged before the whole school, Silver. You may go now."

Jimmy Silver stood rooted to the floor. "But, sir—" he gasped.

Dr. Chisholm waved his hand to the door. "That is enough, boy! You may go!"

"But—" "Go!" thundered the Head angrily. "How dare you bandy words with me, boy? Leave my study!"

"But I did not do it, sir!" panted Jimmy. "I swear—"

"Mr. Bootles, kindly take that boy from my study!" said the Head.

The Form master's hand dropped on Jimmy Silver's shoulder. "Come!" he said quietly.

"Mr. Bootles, I—I swear I did not—" "Come!" said the Fourth Form master again. And he led the dazed junior from the study.

Jimmy Silver went like a fellow in a dream.

But it was no dream. The sentence had been pronounced, and on the morrow he was to be flogged in public—a spectacle of pity and derision to all Rookwood!

There was a general gasp of amazement in the Lower School when the news spread. Jimmy Silver was to be flogged in Hall.

On the morrow morning, hoisted upon old Mack's shoulders before hundreds of staring eyes, he was to receive his punishment. And the Rookwooders could scarcely believe their ears at first.

But there was one—a junior on the Modern side—who smiled evilly when he heard the news—one who could have enlightened the perplexed juniors if he had chosen. But Leggett of the Fourth kept his own counsel.

THE END.

(Now turn to page 26.)

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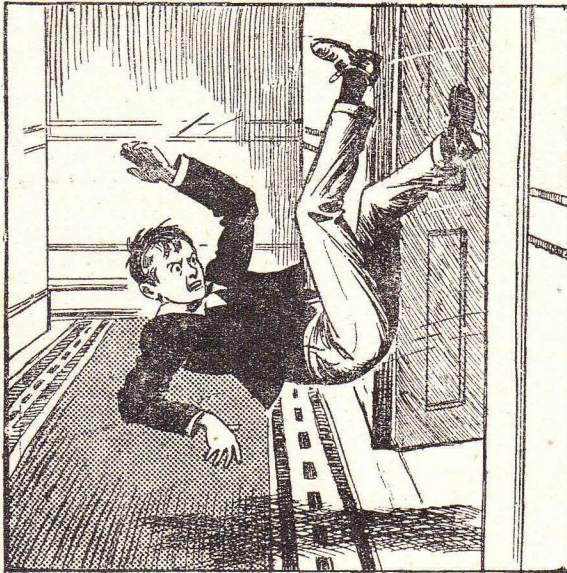
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THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Battle Royal.

"SOMETHING'S up!"
Monty Lowther made that remark as he stood at the window of Tom Merry's study and looked out into the quadrangle.

Tom Merry and Manners were finishing their tea. They looked up inquiringly.

"Is there a war on?" asked Manners.

"No."

"New kid arrived?"

"No."

"Then what the thump—"

"It's your minor," said Monty Lowther. "He's leaning against one of the elms, and he appears to be blubbing."

"My hat!"

Manners was on his feet in a moment. The news rather startled him.

Young Reggie Manners, of the Third, was not a cry-baby. He didn't "blub" unless he had very good reason for doing so. And Manners major, the protector and guardian of Reggie, realised that there must be something very wrong.

Manners joined Monty Lowther at the window. He looked out across the wind-swept quad, and he saw that his chum had spoken truly.

Reggie Manners was leaning against one of the old elms, sobbing almost hysterically.

"I must go and see what's wrong," said Manners. And he dashed out of the study, with Tom Merry and Lowther at his heels.

On the approach of the Terrible Three, Manners minor lifted a tear-stained face towards them. He made a great effort to master his weakness, but without success. A fresh flood of tears came.

"Great Scott, kid! What's the matter?" asked Manners, resting his hand lightly on his minor's shoulder.

The fag continued to sob, but said nothing. His face was pale, save for the redness beneath the eyes, and he looked as if he had recently passed through a painful ordeal.

Suddenly Tom Merry stepped forward. "I can see what's wrong," he said. "Look here!"

He pointed to Reggie Manners' hands and wrists. They were literally covered with weals.

It was obvious that Manners minor had just been thrashed, and thrashed with unusual severity—in fact, with ferocity.

Manners major uttered a fierce cry of indignation.

"Who is responsible for this, Reggie?" he demanded.

No answer.

"Have you just been licked by somebody?"

The fag nodded without speaking.

"Was it old Selby?" asked Manners. "If it was, I'll go along and see him. Master or no master, he's no right to lam a kid like this! If it was Selby, I'm dashed if I won't report him to the Head!"

Mr. Selby, the master of the Third, had the reputation of being a heavy-handed master, who ruled his charges with a rod of iron, and frequently lost his temper. Manners major quite naturally jumped to the conclusion that it was Mr. Selby who was responsible for this latest outrage.

But Reggie Manners shook his head.

"It—it wasn't old Selby," he muttered.

"Then who was it?" persisted Manners.

"Was it Knox of the Sixth?"

"N-n-no."

"Might as well speak up and tell us the facts, kid," said Tom Merry kindly. "We're determined to get to the bottom of this. Whoever lammed you in that brutal way will have to be taken to task for it."

"Yes, rather!" said Monty Lowther, whose usually sunny face was clouded over.

"I—I can't tell you fellows who it was," faltered Reggie Manners. "It would be sneaking."

"Rats!" said Tom Merry sharply. "This is one of those occasions when you're quite justified in speaking up. You say it wasn't Selby who lammed you, and it wasn't Knox of the Sixth. I can't think of any other bullying beast who would go to such lengths as this. But obviously somebody has done it, and we want to know his name."

"We insist!" said Manners. "Speak up, Reggie, or we'll pester you until you do!"

Faintly came the fag's reply: "It was Barker of the Shell."

There was a chorus of amazement from the Terrible Three.

Grundy's cousin, who was the latest addition to the Shell Form at St. Jim's, had already shown himself to be a heavy-handed fellow, who believed in deeds rather than words, and in "wallopings" rather than verbal outbursts.

But Bill Barker had no right whatever to lay hands on a fag. And the Terrible Three were rightly indignant.

"Tell us all about it, kid," urged Monty Lowther.

Manners minor pulled himself together, and tucked his handkerchief into his pocket.

"Barker wanted me to fag for him," he said, "and I wouldn't. He wanted me to go down to the village for him, and lay the tea in his study. I refused to do either."

"I should jolly well think so!" shouted Manners. "I never heard of such cheek! Just because he's been made captain of footer, I suppose Barker thinks he's entitled to a fag. What did he lam you with, Reggie?"

"An ashlant. Goodness knows where he got it from! But he lost his wool, and chased me round and round the study, lashing out as he went. If I hadn't managed to bunk, he'd have half-killed me."

Manners major looked grim. He turned abruptly on his heel.

"Whither bound?" asked Lowther.

"I'm going to have it out with that brute Barker!" said Manners fiercely.

Tom Merry put out a restraining hand.

"Steady on, old man," he said. "You're no match for Barker, and you know it."

"I'm going to lick him!" muttered Manners.

"Don't be a chump! You've as much chance of licking Joe Beckett!"

Manners shook himself free from Tom Merry's grasp.

"Do you think I'm going to take this lying down?" he demanded angrily.

"Not at all," was the quiet response. "But it's no use your tackling Barker. I'll see to that part of the bizney. The fellow's been asking for a licking ever since he came."

"Talk of angels," said Monty Lowther, "and you're bound to hear the flapping of their giddy wings! Here's Parker himself."

A burly youth bore down upon the little group in the quad. It was Barker, and he was looking a trifle shamefaced.

Manners confronted the newcomer with blazing eyes.

"You rotter!" he exclaimed heatedly. "You deserve to be reported for knocking my minor about like this!"

"He deserved a licking," said Barker. "I'm not used to being thwarted, and when a fellow refuses to do my bidding I always wallop him. I'll admit I lost my temper, and hit harder than I should have done in cold blood. And I've come to apologise to your minor."

"Your precious apology won't save you from a licking," said Tom Merry. "Manners wants to fight you, but I've told him he's no match for you. However, I'm quite willing to act as his representative."

Barker laughed grimly.

"Don't be a fool, Merry," he said. "You know jolly well that I could lick you with one hand."

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"That remains to be seen. I'll trouble you to step along to the gym with me."

Barker shrugged his shoulders. "Well, if you insist on making an ass of yourself in public, I've nothing more to say," he said. "But you'll be licked, and your position as Form-captain will become a bit wobbly in consequence. If I lick you—and that's as certain as certain can be—a lot of fellows will be clamouring for me to be made skipper in your place. You seem to have been pretty popular in the past—a sort of tin god in the Shell—but when a popular idol is licked in the ring he jolly soon loses his prestige. I'm warning you."

"Thanks!" said Tom Merry dryly. "Seems to me you're trying to wriggle out of the fight, but I'm not going to let you. We'll settle this affair right away."

"So be it," said Barker, with another shrug of the shoulders. "Your blood be upon your own head."

The party at once made tracks for the gym.

Manners minor scuttled away to spread the news of the forthcoming fight.

Within a matter of ten minutes the gym was packed to overflowing.

Not many fellows knew the rights and wrongs of the case, nor did they care to know them. All they knew was that Tom Merry and Bill Barker were to meet face to face.

A fistic encounter between Tom Merry and the burly new boy was inevitable. It had been bound to come sooner or later. Bill Barker was too big for his shoes, and he badly needed putting in his place. The burning question was, would Tom Merry succeed in doing it?

Barker did not lack support. There were lots of fellows who considered that Tom Merry had been cock of the walk too long. They would have welcomed his downfall in the ring, which would give them a good excuse for electing a fresh captain.

On reaching the gym Barker wanted to fight with bare fists. But Kildare of the Sixth, who dropped in to see what the trouble was about, would not hear of this.

"You'll fight with gloves, in the usual way," he said, "and I'll stand by and see fair play."

So Tom Merry and Barker donned the gloves, and there was a chorus of applause as they stepped into the ring.

By comparison with his opponent, Tom Merry was a pigmy.

Barker was big and broad and well-developed. He was a typical overgrown schoolboy, much too big for his age. He was not flabby, either. His muscles stood out like those of the village blacksmith.

Tom Merry was slim but shapely. St. Jim's knew him for a boxer of skill and science. The problem was, would his skill and science avail against Barker's whirlwind tactics?

Kildare called "Time!" And on the instant Barker rushed at the captain of the Shell—bore down upon him like a human cyclone.

Tom Merry tried to feint, but he could not wholly ward off that terrific attack, and Barker's left sent him spinning against the ropes.

"Buck up, Tommy!" called Monty Lowther anxiously.

"Go it, Barker!" urged a dozen fellows.

They knew nothing of the new boy's ill-treatment of Manners minor, or they would have been less eager to give Bill Barker their support.

Tom Merry sprang clear of the ropes, and closed with his burly antagonist. He beat a tattoo on Barker's ribs, and the new boy staggered back with a below of anguish.

Encouraged by his success, Tom Merry continued to press. And he easily carried off the honours of the first round.

"Tom Mewwy's goin' to give that hefty boudah the lickin' he deserves!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

But Jack Blake was not so sanguine.

"Barker won't let him get so close quarters in the next round," he said. "Tommy's already punctured his ribs, and he doesn't like it. He'll keep him at arm's-length now, you see."

Blake was right. In the second round, Tom Merry tried hard to clinch. But Barker successfully held him off.

There was a grin on the new boy's face. He seemed to think he had the fight well in hand. Without exerting himself unduly, he

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kept his nimble opponent at bay until the end of the round. It had been rather a tame round, with scarcely a blow struck.

The third round, however, was a sort of fireworks exhibition. And Barker supplied the fireworks. He set up a whirlwind attack, and Tom Merry was forced to retreat round and round the ring.

Tom's defensive work was very clever. Time and again he dodged and ducked, and Barker's fists smote the empty air. But towards the end of the round the new boy broke clean through his opponent's guard, and his left landed with terrific force on the point of the jaw.

No boxer could have withstood that blow. It might almost have felled an ox. It certainly felled Tom Merry, and half-stunned him into the bargain.

With a grave face, Kildare counted the fallen boxer out.

Barker's supporters cheered vociferously. Tom Merry's partisans stood silent and stupefied. They had scarcely expected the new boy to win in such hollow fashion.

"Tom Merry's licked! Time we had a new skipper!"

It was Crooke of the Shell who spoke. And a loud "Hear, hear!" followed his words.

Manners and Lowther stepped into the ring, and assisted their chum to his feet.

"Rough luck, Tommy!" muttered Lowther. "You did your best, but that brute's above your weight."

Tom Merry nodded dully.

"They're beginning to cry out for a new skipper," he said bitterly.

"Well, they'll be unlucky, that's all," said Manners. "We're sticking to you, Tommy, through thick and thin."

"Rather!" said Monty Lowther.

Tom Merry did not doubt the loyalty of his chums. But there were many others in the Shell, who, if an election came, would give their votes to Bill Barker, whose bustling tactics had taken St. Jim's by storm. And once Barker became captain of the Shell, Tom Merry's star would set.

It was not a pleasant prospect. And it was not surprising that Tom Merry's face wore a worried as well as a battered look as his chums assisted him from the gym.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Barker's Bold Bid.

"HALLO! What's all this about?" Monty Lowther halted in front of the notice-board next morning. Tom Merry and Manners halted, too.

A huge sheet of drawing-paper was pinned to the board, and it bore the following announcement:

NOTICE!

"At a mass meeting of the Shell last night, it was decided to hold an election for the purpose of deciding whether Tom Merry shall remain skipper, or whether Barker shall be elected in his place.

"The election will be by ballot in the ordinary way, and will take place on Saturday evening at eight o'clock in the junior Common-room.

(Signed) AUBREY RACKE.

GERALD CROOKE.

GEORGE GORE.

Electioneering Committee."

Underneath this notice appeared the words, scrawled in blue pencil:

VOTE FOR BARKER.

Manners gave a low whistle. "Things are beginning to happen!" he ejaculated. "First time I've heard anything of a mass meeting of the Shell."

Monty Lowther grunted.

"The 'mass meeting' consisted of about four fellows, I expect," he said. "Racke & Co. are at the bottom of this, as you see. They don't like Barker. He gave them one of his celebrated 'wallopings' when he first came. But they think it's safer to be his pals than his enemies. Apart from that, they've got their knife into you, Tommy, and they think this is a golden opportunity of getting you kicked out of the captaincy. What are you going to do about it?"

"Nothing," said Tom Merry.

"What!" shouted Manners. "You're going to let 'em go ahead with this election?"

Tom nodded.

"If they want Barker, they can have him,"

he said. "They'll be fed-up with him before he's been skipper of the Form a week—if he gets elected, that is."

"He's not going to get elected!" growled Manners. "Not if we know it!"

A loud guffaw caused the Terrible Three to spin round. Barker stood there with his hands in his pockets, and a broad grin on his far from handsome face.

"How do you like that, Merry?" he asked, nodding towards the announcement on the notice-board.

"It won't cause me any sleepless nights," said Tom. "You can go ahead."

"Thanks! I mean to."

"What are you going to do if you become skipper?"

"When I become skipper, you mean!" said Bill Barker, with a chuckle. "Why, I shall wake this sleepy old Form up! You're all half-asleep at present. You're vegetating. I shall alter all that. And I shall maintain law and order, too—with my fists!"

"You're a jolly sight too handy with those fists of yours!" said Manners. "If you lay hands on my minor any more, and try to get him to lag for you, we'll come along and give you the bumping of your life!"

Barker was quite unmoved by this threat.

"Look here, Merry," he said. "In order to save the fuss of an election, p'raps you'd like to stand down at once, and let me take your place as skipper?"

"Nothing doing," said Tom promptly.

"Very well. Then we'll go ahead with the election."

"How many votes do you hope to get, my pugilistic friend?" inquired Monty Lowther.

"Oh, about forty!" said Barker calmly.

"Forty!" echoed Manners. "Why, there's only forty fellows in the Shell."

"I mean to get 'em all on my side," said Barker. "My methods of canvassing will be simple and effective. I shall call on each fellow in the Form, and say, 'Who are you going to vote for?' If he says 'You,' all well and good. If he says 'Merry,' I shall wallop him. And I shall keep on walloping him until he changes his mind."

"My dear chap," said Monty Lowther, "you were born about a hundred years after your time. You ought to have lived in the old prize-fighting days. You don't seem to know any language except the language of force."

"That's good enough for me," said Barker.

"Do you call it fair—bullying fellows into voting for you?" asked Tom Merry.

"All's fair in love and war—and elections,"

was the reply.

And Barker strolled away, to start on his tour-of canvassing.

He had already been promised three votes—the votes of Racke, Crooke, and Gore. And it didn't take him long to collect others.

Skimpole of the Shell was the first fellow he singled out. Skimpy was strolling in the quad, devouring, as he walked, the works of Professor Balmycrumpet.

"You've heard about the election, I suppose?" said Barker.

"Yes, my dear fellow," said Skimpole, blinking at Barker.

"Are you going to vote?"

"Naturally."

"Who for?"

"I shall vote for the retention of Tom Merry as captain of the Shell. Dear me! Why are you taking your coat off, Barker?"

"I'm going to wallop you!" was the grim reply.

Skimpole backed away in alarm.

"What have I done?" he almost screamed.

"You're going to give your vote to the wrong party," said Barker. "Can't have that sort of thing, you know. I'm going to persuade you to change your mind."

"I—I've changed it already!" gasped Skimpole, as the burly Barker bore down upon him. "On maturer consideration, I have decided to give my vote to you!"

Barker grinned, and slipped his coat on again.

"You just changed your mind in the nick of time," he said.

And he strolled away, making a note of Skimpole's name in his pocket-book.

Buck Finn and Lennox were the next two to be visited. They were lukewarm supporters of Tom Merry, and they had decided to vote for him. But they piped to another tune when Barker came on the scene. He threatened to knock their heads together unless they promised him their votes on the spot. And Buck Finn and Lennox hurriedly changed their minds.

Then came Barker's first set-back. He called on Bernard Glyn and Clifton Dane. "You fellows going to vote for me?" he inquired.

"No jolly fear!" said Clifton Dane. "Personally, I'd as soon vote for my aged grandmother!"

Barker scowled.

"You're going to vote for Merry?"

"Right on the wicket!" said Glyn. "Tom Merry's our man. He always has been, and he always will be."

Barker looked grim.

"If you won't promise to vote for me," he said, "it will be my painful duty to wallop you both!"

Glyn and Dane had suspected that this was coming, and they were ready for it. With one accord they sprang to their feet, and rushed at Barker.

In the ordinary way, the burly Shell fellow could have accounted for both of them. But he was taken completely by surprise. Before he could fully grasp what was happening, his legs were swept from under him, and his burly frame was sent hurtling through the doorway.

Bill Barker sat down on the linoleum of the passage with a bump and a roar.

Crash!

The door of the study was slammed in Barker's face, and the key grating in the lock. Glyn and Dane were taking no risks. They knew that if Bill Barker re-entered the study he would probably wreck it.

The new boy picked himself up, feeling himself as if to make sure he was still in one piece. Then he flourished a hefty list at the locked door, and resumed his quest for recruits.

All that day cousin Bill worked hard to obtain promises of votes. And nearly two-thirds of the fellows in the Shell undertook to support him at the election.

Meanwhile, Tom Merry chums were not idle. They did everything in their power to prevent Barker walking off with the captaincy. They even had a special number of "Tom Merry's Weekly" published, containing articles which ran down Barker, and lauded Tom Merry up to the skies.

But even Tom Merry's best friends felt a little doubtful as to whether he would be re-elected, after his smashing defeat in the ring at the hands of Bill Barker.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Best Man Wins.

SATURDAY dawned at length, and the election-fever was at its height.

The enterprising supporters of both sides had had handbills printed, and these were displayed in great profusion everywhere. They plastered nearly every door, and every wall, and every tree-trunk within the school precincts. The blue handbills bore the words, "Vote for Merry!" and the flaming red bills displayed the message, "Vote for Barker!"

There were mass meetings in the quad and in the junior Common-room. There were fights and riots and processions. And masters and prefects were powerless to quell the excitement.

Long before the time of the polling—eight o'clock in the evening—the Common-room was crowded.

Only the Shell fellows were allowed to vote, of course. But the Fourth-Formers were present in full muster.

"I sincerely trust that Tom Mewwy comes out on top, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "But I have my doubts. I hear that Barkah has bullied nearly everybody into votin' for him."

"Those methods ought not to be allowed!" growled Jack Blake. "Every voter should be given a free hand."

"Yes, rather!" said Digby. "If Barker gets elected—and I fancy he will—he'll owe it to his beastly bullying!"

"And to the fact that he licked Tom Merry in the gym," added Herries. "We mustn't forget that!"

At that moment Bill Barker came into the Common-room with his giant stride. He was looking on the best of terms with himself. He had collected no less than thirty names of fellows who had promised to vote for him; and, as he explained to Aubrey Racke, there was really no need for an election.

"I shall get in with a corking majority!" he said. "Tom Merry hasn't a hope! This balloting bizney is a sheer waste of time!"



BARKER THE CANVASSER! "I'm going to wallop you!" said Barker, peeling off his coat and advancing upon Skimpole. "I'm going to persuade you to change your mind about voting for Tom Merry. You are going to vote for me!" "All right! I have changed my mind. I will vote for you, Barker!" faltered Skimmy. (See Chapter 2.)

The captain of St. Jim's had undertaken to distribute the ballot-papers and to reckon up the votes. He tried to maintain silence in the junior Common-room, but he might as well have tried to quell the occupants of the Tower of Babel.

"It's eight o'clock, Kildare!" "Get on with the washing!" "Serve out the merry papers!"

Kildare frowned. "Simmer down, can't you?" he exclaimed "I can hardly hear myself speak!"

Amid intense excitement the ballot-papers were served.

The names of the two candidates appeared on each paper. It was only necessary to put a cross against one of them.

There was no hesitation on the part of the voters. The whole thing only occupied about two minutes.

Kildare collected the papers, and conveyed them to the table at the end of the room. Then he sat down and proceeded to count the votes, while the juniors watched him breathlessly.

"We shall be able to tell by Kildare's face how it's going," murmured Monty Lowther.

But Kildare's face was inscrutable. It was Sphinx-like in its expression when he rose to announce the result.

Some sort of order having been restored, the captain of St. Jim's spoke.

"I have pleasure in announcing the result of the election!" he exclaimed. "There were forty votes in all. William Barker has received nineteen votes, and Tom Merry twenty-one. Merry will, therefore, remain captain of the Shell."

For a moment there was a dead silence. Bill Barker and his supporters were stunned, too. For, truth to tell, they had scarcely dared to hope for such a result.

When the moment of stupefied silence had elapsed, somebody set up a rousing cheer for Tom Merry. And the next instant the Common-room rang with cheering.

Bill Barker's face was working convulsively.

"There's been a mistake!" he shouted. "You've made a blunder, Kildare!"

"Nonsense!" snapped the captain of St. Jim's.

"Does this mean that I—I've lost?" stammered Barker.

"Precisely!"

"Then a lot of my so-called supporters have proved traitors!"

That was exactly what had happened. Lots of fellows had promised to vote for Barker, for the sake of avoiding unpleasantness with the heavy-handed new boy. But their promises had been of the pie-crust variety.

It was a terrible set-back for the ambitious boy from Boraco, and a big blow to his pride. He had counted on being elected by a handsome majority, and he had been defeated by a couple of votes!

Tom Merry's defeat in the ring had not made such a difference as Bill Barker had anticipated.

"Beaten!" he muttered. "Beaten, by Jove!"

He kept repeating the words like a parrot. It was not surprising that Aubrey Racke & Co. melted away, leaving Barker to endure his disappointment alone. The cads of the Shell had no use for a fallen idol.

The election was over, and the crowd in the Common-room dispersed.

Bill Barker remained in his chair near the fire, and he sat staring moodily into the leaping flames.

"Beaten!" he repeated. "And I thought I was on a good thing! But I'm not done yet! I'll show these fellows that I'm still a force to be reckoned with! After all, I'm captain of the footer, and it's about the first time in history that a new chap has won that distinction! I've had a bitter pill to swallow this evening, but I shall soon be making things hum again. And then somebody's going to sit up!"

Saying which, the defeated candidate rose to his feet, and strode away to his study.

THE END.

(*"The Form Against Him!"* is the title of next week's grand complete St. Jim's story.)

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By VICTOR NELSON.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

By the terms of the late Sir Charles Lestrade's will, Harry Lestrade and his cousin, Austin Courtney, must fight for the possession of the Lestrade fortune on the field of sport. The one who distinguishes himself most becomes owner of a vast amount of wealth. Harry Lestrade receives the first opportunity to distinguish himself in a local football match, for which club he is "signed on." Several other sporting events, in which both the cousins compete, are won by young Harry Lestrade. Furious at his non-

success, Courtney tries underhand methods of getting Harry out of the struggle.

The last event in which the two cousins met was at Douglas, in a motor-cycle race. Courtney hires a man to drag a tree across the track as Harry is passing on his cycle. There is a crash, and Lestrade is unable to complete the race. His cousin wins.

Back at Lestrade Castle, Harry is schooling his horse, Tearing Haste, his entry for the next steeplechase, with his friend Marjorie Randall.

(Now read on.)

The Cup Draw.

"I FEEL sure he is going to win, Harry," Marjorie declared, when Harry brought his horse to where she was standing and dismounted. "I am already on the point of making my father promise to take me up to Liverpool to see the race, and I shall be in the stand to cheer you when you come over the last jump and have everything else beaten!" "I'm afraid you may be a little too optimistic, Marjorie," Harry laughed. "But I shall do my best, if only to beat my cousin. I assure you that it is war to the knife between us since what happened in the Isle of Man." "I should think so, too!" Marjorie agreed. "The worst of it is, his laming you has allowed him to get ahead," she added, her eyes indignant.

Harry nodded, for this was true. His wrenched ankle had prevented his turning out when his team had met Bath Albion on the preceding Saturday in the third round of the competition proper for the English Cup, though, to his delight, the Wanderers had been able to win without him, and were still a fighting factor for the coveted trophy.

On the other hand, Austin Courtney had turned out for League games and for the third round, and, warming to football and regaining the old skill he had had as a lad, had acquitted himself brilliantly. Then, he had been able to pick up a race with one of his horses at Leicester.

The football season was now far advanced, and Romford Rovers, Courtney's team, had, like Harry's, come out of the third round triumphantly, beating Blackburn United on the latter's ground by the odd goal in three.

Harry, Specs, and Marjorie remained watching the other racers as they were put to exercise, and suddenly they heard a loud "Coo-ee!" from a distant gate leading into the open road.

They wheeled about, and saw the stalwart figure of Tony Wagg running towards them and waving his hand.

"Say, I've some news for you!" he exclaimed, addressing Harry, after he had raised his cap to the girl. "How's that ankle of yours?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 202.

"Quite well now, Tony," answered Harry, wondering what was coming, as he realised the excitement that was in the trainer's battered but pleasant face.

"Hurrah!" Tony cried. "Then you can have another cut at that blackguard cousin of yours on the football field, provided his team play him in two Saturday's time! I received the result of the draw for the fourth round for the Cup late last night, and we are drawn against Romford Rovers on their ground!"

Harry Lestrade's eyes flashed and hardened. He had not expected to find himself in direct opposition to his cousin in any of their sporting activities until the Grand National. But chance had willed it otherwise, and again they were to meet on the football field!

Well, he would play as never before in the forthcoming Cup tie, and, if he could bring it about, Romford should leave their ground a beaten team, and out of the struggle for the Cup!

As well as having the success of his own club at heart, he had yet to repay his cousin for his treacherous "croaking" of him in the Isle of Man. And here was an opportunity to do it even sooner than he could have hoped!

The Wanderers at Practice—The Bribe.

THE knowledge that in less than two weeks the Wessex Wanderers were to meet Romford Rovers in the Fourth Round for the Cup, and that he would thus again encounter his cousin, Austin Courtney, on the footer-field, spurred Harry Lestrade to even greater efforts in the direction of keeping himself fighting fit.

Harry had entered the great sporting contest involved by his late father's will with absolutely no ill-feeling against his cousin. But, since Courtney's attempts to "croak" him and gain an unfair advantage over him, the boy's outlook had changed.

It was now war to the knife between him and the treacherous and unsportsmanlike Courtney, as the boy had told his friend, Marjorie Randall, and he was determined to strain every nerve to beat his cousin, and convince him that clean tactics paid best in the end.

He had made up his mind to do his utmost to beat both Courtney and others in the Cup tie, so that his side proved the winners, and then, with luck, he would again trouble his cousin when on their respective horses, Tearing Haste II, and Fast and Free, they both faced the starter for the Grand National.

Over the week following Tony Wagg's information that the Wanderers and Romford Rovers had been drawn together in the Fourth Round, Harry Lestrade did not neglect his schooling of Tearing Haste. But, immediately after giving the racer his morning spins, the lad either joined the men of his football team and trained and practised with them, or sought physical exercise in bouts of skipping or in long walks with Specs.

The consequence of this was that Specs declared he was "fast being reduced to a living skeleton," whilst, on the contrary, Harry Lestrade noticeably broadened and hardened once again after his enforced spell of inactivity through his cycling smash in the Isle of Man.

Early one morning Specs and Harry were taking a walk that the latter was for once in a while making just comfortable, in view of the football practice that was to take place that afternoon, when a touring-car passed them.

Harry recognised it as it hummed by, whilst its single occupant, who wore masking goggles turned for the fraction of a moment and looked back at them.

"Did you see whom that was, Specs?" Harry asked, with a rather grim smile curling his lips.

Specs shook his head, peered short-sightedly after the fast-retreating automobile, which was now taking a curve ahead that would carry it out of sight, then shook it again.

"No, old thing. Who was it?" he asked.

"My cousin, Austin," Harry answered. "It's just a little sign of anxiety, his being in these parts to-day, Specs. He knows that the Wanderers always turn out for practice on Tuesday afternoons, and I'll wager you anything you like that he intends to come to our ground to see how we are shaping."

Specs nodded, looking thoughtful. He knew that the Wanderers' ground was always open to any members of the public who cared to come in and look on whilst the club was training.

"Of course, it will mean a serious blow for him if the Rovers are beaten, especially if you help to bring it about by scoring a goal or two, old bean," he said. "Yes, I expect you are right. He will be on the ground this afternoon. Well, if you and the others play as you usually do, he will have an eye-opener, and something to go back to his club and talk about. By the way, what made him leave the castle?"

Harry shrugged. "I suppose it was partly because he thought it would be unpleasant to have to face me after his villainy in the Isle of Man," he answered. "Then, I think Williams, poor old dad's trainer, had shown him pretty plainly that he thought he had been behind the shooting of Tearing Haste. Probably my cousin measured Williams' corn by his own bushel, and mistrusted him because of that."

"So he cleared off with his horses and took them to the trainer at Newmarket?" Specs mused. "Is he living there, do you know?"

"Yes. At least, he has left instructions with the butler to forward on any letters that arrive for him to an address in the Norwich Road," replied Harry. "I suppose when he is needed with his football club, he motors to Romford. But, let's forget the beggar! If he is at the practice this afternoon, I will do my very best to give him something to think about."

The two chums quickened their pace and walked back to Lestrade Castle, where they partook of a somewhat belated breakfast.

They learned that Courtney had called at the castle and left his car in the garage. But, after collecting some letters, the butler had been about to forward to him, he had left again, doubtless to avoid a meeting with Harry.

The latter and Specs spent the rest of the morning quietly. Then, after a light lunch, Harry secured his kitbag from his room, and they left for the Wanderers' ground.

A goodly sprinkling of intending onlookers were gathered on either side of the pitch beyond the touchlines, and Harry Lestrade's

prophecy that Courtney had motored here to watch the practice proved correct.

Smoking one of the very few cigarettes he now allowed himself, the young man was standing amongst a little crowd of men and lads gathered in front of the stand.

Several of the regular team and some reserves had just arrived as Harry, having left Specs, gained the players' entrance. Amongst them was a rather hulking and awkward young fellow of twenty-four or five, named Jem Newbold, who had occupied Harry's place at inside-left during the period whilst the boy had been unable to play owing to the injury to his ankle.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Wills, the goalie, as they entered the dressing-room. "Old Tony's been busy since last we were here. Here's the team for the Cup tie on Saturday."

As he had been speaking, Wills had walked over to a sheet of paper, headed with the name of the football club, which was pinned upon a notice-board. On it was typewritten a list of the names of the players selected for the important game at the end of the week, as Wills said.

The other players joined the goalkeeper and studied the notice interestedly, and it was just as that moment that Tony Wagg, the ex-boxer who acted as trainer to the club, entered the dressing-room.

"Don't waste time gaping at that, boys," he said. "It's the usual team I'm putting in the field."

Jem Newbold turned, with a scowl on his heavy-jowled face.

"What do you mean—the usual team?" demanded he, a little truculently. "You've got me down as 'Reserve,' and you played me at inside-left in the last round."

Tony Wagg gave a twitch of his broad shoulders.

"Lestrade is all right again now," he said quietly. "You were only included in the last Cup tie as a substitute because he was lame and unable to play, Newbold."

"Oh, I see! Even though your substitute player did score a goal and helped you win, he's not wanted now!" Newbold sneered. "I think it's confoundedly unfair, my being stood down for a newcomer to the club."

"You allow me to know what is best, please, Newbold!" Tommy Wagg retorted.

He turned away, to show that he would discuss the matter no further. Newbold turned white with a sudden passion, and his eyes glinted ugly, as he shot a glance at Harry Lestrade. Harry, who was chatting to Codling, the centre-forward, as both began hurriedly to peel off their clothes, did not intercept the look, or he would have realised that chance had made for him another enemy.

Although Newbold had scored a goal in the last Cup tie, as he said, it had been distinctly "fluky," a fact that Tony Wagg had not failed to note. Newbold had plenty of strength, but he was a trifle too slow and awkward ever to make a really good footballer. On more than one occasion he had

been played in the first team by Tony Wagg, and given a chance, but at no time had his play been brilliant.

"If I get the opportunity to-day, I'll see whether or no the cub will turn out on Saturday," Newbold thought, as he also commenced to change. "A miskick on that ankle of his and Mr. Clever Wagg might sing another tune."

Five minutes later, all the regular players and reserves—they numbered twenty-two in all—were arrayed in footer rig. Tony had mixed them into two scratch teams.

A move was made on to the field, and Tony assigned them to their respective positions. An evil little grin hovered for a moment about the lips of Jem Newbold, as he found himself placed at right-half on one side, whilst Harry Lestrade was occupying his usual position at inside-left on the other.

What he had hoped for had come to pass. During the practice play that would ensue, he and the boy would be bound to come into contact over and over again, and the treacherous and ugly things that were in his mind would surely be possible before long, Newbold told himself.

For awhile, Tony allowed the two scratch teams to play their own game, just as if it was an ordinary match they were engaging in. Then, when either side had succeeded in scoring a goal, he called a halt and commenced to put both teams through every phase of combination, attack, and defence, frequently accompanying his instructions with remarks that were more caustic than polite.

The players, aware that Tony knew the game from A to Z, took it all in good part, however, with but one exception. That exception was Newbold, who seemed more than usually clumsy this afternoon.

"It's football you're supposed to be playing, in case you don't know, Newbold—not hop scotch," Tony shouted once, when the reserve made to trap the leather, slipped and sprawled over it. "You're like an elephant with football boots on!"

Several others amongst the players and those of the watching crowd who were near enough to hear, laughed at this sally, and Newbold's face was a dusky red with anger as he picked himself up.

As the play continued, he did his best to vent his temper upon Harry Lestrade, tackling him as the boy gained possession and dealing him a vicious and painful kick on the shin.

"Sorry!" he growled out ill-naturedly. Austin Courtney watched with an expression of malicious satisfaction in his eyes, as he saw Harry limp out of the play and stoop and rub at his leg.

The rogue had been growing more and more anxious as to what would happen on the following Saturday, as he had witnessed his cousin's play. Though it was only practice, Harry Lestrade had been showing a dash and brilliance that was overwhelming, and Courtney had been telling himself that there was not a player in the eleven whom the Romford Rovers would put in the field who could equal him.

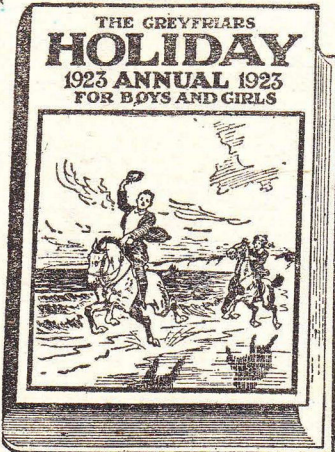
He hoped that Harry was badly hurt, especially as Tony Wagg started towards him. Courtney was to be disappointed, however. His cousin straightened up, and hurried back into his position.

Tony Wagg had sharp eyes and he had not failed to see who had been responsible for the boy being hurt. The trainer watched keenly, as once again Harry secured the sphere, and, with his fellow-forwards covering him well, he made an individual dash goalwards.

With his heavy face vicious, Jem Newbold waited on the youngster and tackled him

(Continued on page 24.)

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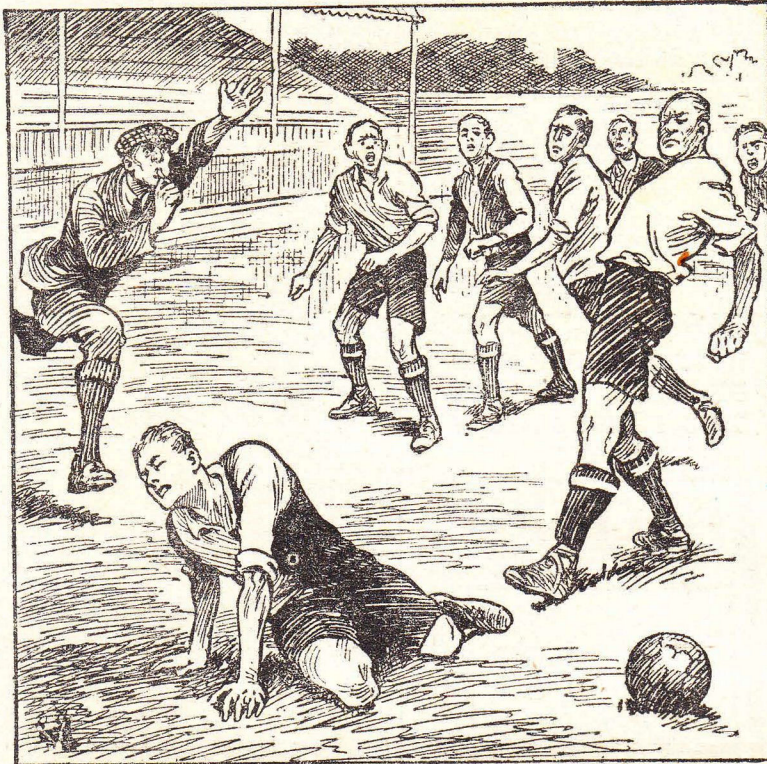
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ORDERED OFF THE FIELD! Tony Wagg came sprinting across the pitch. "Get off the field, Newbold!" he ordered sternly. "What for? It was an accident!" said the reserve, glaring at the players who had gathered round him. (See this page.)

again. Harry Lestrade side-stepped him with a quickness that Newbold's clumsiness made it impossible for him to cope with. But the reserve sprinted after Harry madly and drew alongside of him, as, with the leather at his toes, he neared the penalty-area.

The backs advanced to give Harry battle. But before the boy and they could come to grips, Jem Newbold had made a second attempt to lame him. And in Newbold's heart was a hope that he would be able to injure the boy badly enough to prevent his playing in the forthcoming Cuptie, so that he would be put in his place.

Pretending to kick at the ball with all his force, Newbold lashed out at Harry Lestrade's ankle. Fortunately for the boy, the savage kick was slightly misjudged, and the toe of Newbold's football boot glanced off its objective.

But, even as it was, the kick was sufficiently painful to bring a cry from the lad's lips, and he went down in a huddled heap.

At a sprint, Tony Wagg came swiftly across the pitch, shrilling the whistle he carried to stop the play.

"Get off the field, Newbold!" he ordered sternly.

"What for? It was an accident!" the reserve protested sulkily, glaring towards a section of the onlookers who had seen how deliberate the thing had been and were hissing him.

"Accident, was it?" Tony Wagg retorted. "Well, we can't afford to have accidents that are likely to lay up one of our best players at a time like this," he added meaningly. "Now clear without any more back-chat, or I'll report my opinion of your accident to the management."

He stooped anxiously over Harry Lestrade. "Badly hurt?" he asked of the boy, who was sitting up chafing at his numbed and bruised ankle.

"No; it will soon wear off," the lad answered pluckily; and the trainer helped him to his feet.

Jem Newbold had hesitated for a moment, regarding the trainer and Harry with spitefully narrowed eyes. But it had been only for a moment. He knew it was useless to argue with Tony Wagg when he made up his mind, and with a shrug of his shoulders, he started towards the dressing-room.

More hisses and boing followed him. As he was about to pass into the tunnel-like passage under the stand that led to the dressing-rooms, he heard a cheer, and looking back, saw that Harry had recommenced playing.

Jem Newbold muttered a disappointed imprecation under his breath, realising that his endeavour to put Harry out of action had failed. It was in a very evil mood that he flung off his footer attire and re-donned his ordinary clothes, and, when he presently

left the enclosure, he turned and shook his fist.

"You wait, you stuck-up young whelp!" he hissed, through angrily clenched teeth. "I'll be even with you yet—and the whole club, too, if I get half a chance!"

"And why not?" a quiet voice said at his back. "Perhaps I can show you a way!" Jem Newbold had been standing in a narrow lane that formed an approach to the private entrance to the ground used by the players. A startled exclamation broke from him, as he wheeled about on his heels, for he had thought himself alone.

Now, however, he found that a tall young man had rounded a curve in the lane and stood before him. Jem Newbold was a local man and he recognised the speaker as Austin Courtney.

"You do not appear to have any particular liking for my cousin, Harry Lestrade," the latter said, with a grim smile. "What's the trouble? Why did you try to lay him out on the field just now?"

"Who says I tried to lay him out?" Newbold asked aggressively, his hands clenching as he moved forward, for he was still in an unenviable temper.

"Anyone who had eyes in their head could see that you did," Austin Courtney assured him, with an impatient gesture. "My one regret is that you didn't succeed. If you read the sporting papers, you must know of the big contest between us, and I would have given no small sum to see him injured so that he could not turn out against my team, the Romford Rovers, in the Cuptie on Saturday."

Jem Newbold nodded. Like the rest of the public, he had read of the late Sir Charles Lestrade's will, and of the strenuous struggle going on between the cousins in various branches of sport.

"I think I understand," he said. "If I had laid him out so that he could not have played at the end of the week, you would have had more chance of shining and getting ahead. Well, I wish I could have obliged you, for I hate the cub like poison!"

Quickly he told Austin Courtney of how he had been played in the first team during Harry's enforced absence, and of how he had now been stood down again on the boy's return to fitness.

"What did you mean," he asked, "about showing me a way to get my own back?"

Austin Courtney darted a furtive glance over his shoulder. Then, certain that they were alone, he lowered his voice to a whisper, and outlined a dastardly plan that had been forming in his mind.

"You said you'd like to be even with my cousin and the whole club," he said, in conclusion, "and here is your chance. You can do it easily as you say you are to accompany the team to Romford as a reserve player, which will mean your being left in the dressing-room whilst the others are engaged in the game out in the pitch. You'll not only probably put my cousin out of the game in the second half, but almost surely bring about the defeat of the Wanderers, which will be all in my favour. And remember there is a twenty-pound note for you, if you agree, on the nail, and another after my side have won the Cuptie. What do you say?"

For just a moment Jem Newbold hesitated. Then he held out his hand.

"Give me the twenty on account," he said, with a vengeful chuckle. "I am your man, Mr. Courtney, and glad of the chance to hit back! The Wanderers will win no Cuptie on Saturday. That I promise you!"

A crisp banknote changed hands, and on the lips of Courtney was a grimly satisfied smile.

"Meet me at the inn in the village here at eight o'clock on Friday night," he said, "and I will give you the powder I spoke of."

Will the Wanderers win the Cuptie—or will Jem Newbold be able to "get" at the players with the drug? See next week's long thrilling instalment of our Wonderful Sporting Serial

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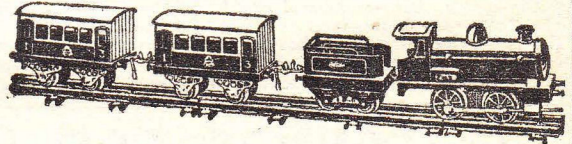
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Meccano rails, points and crossings are built for hard wear and for smooth running. They are made of the finest materials and hold together rigidly and strongly, for real workmanship is put into them. Note the great superiority both in quality and appearance of the Meccano rails as compared with Continental-made rails. Note also the extra sleepers, giving added strength and steadiness to the track. Write for our New Illustrated Rails, Points and Crossings Leaflet.

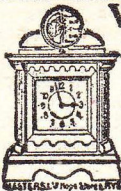
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"Dear Sirs,—I am a young man again after taking three boxes of 'Urace.' I am 89 years old, and have had rheumatism and sciatica for 40 years, but can now walk about without any pain. I have told my friends how 'Urace' has cured me. I consider 'Urace' the best remedy ever invented. You can make what use you like of this.—Yours truly, H. S. BENEY."

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URACE, and URACE alone, can cure rheumatism. Nothing is more certain than that. It cures on a new and common-sense principle. It directly attacks the cause of rheumatism—uric acid—dissolves and expels the uric acid from the system, and prevents its reappearance. That is why it CURES AND CURES QUICKLY. 1/3, 3/-, and 5/- per box, from Boots, Timothy White & Co., Taylor's, and all Chemists and Stores, or direct from the URACE Laboratories, 89, Woburn House, Store Street, W.C. 1.

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1/3, 3/- and 5/-
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Bright and Cheerful? It is impossible to be so if you suffer from Nervous Fears, Awkwardness in Company, Nervous Depression, Blushing, Timidity, Sleeplessness, Lack of Will-Power, or Mind Concentration. You can absolutely overcome all nervous troubles if you use the Mento-Nerve Strengthening Treatment. GUARANTEED CURE OR MONEY REFUNDED. Send 3 penny stamps immediately for particulars.—GODFREY ELLIOTT-SMITH, LTD., 543, Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C. 4.

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sending sixpence for Illustrated Catalogue of Tricks, Puzzles, Jokes. We will send absolutely free a Remarkable Card Trick. Write name and address plainly, enclose postal order sixpence, and address—Desk LX, ECLIPSE NOVELTY CO., Francis Terrace, London, N. 19.

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 POPULAR, as we all know, has a knack of getting there. I was reminded of this by a cheery chum, who referred to our splendid series of photos of sportsmen, in which a portrait of an Arsenal champion turned up just at the right time, when wanted. I may as well say here that our new series of photographs is full of winners, and the likenesses just the best obtainable anywhere.

For next week I have a positively topping programme. There is a yarn of old Greyfriars, which will send a thrill through anybody. Its title is "For Life or Death," and it has got the real atmosphere of the famous school, showing Frank Richards at his best. Now, my chums of the POPULAR want to be thrilled, naturally, but they like stories which keep somewhere near to possibility. I am convinced in my own mind that the ever-increasing circle of readers of the POP is due to this fact.

The POPULAR cannot be beaten for school stories. Its weekly list of fiction treats embraces all the three schools—I

had better say four, since in this connection comes a reminder that we have the Backwoods School to consider. Next week the famous Frank Richards series is represented by a stirring yarn called "The Missing Heir." It is marked by just those qualities we know so well—grit, and a dash of the unflinching humour one looks for here.

The "bill" for next week also includes a story of Rookwood, "Saved By His Form Master," a really good narrative in which Jimmy Silver is met again, while, also, you will find a first-rate tale about St. Jim's, and a tip-top Supplement. "Billy Bunter's Weekly" goes ahead like our old friend the house afire, and the inspiring Editorials remain as distinguished a feature as ever they were. To my mind the Supplement reflects immense credit on Bunter, who is now—see the "Magnet"—stepping it in the boundless wilds. His four fat subs have worked like Trojans in the temporary absence of their famous chief, and have kept the "Weekly's" flag flying in fine style.

Of course, our serial, "The Rival Sportsmen," carries on in Mr. Victor Nelson's unerring style.

My advice is—Make sure of the POPULAR next week. It will be better than ever.

Meantime our companion papers, the "Magnet," "Gem," and "Boys' Friend" are going great guns. The

coloured covers of the two first are superb, so everyone is saying, and the photograph series unsurpassed. The coloured photos in the "Boys' Friend" are so special that I must give them an extra word.

By the way, as Christmas is so near, I may as well point out that a present which would please anybody—for it contains amusement for all, irrespective of age—is a copy of the "Holiday Annual."

NOTICES.

"Taffy" (Swansea).—"What would you do if there were a dozen Bunters at Greyfriars instead of two?"—Expire!

"East-End" (Silvertown).—"We want more of Fish."—Then I suggest you apply at Billingsgate.

T. Growell (Grimsby).—"Why is Johnny Bull always grunting? Is there anything wrong with his larynx?"—Why is Master Growell always Growell-ing?

"Curious" (Colchester).—"What does Mr. Frank Richards do in his spare time?"—Methinks he hasn't any!

"Gay Sport" (Gosport).—"I made a century the other day."—So did we. Shake!

"Perplexed" (Oldham).—"You never seem to get any older."—Rats! Billy Bunter is making us quite grey-headed!

Your Editor.

FIVE POUNDS FOR A FEW MINUTES' WORK!

Read this Puzzle Picture to-day and send in your solution right away!
No time to lose.

FIRST PRIZE £5 0 0; Second Prize £2 10 0;
TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS EACH.

What You Have to Do!

Here is a splendid Footer competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Chelsea Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears underneath, pin it to your solution, and post it to "CHELSEA" Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4., so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7th.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the event of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide all, or any of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Gem," "Magnet," and "Boys' Friend," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enter "CHELSEA" COMPETITION and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

P.....

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BE BUILDERS WITH

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ENGINEERING FOR BOYS

The reason why you can build such wonderful models as this Hydraulic Crane with Meccano is that every part is a real engineering piece—each perfectly designed and accurately made. You never come to the end of Meccano fun. All the models work just like the real thing, and the youngest boy can begin to build the moment he gets his Outfit home.

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£250 PRIZE COMPETITION

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HOW TO ENTER—READ THIS CAREFULLY.

Go to the nearest Toy or Sports Shop and buy "Success." With each game you will find full instructions. If you have any difficulty in obtaining, write to "Success," 54, Great Eastern Street, London, E.C. 2, enclosing postal order for the size you require.

here's an exciting game which you can all play and which every member of the family will enjoy—just what you have been looking for. Simple to understand, it is a succession of thrills and adventures from the first move to the last.

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Monthly

is all you pay for a superbly made Mead Gramophone with massive, highly polished solid oak cabinet; gigantic richly coloured horn; extra large silent running motor, unusually loud rubber insulated Sound Reproducer; brilliantly nickelled seamless tapered tone arm and all other up-to-date improvements. Sent packed free and carriage paid with 26 Tunes and 400 Silver Steel Needles on

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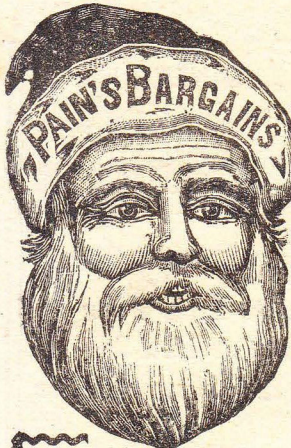
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Send 7 of these coupons with only 2/9 direct to the Fleet Pen Co., 119, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. You will receive by return a Splendid Fleet Made 14-ct. Gold Ribbed Fleet Fountain Pen, value 10/6 (Fine, Medium, or Broad Nib). If only 1 coupon is sent, the price is 3/9. 2d. being allowed for each extra coupon up to 6. (Pocket Clip, 4d.) Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. **Special New Offer—Your own name in gilt letters on either pen for 1/- extra.**

Lever Self-Filling Model, with Safety Cap, 2/- extra.

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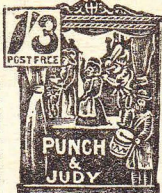


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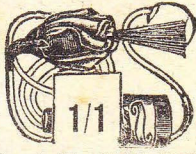
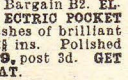
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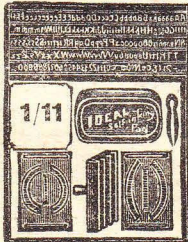
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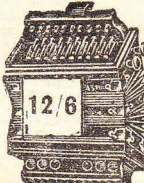
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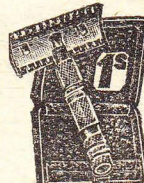
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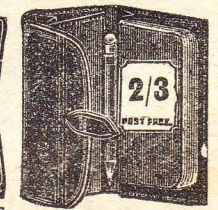
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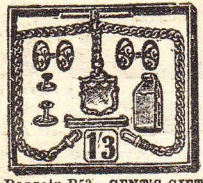
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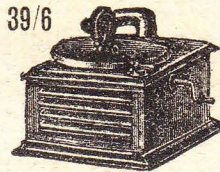
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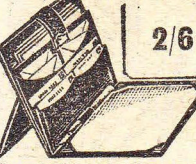
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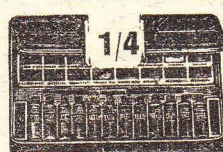
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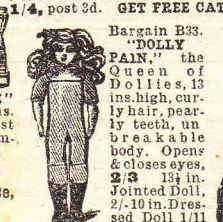
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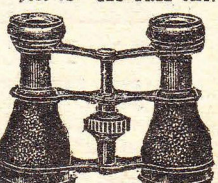
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