

4 LONG SCHOOL TALES & GREAT DICK TURPIN STORY  
IN THIS ISSUE!

Week Ending -  
March 24th,  
1923.

New  
Series.

No.  
218.

# The POPULAR 2<sup>D</sup>

money Prizes  
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Week!

The Story Book for Boys.

Twenty-eight  
Pages.

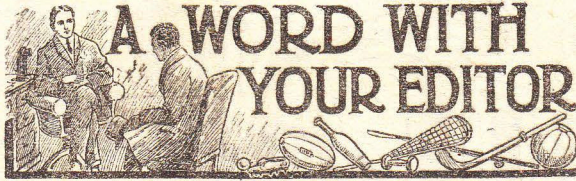


**BULKELEY LOSES HIS TEMPER BEFORE THE HEAD OF ROOKWOOD!**

*(A Tense moment in the long, complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. inside.)*



A Topping Batch of New Stories for next week's issue!



All the world's a stage. That's what William Wibley thinks, just like another William thought before the days of Wib. In next week's topping Greyfriars yarn we find Wibley as energetic as ever about giddy Thespian stunts. Of course, he lands himself in dire trouble, for certain seniors take grave exception to the proceedings of the actor. You will be interested in the account of the strained relations which ensue. Wibley emerges from the ashes of his temporary disgruntlement more of an actor than ever. His wheeze is terrific. See all about it next Tuesday and have the laugh of your life.

**TWO TRICKSTERS TRICKED!**

We know a bit too much about Kern, the wily Swiss, with the scanty allowance of honesty. You remember the yarn about the placers, and how uneasy the gold seekers became, and no wonder? Next week's story shows Frank Richards, Bob Lawless, Vere Beauclere, Chunky Rodgers—and the Chink, for we can't forget him, making their way back to Cedar Creek after their spell of wonderful adventures in the Wild West. How they come up against those beauties, Keller and Guten, makes good reading.

**"THE PREFECTS' REVOLT!"**

More rough times at Rookwood! This great yarn deals with the plight of Bulkeley. Bulkeley is an out and out popular captain, and there is plenty of angry feeling at the treatment meted out to him. The long and the short of it is that Bulkeley's co-prefects rise in a body at the injustice shown by the school authorities. You can carry discipline and subservience to the powers that be a bit too far. This fact is shown by the concerted action of Bulkeley's comrades. Mr. Owen Conquest has never revealed himself in better fettle.

**"THE HAUNTED STUDY!"**

'Ware Study Number 9! There is a ghost in it, making its shadowy self thoroughly at home. At least, that's the story, but everybody does not believe that the strange happenings in this particular room have a supernatural source. There are sceptics at St. Jim's, and it is a lucky thing that some of these mockers try to penetrate the engaging mystery of the Shell corridor. Martin Clifford presents a really first-class mystification next week, so please don't miss it.

**OUR FEASTING NUMBER.**

Gargantua, and a few other fellows who lived in the back ages were all good, tried men—at a feed. But these celebrities would have to cry off when a mammoth trencherman like Bunter toddled on to the scene. The coming number of Bunter's "Weekly" is a perfect prodigy. Personality in journalism is what the public wants. Bunter throws the whole weight of himself into his job. It may be eating, or it may be a frenzied Friday night making up the pages of his startling and pugnacious little periodical. Next week's Supplement shows Bunter and his merry men to the life. It is, if you will permit me to say it, a sort of gastronomic compendium, a tribute in its way to the tuckshop, that palladium of the Empire. King Henry the Fourth of France was heard to declare at a small supper party that nothing so enlightened the mind as eating. There you have the reason limpid as the silvery waters of the Thames, for the gigantic brain power of the porpoise. 'Nuff said!

**"STAND AND DELIVER!"**

Those good old days in Merry England want some heating. Read of them, and about Dick Turpin, in next week's top-hole instalment of our great serial.

**PHOTOGRAPHS AND COMPETITIONS.**

Another record has been created by our magnificent series of Glossy Sporting Photographs—the best ever. Of course next Tuesday's Competition is well up to form. It will fascinate you.

**MAGNIFICENT FREE PHOTOGRAPHS.**

It would be a shame to overlook the record opportunity now being offered by the "Boys' Friend" and the "Gem" to all readers who are keen in sport, and who want likenesses of famous sportsmen. The "Boys' Friend" is giving away splendid, free, real hand-coloured photos of celebrated footballers, while the "Gem" is making a grand speciality of free autographed portraits of players who have made their mark on the footer field. Don't miss these treats!

Your Editor.

**WHAT IS THE SOLUTION—?**

A Simple Football Competition. Big Money Prizes.

FIRST PRIZE £5 0 0: Second Prize £2 10 0:  
TEN PRIZES OF FIVE SHILLINGS EACH.

The puzzle grid contains the following words and numbers:

- Row 1: plAed, LU, 2240 LBS, 72 months
- Row 2: 4, 3, RE, LUT, WA, WA, ED., The
- Row 3: TOWN, PUT, the, 3, RE, ST
- Row 4: PROF, Si, AL, 11, T, the, M, S, of, H, 3/5/10
- Row 5: EVER, NO, N, THE, My STIPEND is £12 a month, of, Ech
- Row 6: WA, WA, s/d 2/6, 7 DAYS, DU, the, p, 4 years
- Row 7: LUT, HAS, E, NE, The stars were shining RADIANTLY

**What You Have To Do.**

Here is a splendid new competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Luton 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 below, pin it to your solution, and post it to "Luton" Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, March 29th, 1925.

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 the value of 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 "Boys' Friend," "Magnet," and "Gem," and readers of these journals are invited to compete.

I enter "Luton" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

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**THE FALL OF BULKELEY!**

News of the fall of the popular skipper of Rookwood shocks the school from the Sixth to the Second! What had happened in the Head's study?

**A SENSATIONAL SCHOOL TALE!**



# The Captain's Disgrace!

The Most Thrilling and Dramatic Story of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, ever written.

By **OWEN CONQUEST.**

(Author of the famous Stories of Rookwood now appearing in our Topping Companion Paper the "Boys' Friend.")

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
**Rough on Raby!**

**L**OOK out, Carthew!"  
"Keep off the grass!"  
"Clear out!"  
Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth, shouted, and several other juniors shouted in wrathful tones. But Carthew of the Sixth did not heed. Jimmy Silver & Co. were at cricket practice on Little Side at Rookwood. Raby was at the wicket, and Arthur Edward Lovell was bowling to him. And Carthew, the bully of the Sixth, calmly walked across the pitch. Carthew was a Sixth-Former and a prefect, and a very important person—in his own estimation, at least. But he certainly had no right to walk into junior cricket in this way, and a dozen emphatic voices told him so.

Carthew glanced at Jimmy Silver as he shouted, but that was all. He walked on. He was taking a short cut. Apparently, the bully of the Sixth supposed that junior cricket would stop while he took his short cut. It was very like Carthew!

The junior cricketers thought differently. George Raby, at the wicket, looked at him, and his eyes gleamed. Lovell was delivering the ball. Raby played the ball exactly as he would have done if Carthew had not dawned upon the horizon at all.

He did not want the leather to hit Carthew, but he did not care twopenny whether it hit him or not. That was Carthew's look-out.

In point of fact, it did hit him. The ball, hot from the bat, whizzed right at the Sixth-Former as he strolled carelessly across the pitch.

Even then, a quick movement would have saved him. But it did not even occur to Carthew that a junior batsman would venture to take the risk of hitting a ball in his direction.

He strolled on unregarding. Crack!

Then Carthew took notice! He really had no choice about the matter then, for the ball smote him upon the shoulder with a terrific smite, and Carthew staggered.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Newcome. "He's got it!"

"Well stopped, Carthew!" shouted Morn-fington.

Carthew gave a gasp of pain—he was hurt. The ball rolled at his feet, and he clasped his shoulder and glared round at the juniors. "Who threw that ball?" he shouted.

"Nobody threw it," answered Jimmy Silver. "You got in the way, Carthew. I warned you."

"Your own look-out," said Raby.

Carthew compressed his lips, irritated as much by the grinning of the juniors as by the pain in his shoulder.

"Send that ball back, Carthew, will you?" called out Lovell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carthew did not trouble about returning the ball. He ran along to Raby's wicket, his eyes glittering.

"You cheeky young rascal!" he panted.

"Here, hands off!" exclaimed Raby warmly. "It was your own fault. Don't you know better than to walk across a pitch like that? Oh, my hat!"

Carthew grasped the batsman by the collar. "Yaroo! Let go!" roared Raby. "I'll jolly well give you my bat—"

The prefect grasped the bat and twisted it away. Then he jerked up a stump from the wicket.

Whack, whack!

"Yoop! Help! Yaroo! Rescue!" howled Raby.

With the Sixth-Former's grasp on his collar and the stump attacking him in the rear, George Raby wriggled and danced and yelled. Carthew laid on the stump with great energy. "Rescue!" shouted Jimmy Silver.

There was a rush of the Fourth-Formers to intervene. Prefect or not, Mark Carthew had to be stopped.

Fortunately, before the juniors could lay hands on the angry prefect, Bulkeley's commanding voice was heard. The captain of Rookwood came striding over from Big Side, whence he had witnessed the incident.

"Stop that, Carthew!"

"Hold on, you fellows!" murmured Jimmy Silver, as Bulkeley strode upon the scene with a knitted brow.

The juniors paused. But Carthew, too enraged to care even for the head prefect, laid on the stump, and Raby roared again.

Bulkeley caught the prefect by the shoulder and swung him back. Carthew's next swipe with the stump missed Raby.

He turned a passionate face on Bulkeley. "Let go, you fool!" he shouted.

"Let go that kid!" was Bulkeley's answer. "I won't! I—"

"I think you're forgetting yourself, Carthew," said Bulkeley quietly. "Let go Raby at once!"

"Let go, you cad!" shouted Lovell.

"Silence, Lovell!" rapped out the captain of Rookwood. "Take fifty lines for calling a prefect names."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Lovell. "I—I say—"

"Silence! Carthew, release Raby's collar at once!" said Bulkeley, in tones that were quiet, but so full of determination that the bully of the Sixth obeyed him.

Raby jumped away as soon as he was released, gasping for breath.

Bulkeley let go Carthew's shoulder then. It had very nearly come to a collision between the captain of Rookwood and the Sixth Form bully, and it was fortunate for Carthew that he had yielded in time.

"You—you—you saw what that young scoundrel did?" panted Carthew.

"It was your own fault."

"What?"

"You'd no right to interrupt the cricket. Get off the junior ground at once," answered Bulkeley.

Carthew gritted his teeth.

"So you're backing up those cheeky young rascals, Bulkeley!" he shouted. "Well, I can tell you—"

"That will do," said the Rookwood captain curly. "Clear off, Carthew; you've said quite enough."

Carthew gave him a bitter look, and tramped off the field. Bulkeley followed him.

"Good old Bulkeley!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Bravo!"

"What has the silly ass given me lines for, I'd like to know?" grunted Arthur Edward Lovell. "I only called Carthew a cad! Bulkeley knows he's a cad."

"He is—he are!" grinned Jimmy Silver. "But these painful truths mustn't be told to prefects by juniors, old top. Raby, old fellow—"

"Yow-ow-ow!" came from Raby.

"Hurt?" asked Jimmy.

"Yow-ow! Do you think a chap can be lathered with a cricket-stump without being hurt?" howled Raby. "Wow-wow-wow! I'll make that bully squirm for this! Wow-wow!"

"Batting again?" asked Conroy.

"Wow! No! Wow!"

"Go and sit down for a bit, old son," said Jimmy Silver.

"Oh dear! I'm not going to sit down for a bit—not for a good bit!" roared Raby. "Wow-wow!"

The unfortunate batsman limped away, still yowling and wowing, and vowing vengeance on Carthew. And the cricket practice went on, minus George Raby—and uninterrupted by Carthew of the Sixth.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**  
**A Roland for an Oliver.**

**Y**OW-WOW-WOW!"

Putty of the Fourth looked into the end study in the Fourth Form passage on the Classical side.

Putty of the Fourth—otherwise Teddy Grace—looked sympathetic, though he was smiling a little.

"Yow! Ow! Woop!"

Raby was moving restlessly about in his study.

He had come in from the cricket-field, but he was not feeling inclined to sit down—far from it.

Carthew had laid on the stump not wisely but too well.

The junior glanced round as Putty of the Fourth appeared in the doorway glumly.

"Feeling bad?" asked Putty.

"Ow! Yes!"

"Sorry, old chap!"

"Thanks!" grunted Raby. "Much obliged

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though your sorrow won't help me much. Yow-ow-ow! Why aren't you at cricket?"

"I've done some bowling," answered Teddy Grace. "I came in to speak to you."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You see—"

"Wow! I'm not good company at present, thanks!" grunted Raby. "Yow! You'd better get back to the cricket. M-m-m-m-m—yow!"

"I was thinking of Carthew—"

"Hang Carthew!"

"Can't be done—there's a law against hanging prefects—"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"But there are other ways of treating him," pursued Putty. "More ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream. Carthew's out at present—"

"Wow!"

"But he will be coming in to tea before very long—"

"Bother Carthew!" roared Raby. "You ass, what are you hurbling about Carthew for? Wow-wow!"

Putty smiled.

"I thought you might like to know," he replied. "You see, Carthew has been asking for trouble, and there's no reason why he shouldn't get it. There's a picture-nail over the door of his study—"

"Bother his study! Wow!"

"Suppose you tied a string to it—"

"Wow!"

"And the other end of the string to a pail—"

"Oh!"

"It would balance the pail nicely on the top of his door, which you could leave ajar!" exclaimed Putty.

Raby stared.

"And a mixture of soot and ink in the pail would make a pleasant surprise for Carthew, wouldn't it?" continued Putty.

Raby grinned.

"That's what I dropped in to remark," said the new junior. "A word to the wise, you know. There's an old tin pail in the box-room, and I believe there's soot in the chimney, and ink can be collected up from the studies—the fellows won't mind, if it's in a good cause—"

Raby laughed.

"There, you're better already!" said Putty encouragingly. "I'll help you, if you like. Always pleased to do anything to oblige a prefect, like a good fag, you know. What do you say, my pippin?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Yes, but besides that?" grinned Putty.

"Yow! It's a jolly good idea. But you'd better not help," said Raby. "You're a bit too well known as a practical joker. Carthew is sure to think of you when he gets it on his napper. You'd better keep in the public eye and be able to prove an alibi."

"Oh, I'll chance it!" said Putty carelessly. "Besides, you can't do it alone; the pail has got to be fixed up. Let's get a move on, and have it ready for Carthew when he comes in."

"All right."

Raby almost forgot the pain of the stumping as he set to work to help Putty of the Fourth in preparing that agreeable little surprise for Carthew.

Putty hurried to the box-room for the old pail, and Raby scraped down soot from the chimney.

In a very short time the pail was nearly full of a horrid mixture, soot predominating, mixed with plenty of ink of different hues, and some gum to give it consistency.

"We shall have to be jolly wary getting this to Carthew's quarters," said Raby, grinning.

"All serene, I think—everybody's out of doors!" answered Putty. "But I'll go ahead and scout. You follow with the pail, and if I whistle, get it out of sight."

"Right-ho!"

Putty of the Fourth sauntered cheerily downstairs with his hands in his pockets and a genial smile on his face.

George Raby followed more cautiously with the pail.

But there was no alarm.

In the bright spring afternoon nearly everyone was out of doors, and the pail was conveyed safely and unseen to Carthew's study in the Sixth Form quarters.

The study was unoccupied at present. Putty, glancing from the window, spotted Carthew at a distance, in conversation with Knowles, of the Modern side.

"All serene!" he said. "There's Carthew, and he's walking towards Mr. Manders' House. He's going in with Knowles, I expect. Lots of time."

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House. He's going in with Knowles, I expect. Lots of time."

"Good!" said Raby.

The fixing up of the booby-trap was done in a leisurely and careful manner. Putty seemed to have had a good deal of experience in this line, as Raby noticed. It was, in fact, as much Putty's irrepresible propensity to practical joking as anything else that had led him to espouse Raby's cause in this way.

Putty was too good-natured to play such a trick upon an undeserving victim; but probably he had not been displeased to find a victim who deserved it. And there was no doubt that Carthew of the Sixth deserved it.

The door was placed a little ajar, with Raby holding it from the outside—keeping a wary eye open on the passage.

Putty mounted on a chair inside.

"How are you going to get out afterwards, though?" asked Raby.

"That's all right; I can drop out of the window."

"You might be spotted—"

"It's all right, I tell you. Hold the door still," answered Putty. "Dodge if anybody comes along; I can look after myself. The window's open."

"It seems to me you're taking all the risk!" growled Raby.

"That's all serene!"

Putty was working quickly as he talked.

A cord was fastened to the bottom of the tin pail securely. The other end of the cord was secured to the nail over the door.

The pail rested on top of the door, against the wall above, safely enough—so long as the door was not moved. When the door moved, the pail would pitch over, and hang upside-down on the cord. And whoever happened to be underneath it was certain to meet with the surprise of his life.

Putty jumped down, and put the chair back in its place.

"All right—cut off, Raby!" he said.

The door was ajar, but the space was too narrow for Putty to pass. He crossed to the window, and, after a cautious glance, dropped lightly out from the sill, and sauntered away with an air of careless unconcern—as if he had done anything but drop from a prefect's study window!

George Raby, in the corridor, chuckled as he turned away. His chuckle ceased suddenly, however, as Neville of the Sixth came round the corner.

Neville glanced at him as he came along to his study, and Raby passed him with all the unconcern he could assume. The prefect took no special notice of him—but Raby wondered whether Neville would remember having seen him there—later!

But it was no use thinking of that now. The booby-trap was fixed—and waiting for Mark Carthew, and Raby hoped for the best.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Wrong Man.

"GURRRRRGGHH! Gurrgh!"

Wild and weird and woeful sounds rang along the Sixth Form passage.

"Yow-ow! Ooooh! Grllllh! Mmmmm!"

"What the dickens—"

"Bulkeley—"

"Great Scott!"

Doors opened on all sides, and there was a chorus of startled voices. Most of the Classical Sixth were at tea, or coming in to tea. In a minute or less the corridor was crowded with astonished seniors.

In the doorway of Carthew's study was a shocking spectacle.

A figure staggered there—the lower part recognisable as belonging to Bulkeley of the Sixth—the upper part utterly unrecognisable. Soot and ink drenched the unfortunate captain of Rookwood.

Over the doorway an up-ended pail swung to a cord—driving. The last drops of the mixture dropped out on the floor.

But the bulk of it had found a resting-place, at one fell swoop, upon the head and shoulders of the captain of Rookwood.

Bulkeley had tapped on the door, and pushed it open quite unsuspectingly. And then the catastrophe had occurred with lightning swiftness.

Putty had laid that booby-trap well, and it worked like a charm—though not exactly according to programme. There was nothing wrong with the booby-trap; it was the victim that happened to be the wrong one. That was a small detail that the most careful of practical jokers could not possibly have foreseen. But it was rather serious.

Bulkeley staggered, spluttering, gasping, and spluttering wildly, hardly knowing what had happened to him.

There was soot in his hair, down his neck, on his face, in his eyes and his nose; and not only soot but a thick mixture of gum and ink—a horrid mixture that clung and stuck and smelt.

Extraordinary sounds came from Bulkeley as he staggered in the doorway and clawed at the mixture.

Neville was the first to reach the spot. He gazed in horror at the captain of Rookwood.

"Bulkeley!" he gasped. "Is—is—is it you, old chap?"

"Grooh! Oooooooh!"

"What—wha-at—oh crumbs!"

"Yurrrrrgggh!"

"It's a booby-trap!" gasped Jones major.

"Oh, my hat! A—a—a booby-trap over Carthew's door—"

"Yooooooh!"

"Meant for Carthew!" murmured Lonsdale.

"Bulkeley—"

"Gurrrrrrrrrgh!"

Bulkeley gazed at his eyes and nose, spluttering, and almost weeping with rage. Bulkeley's good temper was generally to be relied upon; but the best of tempers would have failed at such a moment.

The Sixth-Formers stared at him, backing away a little. They could not help him; and they were rather unwilling to come in contact with him just then. The mixture did not look inviting.

"Hallo! What the thunder—!" Carthew of the Sixth came striding along the passage, and he fairly blinked at the weird figure in his doorway. "What on earth— Bulkeley— Oh, my hat!"

Carthew had returned five minutes too late for the booby-trap.

"Gurrrrrrrrrgh!"

"It's a b-b-booby-trap!" said Jones major helplessly.

Carthew grinned.

"In my study, and Bulkeley's got it!" he said. "My hat! I say, I'm awfully sorry, Bulkeley!" His voice did not sound very sorrowful. "This is hard lines—very hard lines indeed!"

"Grooh! Grooh! Ow! Yow! Oh!" gasped Bulkeley. "Who—who did this? I'll skin him! I—I—I Ooooooh! Pah! Ow!"

"I fancy I can guess who did it," said Carthew. "That young rascal Raby, of course, because I licked him for his cheek. It's clear enough that it was intended for me—"

"Ooooh!" Bulkeley got his vision clear at last, and blinked at Carthew. "I came to your study, Carthew, to speak to you about that— Grooh! I—I— Gurrrrrrgh!"

"And you got the booby-trap!" grinned Carthew. "Much obliged! I suppose I should have got it if you hadn't!"

"Ooooooh!"

"Better get along to a bath-room, old chap," murmured Neville.

"It was Raby of the Fourth right enough," said Carthew maliciously. "Shall I look for him and give him a licking, Bulkeley?"

It was quite an enjoyable situation to the bully of the Sixth. He thought this might be a lesson to Bulkeley about backing up cheeky juniors against the Sixth. He charitably hoped so, at all events.

Bulkeley dabbed at his mouth with his handkerchief breathlessly.

"You'll let him alone!" he snapped.

"What? After what he's done?" smiled Carthew. "You look an awful sight, Bulkeley! It will take you hours to get the muck out of your hair! This really isn't the way the captain of the school ought to be treated, Raby—"

"You're no proof that it was Raby!" growled Bulkeley. "If it was I'll skin him! But—"

"By gad! I remember seeing Raby hanging about here some time back!" exclaimed Neville. "Now I think of it—"

"I'll see him later, then, if you saw him!" gasped Bulkeley, evidently attaching more importance to Neville's words than to Carthew's. "You're not to touch the kid till I've inquired, Carthew. I can deal with him."

Carthew shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, just as you like!" he answered. "If I'd got that little lot I'd have nearly slaughtered him, I know that! You've got it, and you're welcome to it!"

And Carthew walked away smiling, in great good-humour. He returned at once to Mr. Manders' House to relate this happy

George Bulkeley is in Disgrace, but the Prefects Stand by Him!



happening to his pal Knowles, amid many chortles.

It was not a happy happening from the Rookwood captain's point of view, however. George Bulkeley staggered away to a bathroom, still gasping and spluttering.

Neville went with him to help him scrub. There was quite a lot of scrubbing required. Steaming hot water, plenty of soap, and an unbrining scrubbing-brush occupied Bulkeley's attention for quite a long time.

Neville helped him in sympathetic silence. Bulkeley's temper was at boiling-point, and it was not a time for conversation. Indeed, Bulkeley snapped even at Neville once or twice, so sore and savage was he—which Neville took as a good pal should at such a time, in diplomatic silence.

Soot and ink were not easily removed; and by the time the captain of Rookwood was clean he was tired and he was sore; his face and head felt as if they had been freshly boiled. His complexion was crimson and his eyes had a dangerous glitter in them.

That look in Bulkeley's eyes boded ill to the offender. Neville brought him a change of clothes, which were very much needed. His attire was drenched with ink.

When Bulkeley emerged, newly swept and garnished, so to speak, the look in his face was so menacing that Neville ventured upon a remark at last.

"It's not certain that it was Raby, old chap—"

"You say you saw him there?"

"Yes; but—"

"I'm going to be just, I hope," said Bulkeley. "If it wasn't Raby, Raby won't be punished. I don't suppose you think I'm a bully, Neville, ready to land out at the nearest fag?"

"Of course not, old chap. But—"

"Well, tell Raby to come to my study."

"I meant it wasn't intended for you, Bulkeley—"

"I got it!"

"It was meant for Carthew—"

"For a Sixth Form prefect?" said Bulkeley.

"Ye-es! But—"

"I'm bound to support Carthew, even if I don't like him, Neville. I'm bound to act just the same as if this trick was played on any other prefect—and, as it happened, it was played on me instead of Carthew. But you needn't be afraid I'm going to adopt Carthew's methods. I sha'n't touch Raby unless it's clearly proved that he did it."

Neville said no more, Bulkeley certainly was not likely to punish any junior without proof, however enraged he might be. But his look showed that if proof was forthcoming the punishment in this instance would be severely drastic.

The captain of Rookwood strode away to his study with knitted brows, and his chum went in search of Raby of the Fourth.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Bulkeley Loses his Temper.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. were at tea in the end study.

It was rather a desultory tea. For once the healthy appetites of the Fistical Four were impaired.

The disaster that had happened was utterly disconcerting. It could not possibly have been foreseen; but that did not make the matter any better.

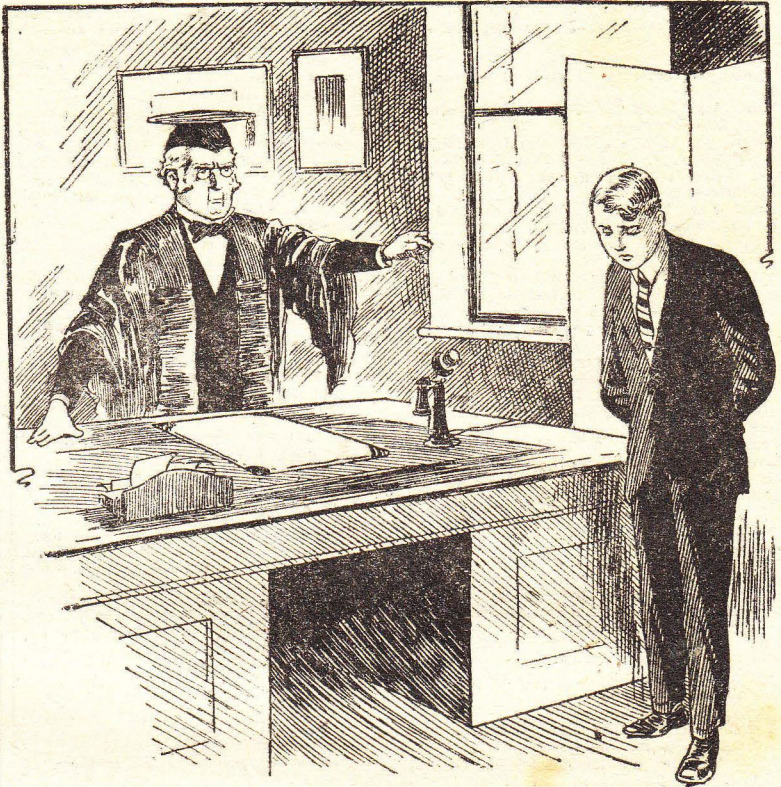
Raby was quite unhappy. The punishment intended for Carthew had fallen upon George Bulkeley, whom the juniors liked and respected, and at a time when, as appeared from Tubby Muffin's chatter, Bulkeley had been going to "slang" the bully on Raby's account.

That was the unkindest cut of all—that Bulkeley had received the food of mixture—Raby's mixture—when it was on Raby's own account that he was paying that visit to Carthew's study.

Raby hardly touched his tea. He was feeling quite miserable, and not by any means solely because of his apprehensions of what was to follow.

But he had his apprehensions, too. The captain of the school was far too important a personage to be treated like this without a terrific "row" following. If Carthew had got it the matter might have been serious. But Bulkeley had got it, and it was almost time for the skies to fall.

"It's rotten!" said Raby, for the tenth time at least. "Rotten! Who could have guessed Bulkeley would get it? It's rotten!"



There was a moment or two of silence in the room. The Head's firm gaze was fixed upon Bulkeley's crimson face. "This is a very disconcerting discovery," said the Head at last. "From this moment you are not a prefect. I cannot allow you to exercise any authority at Rookwood." (See Chapter 6.)

"Beastly!" said Jimmy Silver. "I wish you hadn't thought of the thing at all, by Jove! It was rather a rotten idea, anyway!"

"Well, I didn't think of it! It was that ass Putty suggested it," said Raby. "But he meant well, the silly idiot!"

"I've a jolly good mind to punch his head, whether he meant well or not!" growled Lovell. "He's always playing monkey tricks!"

"No, that's not quite fair," said Raby loyally. "Putty was backing me up, and he meant well. Goodness knows I wish he hadn't! But I was glad of the suggestion, and he helped me; in fact, did nearly the whole bizney, and I helped him. Of course, I've got to stand the racket. No need for Putty to be dragged into it."

Raby's chums assented to that. But they were anxious for Raby.

"I wonder we don't hear from Bulkeley," said Raby uneasily. "Of course, they must know I did it. Neville saw me there, and Tubby's said that he heard Neville tell Bulkeley so. So they must know."

"Bulkeley's cleaning himself, I suppose!" groaned Jimmy Silver. "Scarf your egg, Raby; you've hardly touched it!"

"I don't feel hungry."

"Better stoke up; it'll help you to stand what's to come," advised Newcome.

Raby grinned faintly, and put his spoon into his egg. Newcome's advice was good, after all.

"Hallo, here comes somebody!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Neville of the Sixth looked into the end study with a grim brow. The Fistical Four rose to their feet in silence.

"Come with me, Raby!" said the prefect. "Yes, Neville," answered the junior meekly.

"What's Raby wanted for?" asked Arthur Edward Lovell.

"On suspicion of fixing up a booby-trap in Carthew's study," answered Neville grimly. "Nothing to be afraid of if you didn't do it, Raby."

"Can we come, too?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"If you had a hand in it, you'd better come."

"They hadn't," said Raby. "They didn't even know what I was doing—they were at cricket, Neville."

Neville gave him a rather curious glance. There certainly was no sign of prevarication about Raby, serious as the matter was.

"You're admitting it, Raby," he said quietly.

"I'm not going to deny it," answered Raby. "But these chaps knew nothing at all about it till I told them afterwards."

"Then they're not wanted."

Raby followed the prefect from the study, leaving his chums with glum faces. Willingly enough would Jimmy Silver & Co. have accompanied him and shared his punishment, if that had been possible. But it was not possible.

Neville did not speak on the way to the Sixth Form quarters. Neither did the hapless junior. But near Bulkeley's door the prefect stopped, and, after a moment's hesitation, spoke kindly enough to the junior.

"Bulkeley's very much exasperated, Raby," he said. "Be careful how you speak to him. For your own sake, no cheek!"

"I'm not going to cheek him, Neville. Goodness knows I'm sorry enough that he got it! I'd rather have got it myself!"

Neville nodded. "Go in!" he said.

Raby went into the captain's study, and Neville returned to his own room with a thoughtful brow.

Bulkeley was standing by his table, with a look on his face that startled the junior a little. He had never seen the captain of Rookwood look quite like that before.

The Sixth-Former's eyes glittered as they were fixed on Raby. The latter came in rather timidly.

"I—I— You wanted me to come here, Bulkeley?" he stammered.

"Yes. You know what's happened, Raby?" "I—I know."



"Did you fix up that booby-trap in Carthew's study?" rapped out the captain of Rookwood.

"Yes."  
The answer came fearlessly and unhesitatingly.

"Oh! You admit it?" exclaimed Bulkeley, rather taken aback.

"Well, you know I did it, and I shouldn't tell lies about it, anyway," answered Raby. "You know I never meant it for you, Bulkeley—"

"That's not the point! You meant it for a prefect of the Sixth Form!"

"I meant it for Carthew, because he's a bully—"

"That's enough! You dared to play such a trick on a Sixth Form prefect, and landed it on the captain of the school by mistake. That's the best defence you can make?"

"I—I'm sorry—"

"I dare say you're sorry now that you laid that trap!" said Bulkeley grimly.

"I'm sorry you got it, I mean."

"Oh, you're not sorry you played the trick, then?"

"No, I'm not!" answered Raby sturdily. "Carthew asked for it, and I jolly well wish he'd got it!"

Bulkeley compressed his lips.

"You know he's a bully," said Raby, as the captain of Rookwood picked up his cane. "You know yourself—"

"Did you think I should allow you to insult a Sixth Form prefect because you think I am not on the best of terms with him personally?" exclaimed Bulkeley angrily. "That was it, I suppose?"

"No, it wasn't. I never thought—"

"You had better learn to think—I'll help you!" said the captain of Rookwood grimly. "But before I lick you—"

"Oh, I know you're going to lick me," said Raby. "I don't think you ought to, as it wasn't meant for you. But—"

"That will do. Who helped you fix up the booby-trap?"

No answer.

"It doesn't look as if you could have done it alone," said Bulkeley. "One of your study-mates, or all of them—"

"No."

"But there was someone?"

Silence.

"Mind," said the captain of Rookwood, between his set teeth, "I'm going to get to the bottom of this, Raby. Someone helped you to fix up the trap, and he's as guilty as you—perhaps more so. I order you to give me his name!"

Silence.

"That's admitting that there was another fag concerned in it. I want to know who it was. Will you tell me?"

"No, I won't!" said Raby desperately. "It's not like you to ask me to, either. Carthew might, but you—"

"You refuse to answer me?"

Raby drew a deep breath.

"Yes," he said.

Bulkeley's grasp closed more tightly on the cane.

"You understand that this is a serious matter, I suppose?" he said savagely. "You laid a trap for Carthew, and it fell on me. It might have fallen on a master—on the Head himself, if he'd gone to the study—"

"Oh!" gasped Raby, dismayed at the bare idea.

"Whoever was concerned in it is going to be punished—hard. I want the name of the fellow that helped you."

No reply.

"Hold out your hand, then!"

Raby obeyed in silence.

Swish!

"Now the other hand!"

Swish!

Raby uttered a cry of pain.

It was not at all like "old Bulkeley" to lay the cane on like this, and he would not have done so if he had been cooler. But he was not cool now.

"Will you answer me now, Raby?"

"No, I won't!" panted the junior. "I'm not a sneak, and I'll be cut into pieces first, so there!"

"Hold out your hand again, then!" exclaimed Bulkeley angrily.

Raby's hand came out, quivering, but as the cane lashed down, involuntarily, the junior snatched his hand back. His palm

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was burning with the first hard cut, and flesh and blood would not stand another.

The cane, meeting with no resistance, lashed down, and struck Bulkeley's own leg with a sounding lash.

"Oh!" gasped Raby.

He had acted without thinking, but to Bulkeley's angry mind it looked like an intentional trick, and he quite lost his temper. He made an angry stride towards the junior, and grasped him by the collar with his left hand. Then she can come into play across Raby's back.

Lash, lash, lash!

Raby yelled and struggled, surprised and furious by a licking of this kind.

"Let me go! Stop it! Yarcoooh! Oh, oh, oh! You bully— Oh!"

Lash, lash!

"Bulkeley!"

The door opened.

#### THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

#### The Fall of the Mighty!

"BULKELEY!"

It was a grim, surprised, shocked voice in the doorway.

Dr. Chisholm, the Head of Rookwood, stood in the doorway, gazing in on the scene with stern disapproval.

Bulkeley's arm dropped to his side. His face flushed scarlet. Raby staggered away as the captain of Rookwood released him, and leaned heavily on the table, panting and groaning.

There was a moment of grim silence on the Head's part, and then he rustled into the study. Bulkeley stood rooted to the floor. His action, though unusually harsh, had not been unjustified; but it was pretty clear that the Head had drawn the worst possible impression from what he had seen.

"Bulkeley," said Dr. Chisholm very quietly,

"place that cane on the table!"

Bulkeley obeyed without a word.

"I came here," said the Head, in the same

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quiet, severe tone, "to speak with you, Bulkeley, on certain matters connected with your duty as head prefect of Rookwood School. Until this moment, Bulkeley, I have had every confidence in you. I did not expect, as I came to your study, to hear the cries of a junior boy subjected to what I can only call brutal usage."

"Dr. Chisholm!" stammered Bulkeley.

"Is that the manner, Bulkeley, in which a boy of the Fourth Form should be punished?" exclaimed the Head angrily.

"I—I—"

"You appear to have lost control of your temper, Bulkeley. I should not have appointed you head prefect of Rookwood if I had not supposed that you had proper command of your temper."

Bulkeley's eyes flashed. In his present mood he was not much inclined to accept a rating even from the Head.

"If you are not satisfied, sir, with the way I perform my duties—" he began hotly.

Dr. Chisholm raised his hand.

"Calm yourself, Bulkeley, please! That is not the way to address your headmaster!"

The captain of Rookwood bit his lip hard. Raby, leaning on the table, suppressed his sounds of woe. He was hurt—severely hurt—but he tried hard to keep silent. For, strange as it might seem, the junior who had just been thrashed by Bulkeley was concerned for Bulkeley himself now that the Head was "down" on him.

Bulkeley was too good-hearted a fellow in the main for one licking, however harsh, to change the junior's feelings towards him. Raby was sorry that the Head had come in, lucky as it had been for him personally.

Bulkeley suppressed the angry words that rose to his lips. As a matter of fact, the Head's entrance had recalled him to himself,

and he was already ashamed of the violence he had displayed.

"A prefect," continued the Head severely, "is empowered to administer a caning, if needed, but certainly not to thrash any boy in such a brutal manner, Bulkeley."

"You don't know what's happened, sir!" gasped Bulkeley.

"Whatever may have happened, Bulkeley, does not alter the fact that you have exceeded your authority, and acted in a brutal manner. If this boy's fault was so serious that a caning would not meet the case, you should have reported him to me, and I should have considered whether to administer a flogging. You are perfectly well aware of that."

Bulkeley was silent.

He was aware of it, and he knew that he was in the wrong. But this humiliation in the presence of the junior he had punished was too bitter.

"I—I—" Raby gasped. "It—it's all right, sir, I—"

Dr. Chisholm glanced at the junior.

"Did you speak, Raby?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Raby. "I—I don't mind, sir, it—it's all right. Bulkeley thought I was checking him, sir. I didn't mean to. I—I don't mind a licking, sir—"

Raby's voice died away in a tremulous murmur as a sense of his audacity in thus daring to address the Head rushed upon him.

"This boy, apparently, wishes to speak in your favour, Bulkeley, in spite of the way you have used him," said the Head. "Yet you wish me to believe that he has committed so serious a fault as to justify such punishment as you were inflicting."

Bulkeley looked dogged.

"You don't know the circumstances, sir," he muttered.

You are at liberty to explain the circumstances to me, and then I shall judge whether I can continue to repose confidence in you," said the Head sternly.

Raby was silent in dismay. His well-intentioned intervention had certainly done Bulkeley no good.

The silence that followed the Head's remark was broken by a tap on the half-open door, and Teddy Grace looked into the study.

"M-m-may I come in?" stammered Putty of the Fourth.

"Bulkeley is engaged at present, Grace."

"But—but it's about that, sir!" stammered Putty.

"I—I want to own up. It—it wasn't Raby—not all Raby, anyhow."

The Head's expression grew grimmer.

"You may come in, Grace," he said.

Putty came in, looking from one face to another in surprise and dismay. He had been to the end study, and learned that Raby had gone to "face the music," and he had loyally come along to own up and take his share. Half the punishment, at least, was due to him, and he was prepared to take it. He had not expected to find Dr. Chisholm there.

"Now, kindly acquaint me with what has happened, Bulkeley," said the Head coldly. "This boy, Grace, appears to be concerned in it."

Bulkeley compressed his lips.

"I was caught in a booby-trap," he said.

"Raby had fixed it up for another prefect. That is all."

"You admit this, Raby?"

"Yes, sir," said Raby at once.

"And you, Grace?"

"I was in it, too, sir," said Putty. "It was my idea, in fact. I'm—I'm ready to take my share of the blame. We did it together."

"That is very proper, Grace. Were you aware that Grace was concerned in the affair, Bulkeley?"

"No, sir," muttered Bulkeley.

"You were punishing Raby in an outrageous manner, without even ascertaining that he was not the only person concerned in the offence!" exclaimed the Head.

"I—I did not know—"

"You did not know? It was your duty to know! It was not even difficult to do your duty in this case, as the boy was ready to admit his share in the transaction, and has indeed come here of his own accord to confess."

Bulkeley was silent.

He had been hasty, and he had been violent—he had, in fact, for once allowed his temper to get the better of him. There was little to be said. It was the first time; but the Head, naturally, did not know that. So far as he knew, this was simply the first

**Though He Has Fallen From His High Estate, Bulkeley Still Has Many Friends to Help Him!**



time that he had discovered Bulkeley acting harshly and unjustly, which was quite a different matter.

"Have you anything to say, Bulkeley?" asked the Head in an ominous tone.

The captain of Rookwood did not speak, and the two juniors exchanged a glance of dismay. "Old Bulkeley" was evidently in for it.

The Head turned to them.

"You boys may go!" he said.

Slowly and reluctantly, Raby and Putty left the study. They were well aware that the "chopper" was to come down on Bulkeley as soon as they were gone. They wondered breathlessly what was going to happen as the door closed.

There was a moment or two of silence in the room after the juniors had gone. The Head's firm gaze was fixed upon Bulkeley's face, crimson and downcast before him.

"This is a very disconcerting discovery to me, Bulkeley," said Dr. Chisholm at length. "I had every confidence in you. You have destroyed it. You must yourself acknowledge that I cannot, consistently with my duty, allow you to exercise any longer the authority of head prefect at Rookwood."

"I am sorry for this, Bulkeley," went on the Head, in a gentler tone. "I have no choice in the matter, however. You have left me none. From this moment, Bulkeley, you are not a prefect of Rookwood. Whether I may be able to reinstate you at a later date I cannot now say, but for the present my decision is as I have stated—you are no longer a prefect, and no longer captain of the school."

And, as the hapless captain of Rookwood did not speak, the Head turned to the door.

He passed out of the study, leaving the fallen captain of the school still silent, and rustled away down the passage. He passed two scared-looking juniors there, who stared after him, and then at one another.

"Wha-at's happened, Putty?" muttered Raby.

Putty shook his head.

"I—I don't know."

Raby glanced towards Bulkeley's study, but he did not venture to take a step in that direction. Slowly, and with a troubled face, the junior mounted the staircase.

Jimmy Silver, Lovell, and Newcome met him on the landing.

"Well?" muttered Jimmy, looking directly at Raby.

"I—I say, it's rotten!" said Raby miserably.

"You've been licked?"

"Yes—yes; that doesn't matter. But—but Bulkeley! He's in an awful row with the Head, and I don't know what's happened."

"Phew! But what—"

Raby explained miserably, and his chums listened with grave faces. Raby seemed to have forgotten his own licking, painful as it still was, in his concern for the popular captain of Rookwood. And Jimmy Silver & Co. shared that concern to the full.

What had happened between Bulkeley and the Head? That was the question that troubled them, and to which for the present there was no answer.

But what had happened was known to all Rookwood School that evening.

There was a notice on the board in the Head's hand; it was brief, but to the point. All Rookwood gathered to read it; and fellows came over from the Modern side in crowds to read it, too.

"Rotten!"

That was the general verdict.

For the Head's notice briefly stated that George Bulkeley had been removed from the position of captain and head prefect of Rookwood, Lawrence Neville of the Sixth was appointed head prefect in his place, and there was to be a new election for the captain of the school.

"Heastly!" groaned Raby. "And it's my fault as much as anybody's! Oh, that silly howling ass Putty!"

"Old Bulkeley's sacked from the captaincy!" breathed Jimmy Silver. "It's too rotten!"

"Rather a come-down for the merry sport what?" smiled Smythe of the Shell. "It will be rather interestin' to see his face when he shows it in public again, by gad!"

The Fistical Four turned on Smythe as one man and smote him, and Smythe fled, yelling. He did not make any more disrespectful remarks about Bulkeley in the hearing of Jimmy Silver & Co.

"Step up for you, Neville," remarked Carthew of the Sixth, looking at the notice, and then grinning at Neville, who was reading it with a gloomy face.

Neville gave him a grim look.

"Nothing of the kind!" he answered.

"But you're appointed—"

"I shall refuse!" answered Neville curtly.

And he walked away, leaving Carthew whistling. Carthew looked very cheery that evening. He was wondering whether he had a remote chance in the new election of squeezing in as captain of Rookwood. The same thought was in Knowles' mind over on the Modern side.

The news was a shock to all Rookwood. Bulkeley—"Old Bulkeley," as the fellows affectionately called him—had fallen from his high estate—the Head of the Sixth whose nod had been a command, was now nobody in particular. Like Lucifer, Son of the Morning, he had fallen from his high estate, and great was the fall thereof!

Bulkeley was not seen in public again that evening. He remained in his study, and his only chum, Neville, visited him there. But the fall of the captain of Rookwood was the one topic in the school that evening, from the Sixth to the second. And all Rookwood wondered what was to come of it.

THE END.

(Startling developments in the amazing Rookwood drama will be related next week. See page 2.)

READERS' NOTICES.

These notices are inserted free when space permits.

Stanley C. Foster, General Delivery, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., wishes to hear from readers of the Companion Papers—over 15.

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## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Black for Baggy!

"I CAN'T face it! I simply can't! It's bound to be a public flogging, if not the sack!"

Thus Baggy Trimble.

The fat junior was alone in his study. From the distant gymnasium, where the boxing tournament had just finished, came sounds of wild cheering.

Baggy Trimble rose to his feet.

"I can't stop here, or I shall be collared!" he muttered. "The fellows will be coming out of the gym in a jiffy. I must clear out—I must run away!"

With that wild scheme in his mind, Baggy Trimble snatched up a gladstone-bag. It happened to be Kit Wildrake's, but Baggy was too agitated to notice that little detail. Then he rushed to the cupboard, which was well stocked with food, and proceeded to cram cakes and jam-tarts, and everything he could lay his hands on, into the bag.

Baggy had to sit on the bag in order to shut it. The catch clicked into position; then, with a hasty glance round the study, Baggy Trimble fled from the apartment, dragging the weighty bag with some difficulty.

The corridors of St. Jim's were deserted. Everybody was in the gym. But there would be an exodus in a moment, and Trimble had no time to waste. He sped up to the Fourth Form dormitory, and hurriedly donned a suit of Etons over the shorts and vest he was wearing. For Baggy himself had taken part in the great boxing tournament, and it was this that had led to his undoing.

Having dressed in record time, Baggy Trimble quitted the dormitory, and raced downstairs, with the heavy bag bumping beside him. He rushed out into the quad, and thanked his stars that dusk was falling.

The conditions were ideal for running away from school. Though where Baggy was going to run to he had not the remotest idea. There had been no time for deep-laid plans. The fat junior was acting on the impulse of the moment.

As Baggy scuttled across the flagstones, his breath coming and going in great gasps, a tall figure appeared on the School House steps.

Baggy uttered a cry of dismay. Although the dusk was descending rapidly, he recognised the man on the steps; and the man on the steps recognised him.

It was Sir Jeffery Manning, the baronet whose life Baggy Trimble was supposed to have saved on a recent occasion, who had come out on to the steps. And Sir Jeffery was the very last person in the world that Baggy wished to encounter at that moment.

"Trimble!" cried the baronet sternly.

"Ow!"

Baggy gave a startled blink at Sir Jeffery, and then ran for his life. His fat, little legs were going like clockwork as he sped down to the school gates.

Sir Jeffery would have liked to give chase, but two things prevented him.

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In the first place, it would have been very undignified, to say the least of it, for an aristocratic gentleman to pursue a junior across the quad. And, secondly, Sir Jeffery's athletic days were over. He was not young enough to attempt to lower the hundred yards' record.

"The young rascal!" muttered the baronet, with a frown. "He has escaped me for the moment, but he shall not escape the consequences of his rascality! I will see the headmaster at once!"

Sir Jeffery proceeded to the Head's study. The quiet voice of Dr. Holmes bade him enter.

"Good-evening, Dr. Holmes!" said the baronet. "I trust you will pardon this intrusion—"

"My dear Sir Jeffery, I am delighted to see you!" said the Head, rising to his feet and smiling at his visitor. "You came over to witness the boxing tournament, I believe? I hope it was worth seeing."

"Well worth seeing!" said the baronet, dropping into the chair which the Head placed for him. "The final, between Redfern and Clifton, was the finest boxing bout I have seen for many a long day. Yet there was one incident in the tournament which has caused me a good deal of annoyance and vexation."

"Bless my soul!"

"I refer to the contest between Trimble and D'Arcy," said Sir Jeffery. "Until today, I had always supposed that Trimble was as brave as a lion."

The Head smiled slightly.

"On the contrary, Sir Jeffery, Trimble is utterly devoid of pluck. But tell me—why are you so upset about the matter?"

"I have an amazing story to relate to you, Dr. Holmes. A short time ago I was the victim of a dastardly attack near Rylcombe Wood. It was dark at the time, and a man of the footpad type suddenly sprang upon me from behind, taking me completely by surprise."

"Good gracious!"

"Of course, I had no chance to defend myself. I was felled to the ground in an unconscious condition, and when I came round I found Trimble beading over me."

"Trimble!"

"Yes. He informed me that he had fought a fierce hand-to-hand encounter with the footpad, and driven him off."

"And you believed such a preposterous story?" gasped the Head.

Sir Jeffery nodded.

"It did not seem preposterous at the time," he said. "You see, I did not know Trimble then as I know him now. His story sounded quite plausible, and I accepted it. I invited the boy to my house, and entertained him. I felt deeply grateful to him, for I believed he had practically saved my life. Not only did I throw open my doors to him, but I liberally rewarded him for what I conceived to be his great gallantry."

The Head fairly gasped.

"Fifty pounds was the sum which I instructed my secretary to give him," went

on Sir Jeffery—"fifty pounds, sir! And now I find that the young rascal was not entitled to a penny-piece! This boxing tournament has opened my eyes. When I saw Trimble shrink from his opponent in the ring, and heard him squeal when he was hit, I could clearly see that he would be utterly incapable of fighting a fierce footpad."

"Of course!"

"I have been deceived—grossly and wontonly deceived!" cried Sir Jeffery. "That wretched boy has posed as a hero, and when he bragged to me of his duel with the footpad, I believed him! His conduct merits condign punishment!"

The Head nodded grimly.

"Trimble deserves to be expelled," he said. "He has behaved abominably! But he is a very obtuse boy, without a proper perception of right and wrong, and I do not suppose he realises the enormity of his conduct."

"I think he does," said the baronet, "because he ran away from me just now when I called him. He is evidently aware that there is trouble brewing. I hailed him, and he ran down to the school gates. He appeared to be carrying a bag."

"Bless my soul! I hope the young rascal is not contemplating flight," said the Head anxiously.

He rang the bell, and Toby, the page, appeared.

"See if you can find Trimble, and tell him he is to come to my study at once!" said Dr. Holmes.

"Werry good, sir!"

Toby departed, and Sir Jeffery Manning sat stroking his chin thoughtfully.

"With regard to the attack that was made upon me, Dr. Holmes," he said, "how do you account for the fact that the footpad made off without stopping to rob me?"

"The explanation is very simple, Sir Jeffery. You say it was dark at the time. Very well, then! The man had overpowered you, and he was about to go through your pockets when Trimble came on the scene. Your assailant was taken by surprise; he could not see that he had only a boy to deal with—he may even have imagined that it was a police-officer. Trimble remained at your side until you regained consciousness, and then took upon himself the credit of having driven the footpad away."

Sir Jeffery nodded.

"That is a very feasible explanation," he said. "It did not occur to me before."

"It is very unfortunate that you should have given Trimble a reward," said the Head. "The young rascal has doubtless expended all the money. But I will communicate with his father, and insist upon the money being returned to you!"

"That is very good of you, Dr. Holmes—"

"Not at all! It is only right."

After a fairly long interval, Toby, the page, presented himself in the doorway.

"Which Master Trimble can't be found nowhere, sir!" he announced.

The Head and Sir Jeffery exchanged quick glances.

"It is as I feared," said the former. "The

Who is the Ghost of Study No. 9? See Next Week's St. Jim's Tale!



wretched boy has taken flight. But he is not clever enough to be able to get far. I will institute search-parties, and have him brought back to the school with all speed. You may leave me to deal with him, Sir Jeffery. I promise you that I shall not err on the side of leniency."

The baronet rose to his feet.  
"Thank you, Dr. Holmes. I bid you a good-evening!"

The two gentlemen shook hands, and Sir Jeffery left the study, and made his way to the taxicab which awaited him at the school gates.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
A Fugitive from Justice!**

**M**EANWHILE, what of Baggy Trimble? A poet might have described the fat junior's movements in this fashion:

"The shades of night were falling fast,  
As into Wayland High Street passed  
A youth, who stumbled o'er the stones.  
And murmured, in despairing tones:  
'I'm whacked!'"

Baggy was indeed "whacked." He carried the weighty gladstone-bag all the way from St. Jim's, running and walking alternately. And now, as he staggered along the cobbled High Street of the little market town he was puffing and blowing like a grampus.

"Oh dear!" muttered Baggy. "I can't go on. I shall have to rest somewhere."

The lights of the Cafe Royal twinkled invitingly.  
Baggy had ample supplies of food in his bag, but he could not very well start stuffing in the street. For all he knew, there might be search-parties scouring the district for him, and he was in danger this very moment.  
"I'll go into the Cafe Royal and get a snack," he murmured. "I've still got some cash left, thank goodness. But even in the cafe I shan't be safe. A St. Jim's fellow might drop in at any moment. Pity I haven't a disguise."

The idea of getting a disguise appealed to the fat junior. He stepped into a second-hand shop close at hand.

"Have you such a thing as a mask?" he asked breathlessly.

The shopkeeper nodded.  
"Just a black crepe mask to cover the eyes, sir, or a full-face one?"

"A full-face one, please," said Baggy. "And buck up! I'm in a fearful hurry."

The shopkeeper went into a room at the back of his premises, and returned with a collection of hideous coloured masks.

Baggy Trimble selected the most grotesque and terrifying mask he could find. He started to put it on in the shop.

"This one will suit me nicely," he said.

"Not going to wear it in the street, sir, surely?"

"Of course! What did you think?"

"I thought you might have wanted it for a fancy-dress ball, or an amateur pantomime," said the man. "Shouldn't wear it in the street if I were you. They'll be running you in as a suspicious character."

"Oh, rats!"

Baggy tied the two tapes of the mask at the back of his head and surveyed himself in the mirror.

"A complete disguise, by Jove!" he muttered. "Nobody would recognise me now. I look like the giant in Jack the Giant-killer."

Baggy was too stupid to see that his so-called disguise was no disguise at all. To begin with, he still wore his school cap and his suit of Etons. These things stamped him as a St. Jim's fellow straight away. Moreover, he was not able to disguise his ample form. The rotundity of his person revealed his identity at once. Nobody within a radius of twenty miles was so plump as Baggy Trimble, with the exception of his school-fellow Fatty Wynn.

Trimble was foolish enough to think that by concealing his face with that appalling mask he was concealing his identity.

Baggy paid for the mask and rolled out of the shop, the shopkeeper gazing after him in some alarm.

"I can now go into the Cafe Royal without being spotted," reflected Baggy.

As he passed along the street passers-by stopped and stared. For Baggy's appearance was indeed enough to get him arrested on sight. Instead of making himself inconspicuous, the foolish junior was merely drawing attention to himself.

He stepped into the Cafe Royal, and a

waitress who was hovering near the doorway nearly swooned.

There were several people dining at the tables, and they dropped their knives and forks with a clatter on catching sight of the strange apparition.

Then the manager came rushing up.  
"You can't come in here!" he exclaimed.

"Are you mad, or is this a schoolboy prank?"

"Eh? What's wrong?" asked Baggy Trimble in surprise.

"Your face—"  
"This isn't my face—it's a mask!"

"You must remove it if you wish to come in here. You are scaring my patrons!"

Baggy pulled out his wallet and extracted a pound note therefrom. This he handed to the manager.

"Let me keep this on, there's a sport!" he whispered confidentially. "I'm anxious not to be recognised. See? I'll sit at that table round the corner, and then I shan't worry your other customers."

The manager relented.  
"Very well," he said. "So long as you don't cause a disturbance I don't mind. You can take this note back. I don't accept bribes."

Baggy took the note willingly enough, and then he took his seat at the table round the corner.

"I shall be able to sit here for an hour or two," mused Baggy, "and I can think out my plans for the future. Haven't had time to think of anything yet; I've been so rushed. If any St. Jim's fellows happen to come in here, they won't spot me, that's one blessing!"

Unfortunately for Baggy, a number of St. Jim's fellows were already hot on the trail.

The Head had sent for Kildare of the Sixth and instructed him to organise a search-party for the purpose of bringing Baggy Trimble back to the school.

Dr. Holmes explained to Kildare how Baggy Trimble had deceived Sir Jeffery Manning; and Kildare, in turn, informed the six juniors whom he selected to form the search-party. These were Tom Merry, Manners, and

Lowther, of the Shell, and Jack Blake, D'Arcy, and Digby of the Fourth.

The six juniors were astounded when they heard what Trimble had done.

"Fancy squeezing a reward out of Sir Jeffery Manning by false pretences!" exclaimed Jack Blake. "Fancy the cad pretending he fought a footpad!"

"An' fancy him wunnin' away!" said Arthur Augustus.

"He won't have got far," said Tom Merry. "He hasn't had long enough start. I've an idea we shall find him in Wayland. We'll go there first, anyway."

The search-party, glad of an adventure, tramped over to Wayland in the darkness.

One of the first places at which they halted was the Cafe Royal. It was only natural that Baggy Trimble, being still in funds, would visit the cafe.

"Let's step inside and inquire if the porpoise has been here, or is here still," said Manners.

"I'll bet anybody a bag of doughnuts we find him here," said Monty Lowther. But nobody responded.

The six juniors trooped into the cafe. They marched straight down the carpeted gangway between the rows of tables, and presently Tom Merry, who led the way, gave a violent start and stopped short. He had just come in sight of the table round the corner, at which Baggy Trimble was feeding in the ordinary way.

Baggy saw the juniors, and his heart began thumping violently. But he went on eating, and made no sign of recognition.

Having recovered in some measure from their astonishment, Tom Merry & Co. approached the table.

"Trimble!" exclaimed Tom Merry.  
Baggy looked up.

"Are you speaking to me?" he asked in a gruff, unnatural voice.

"Of course! We've come to take you back to the school!"

"I don't know what you mean. Who are you?"

"Weally, Twimble, you know perfectly well who we are!" said Arthur Augustus.



Snatching up his bag, Baggy Trimble disappeared through the swing doors of the cafe, with the six juniors rushing full-pelt after him. The taxi-driver stared in amazement at the fat junior with the grotesque mask, as Baggy swung open the door of the cab. (See Chapter 3.)



Baggy shook his head in perplexity. "Don't know any single one of you from Adam!" he said, still in the same gruff tones. "What did you address me as—Trimble? You must be mistaking me for someone else. My name isn't Trimble."

"What!" shouted the juniors in chorus. "Run away, my dear fellows. I object to being pestered by strangers while I'm eating my dinner. If you don't go at once, I'll call the manager."

"You—you silly chump!" hooted Jack Blake. "It's no use trying to bluff us that you're not Trimble! There's your school cap hanging on the peg; and your Etons give you away—"

"To say nothing of your dainty, fragile form!" said Monty Lowther.

And there was a laugh.

"Drop this fooling, and come with us at once, Trimble!" commanded Tom Merry. Baggy rose to his feet in alarm. He saw that his "disguise" had been easily penetrated, and that it was useless to try to deceive his schoolfellows further.

It was a time for instant action. Throwing some money on to the table to pay for what he had consumed—an unusually honourable thing for Trimble to do—the fat junior snatched his cap from the peg, picked up his bag, and rushed out of the cafe.

Tom Merry & Co. had not been expecting this manoeuvre, and they were taken off their guard. But only for a moment.

"Aitah him, deah boys!" cried Arthur Augustus.

Baggy Trimble disappeared through the swing-doors, with the six juniors rushing full-tilt after him.

The fugitive was in luck's way. There was a taxi standing outside the cafe, and Baggy promptly boarded it.

"Where to, sir?" asked the driver, adding, under his breath, "Queer-lookin' merchant, this! Seems in a mighty hurry, too!"

Baggy leaned out of the window, gesticulating wildly.

"Drive me to—to—anywhere!" he panted.

The driver was a man of great discretion. He saw Tom Merry & Co. come rushing out of the cafe, and he realised that they were in pursuit of this fat boy who was wearing the grotesque mask. He also realised that the fat boy would probably be prepared to pay a good deal for getting out of his schoolfellows' clutches. So he started up his taxi at once, and the vehicle was soon speeding away in the direction of Rylcombe.

Baggy Trimble lay back inside the taxi, his heart palpitating violently.

"By Jove, that was a narrow escape!" he muttered. "Jolly lucky this taxi was handy, or I should have been collared!"

The driver slowed up a little, and inclined his head towards his passenger.

"Where would you like me to put you down, sir?" he inquired.

"You keep going until I tell you to stop," replied Baggy.

"Very good, sir!"

The taxi rushed on through the darkness. Lights twinkled ahead—the lights of Rylcombe Village.

Just as the taxi entered the village street among the pompous personage, standing in the middle of the roadway with arms and legs akimbo, uttered the sharp command: "Alt!"

Baggy Trimble gave a shudder. For the voice was the voice of P.-c. Crump, the village constable.

The taxi slowed up, and Mr. Crump peered at the driver.

"Which I've 'ad destructions from the 'eadmaster of St. Jim's to keep me heyes hopen for a young gent of the name of Trimble," said Crump. "I've got to 'old up every vehicle wot comes along, to make sure as 'ow Master Trimble isn't inside. Which 'e's been an' run away from school, as ever was!"

Having delivered himself of this weighty oration, Mr. Crump advanced with ponderous steps towards the taxi, and jerked open the door. There was a startled gasp from within.

"My heye!" ejaculated Crump, in amazement. "Gottim! Gottim fust go!"

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"Oh, really, Crump——"  
"I can tell it's you, Master Trimble, in spite o' that there mask," said the constable.  
"But it isn't me at all!" cried Baggy wildly. "I'm not Trimble—I'm a total stranger!"

"Tell that to the maroons!" said Crump, who evidently had memories of Bonfire Night. "Which I've caught you red-handed, Master Trimble, an' I'm goin' to take you back to the school!"

Baggy Trimble shrank back into the corner of the seat.

"You're wrong!" he cried excitedly. "Quite wrong! I tell you I'm not me at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the taxi-driver.

Mr. Crump clambered into the vehicle, and seated his huge bulk beside Baggy Trimble. Then he instructed the driver to proceed to St. Jim's.

There was no escape for Baggy this time. He was fairly caught. Within a couple of hours of his departure from St. Jim's he was back again—a porpoise come to judgment, as Monty Lowther afterwards described it.

Baggy's sins had at last come home to roost. Nemesis had overtaken him with speedy feet; and he had now to pay the penalty of his misdeeds.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Rascal's Reward!

GREAT was the excitement at St. Jim's when it became known that Baggy Trimble had been captured.

Mr. Crump, who marched the renegade into the Head's study, blew his own trumpet so successfully that the Head gave him a substantial tip, and Crump departed in a highly satisfied frame of mind.

Kildare and Darrel of the Sixth were ordered to take Baggy Trimble to the punishment-room, where he was to pass the

night. His fate hung in the balance. The Head was half-inclined to expel him for his rascality, and he wanted an evening to think it over.

Baggy Trimble passed a troubled night. The punishment-room was anything but a cheerful prison. It had terrified tougher fellows than Trimble. It was cold, dark, and uncanny. And the ghostly wallings of the wind made Baggy shudder, and pine for his cosy bed in the Fourth Form dormitory.

The long night seemed an eternity to the imprisoned junior. But at last the grey dawn stole in at the tiny barred window—the dawning of Baggy's day of reckoning!

Shortly after rising-bell, Taggles, the porter, came up with Baggy's breakfast. It did not consist of eggs and bacon. Merely a slice of dry toast and a cup of weak tea. Baggy felt that this deprivation was ample punishment for his misdeeds.

Within an hour another bell rang out. It was the bell summoning St. Jim's to a general assembly in Big Hall. Baggy Trimble heard it in fear and trembling.

He had not taken his clothes off all night—though he had long since removed the hideous mask he had bought in Wayland. Crump had insisted upon this when he had brought Baggy back in the taxi.

The bell was still ringing—to Baggy it seemed more like tolling—when Kildare of the Sixth opened the door of the punishment-room. He seemed like a warder summoning Baggy to his execution.

"Come, Trimble!" he said sternly.

Baggy tottered up from the bed on which he had been sitting.

"I—I say, Kildare," he faltered, "am I going to be sacked?"

"Most likely," was the curt reply. "You deserve to be, at any rate!"

"But—but I haven't done anything!" quavered the fat junior.

Kildare's grasp descended on Baggy Trimble's collar, and Baggy was led away towards Big Hall.

"If you take my advice," said the captain of St. Jim's, "you won't try to keep up this bluff. You'll make a frank confession to the Head of what actually occurred on the night Sir Jeffery Manning was attacked. That might make all the difference between a flogging and the sack. If you persist in telling lies, I've no doubt you'll be fired out of St. Jim's."

"Oh crumbs!"

When Kildare marched Trimble into Big Hall all the fellows were in their places.

The Head, looking very stern and severe, stood on the raised platform at the end of the Hall. In the offing stood Taggles, the porter, a sure sign that the Head had decided upon a public flogging. Though whether expulsion would follow the flogging remained to be seen.

Kildare escorted the delinquent to the platform.

"Trimble," said the Head sternly, "I want you to give me a full and frank explanation of the events that occurred on the evening of the attack upon Sir Jeffery Manning. Be very careful what you say. If you tell me a lie, or hide from me anything I wish to know, the penalty will be very severe!"

Baggy Trimble cleared his throat, and blinked at the Head, and started to speak. For once in a way he acted wisely. He decided to follow Kildare's advice, and make a clean breast of everything.

"It was like this, sir," he began. "On the night that Sir Jeffery was attacked, I happened to be attacked myself—by a gang of village louts. They ducked me at the pump, and then chased me towards Rylcombe Woods. I ran through the woods as hard as I could go, and jumped over a hedge into a meadow. I landed right on top of a man—a man who was about to rob Sir Jeffery Manning. I suppose I scared him out of his wits, crashing on top of him like that. Anyway, he sorted himself out, and took to his heels. I expect he thought I was a bobby, or something."

The Head nodded.

"I do not know what a 'bobby' is, but I presume you mean a policeman," he said.

"You say the man fled?"

"Yessir!"

"You did not grapple with him?"

(Continued on page 27.)

THE RESULT OF THE BURY COMPETITION!

In this competition two competitors sent in correct solutions of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been divided between:

- SARAH COOPER,  
Ivy Cottage,  
Wordsley Green,  
Wordsley, near Stourbridge.
- VIDA LOVE,  
20, Emmore Green,  
Shaftesbury,  
Dorset.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following five competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

- Susanah Cooper, Ivy Cottage, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge; William Downes, 45, Wordsley Green, Wordsley, near Stourbridge; Stanley Love, 20, Emmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; A. Jones, Vine Cottage, Budley Road, Ventnor; Frances Morton, 7, Eyre Street, Pallion, Sunderland.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been added together and divided among forty-five competitors, whose solutions contained two errors each. The names and addresses of these prizewinners can be seen on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

Bury has suffered much from lack of cash, and considering the lengthy struggle it has had, has performed numerous remarkable feats. In 1902-3 Bury carried all before it. The forward line was fine, the combination was magnificent, and the club won every match, including the Final.



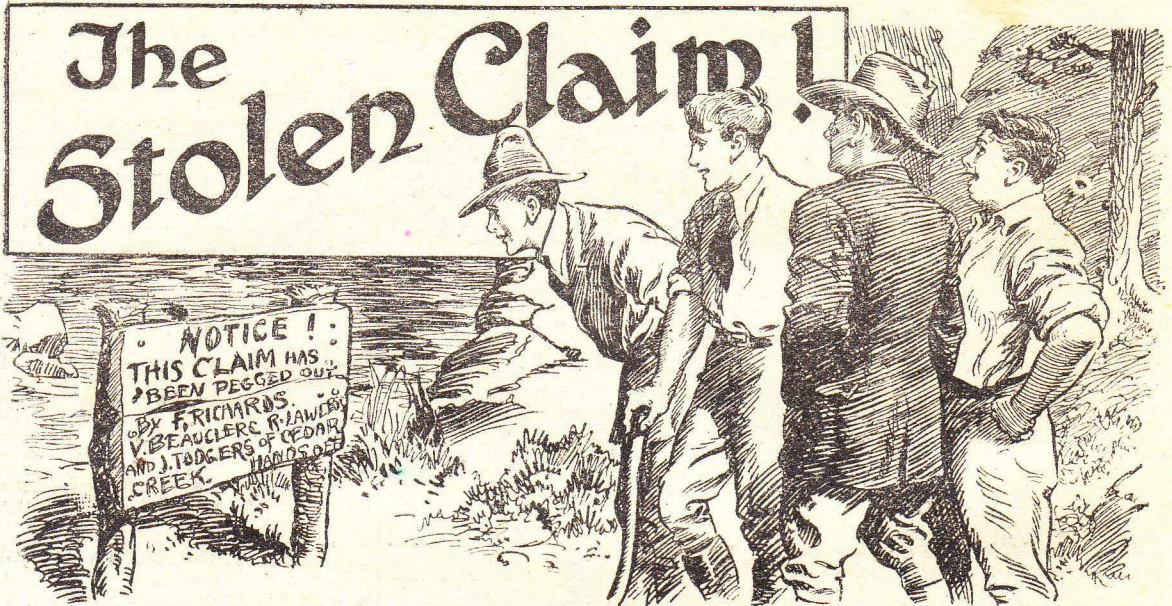
Tell your Pals about our **FOUR FINE SCHOOL YARNS**—they'll enjoy them! 14

**THE GOLD ROBBERS!**

The Cedar Creek Chums' gold "strike," in the Cascade Mountains, is not kept a secret for long—others have designs on that little mine!

**FRANK RICHARDS & CO.'S PERIL!**

is not kept a secret for long—others have designs on that little mine!



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

## FRANK RICHARDS

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

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### The Cedar Creek Claim.

"I GUESS that's O.K.!" said Bob Lawless, with an air of great satisfaction. "Ripping!" said Frank Richards and Vere Beaulerc together. And Chunky Todgers chimed in: "You bet!"

The chums of the Cedar Creek School were standing by a mountain stream, amid the pine-clad slopes of the Cascade Range.

In the bend of the stream, a wooden dam had been built out by the Cedar Creek fellows, exposing a part of the sandy bed.

There, Frank Richards & Co. had been at work washing out the golden grains from the pay-dirt.

On the edge of the stream Bob Lawless had erected two posts, cut from the forest, and to the posts were fastened a board, roughly fashioned with an axe.

The board bore an inscription in large letters.

As Bob's brush was made of twigs, and his paint of vegetable-juices mixed with black mud and water, the lettering was somewhat patchy and irregular; but it was quite clear to read, and could be seen at a distance.

#### "NOTICE!"

THIS CLAIM has been pegged out by F. RICHARDS, V. BEAUCLERC, R. LAWLESS, AND J. TODGERS, OF CEDAR CREEK.

#### HANDS OFF!"

"I guess there can't be any mistake about that!" said Bob. "All the same, the sooner we register the claim at Tucker's Bar the better. I reckon we'll ride down there this morning."

"Sooner the quicker!" agreed Frank Richards.

"We want to get some truck, too," said Bob. "I tell you, kids, there's a good bit of gold-dust in that sand, and we can carry home some dollars with us when we wind up our holiday here. We've got to lay in some spades and picks and stuff, and we've made enough dust out of the claim already to pay for them. Let's get off!"

The schoolboy gold-seekers broke up camp, and mounted their horses, with cheery, contented minds.

They rode away slowly down the difficult

mountain-trail, the pack-mule following the riders.

According to the mountain laws, the notice set up on the claim protected it from other prospectors, and as soon as it was lawfully registered it became the private property of the discoverers.

Frank Richards & Co. were naturally elated.

When they started on their holiday in the North-West they had not looked for a stroke of luck of this kind.

Chunky Todgers, indeed, had announced that he was going to "strike ile," but Chunky's comrades had taken that humorously.

Bob Lawless had discovered the auriferous traces in the mountain stream, and he had "panned" the sand with success.

The claim was to be registered in the names of the four, but they intended to allow a share for Yen Chin, the Chinese, who had been a member of the holiday party until a few days previously.

Yen Chin had been "fired" from the party for various misdemeanours, and as he had put in no work on the claim, he really was not entitled to a share.

But Frank Richards & Co. agreed that he should count as one of the Co.

The four riders rattled cheerfully down the valley, and then into the lower trail that led to Tucker's Bar, the nearest mining camp in that part of the Cascade Mountains.

There was a sudden call on the fresh, morning air, and a diminutive figure came out on the trail from a spruce thicket.

"You stoppee!"

It was Yen Chin.

Bob Lawless pulled in his horse, and his comrades followed his example.

But their looks were not conciliatory.

"Well?" snapped Bob.

"Nicee morning!" said Yen Chin.

"Have you stopped us to say that?"

"Velly glad to see nicey old Bob again!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Pool lill! Chinese solly, bad boy!" said Yen Chin pathetically. "Be velly good boy afterwards. Oh, yes! You wantee me comee backee?"

Bob shook his head.

Frank Richards was already relenting; his heart was of the softest, as the cunning little Chinese well knew.

But the rancher's son looked grim.

"Hook it, John!" he said. "You can't hitch on to this crowd again! It's not only that you sneaked away from camp to gamble with Gunten and Keller—though that was bad enough—"

"No speakee mole to Gluntee and Kellee!" said Yen Chin eagerly. "Guntee and Kellee tlaivee homee now—gonee!"

"That isn't all!" snapped Bob. "You pinched the gold we'd washed out of the claim, and you're a thief, Yen Chin. I dare say you don't look at it like a white man, but it's too thick for us! You'd better take the trail home!"

"No wantee!"

"Then you can go and chop chips!"

Bob Lawless rode on.

Beaulerc, who had not spoken, followed him, and Chunky Todgers snorted emphatically as they passed the little Celestial.

Yen Chin caught at Frank Richards' bridle as he would have followed.

"No leavee pool lill! Chinese!" he murmured.

Frank's heart smote him.

Had a white man been guilty of Yen Chin's conduct Frank would have felt too much disgust to feel much compassion for him.

But he could not help feeling that it was different with the Oriental.

He had always stood Yen Chin's friend at Cedar Creek School, in the far-off Thompson Valley, in spite of the Chow's many impish tricks and his incurable habit of untruthfulness.

But the robbery of his comrades, to "raise the wind" for a poker game with Gunten and Keller, was the limit.

The chums had recovered the purloined "dust"; but that did not alter the fact of Yen Chin's guilt.

Certainly Yen Chin looked very repentant now; but it was probable that that was simply because he had to suffer for his rascality.

He looked up pleadingly at Frank's troubled face.

"No leavee pool lill! Chinese!" he murmured again. "Ole Flanky velly nicey old boy! Lill! Chinese velly foud ole Flanky!"

"Frank!" shouted back Bob Lawless. "Come on!"

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Back Home Again After an Adventurous Holiday in the Wilds!



"I—I say, Bob—"

"Rot! Come on, I say! And if that heathen comes with you, I'll give him the butt of my gun on his cabeza!"

"All right, Bob!"

"No takee pool hill! Chinee?"

"Can't be done!" said Frank. "Dash it all, Yen Chin, you knew what you were doing, and you can't expect to be trusted again! I'm sorry, but there it is! Let go!"

He shook off the Celestial's hand, and rode on after his comrades.

Yen Chin was soon lost to sight among the rocks and thickets, as Frank Richards & Co. trotted on to Tucker's Bar.

But Frank could not help thinking of the Chinee.

There was no reason why Yen Chin should not return to his home at Thompson.

The Cedar Creek holiday was drawing to an end, anyway, and he would have to return soon.

But evidently he wanted to rejoin the party, and finish the holiday with them in the North-West.

He had been "on his lonesome" for two or three days now, and he had not started for the south.

Frank Richards wondered what he would do after his latest rebuff, and he hoped that Yen Chin would be sensible enough to take the trail for home.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### The Claim-Jumpers!

FRANK RICHARDS & Co. were very busy after their arrival in Tucker's Bar.

The little mining-camp in the heart of the Cascade Mountains had few facilities for shopping, but the one and only store provided the articles of which the schoolboy gold-seekers were in need.

At a lumber hotel they obtained a dinner, and then they entered the store to make their purchases.

The "dust" they had brought from their claim was weighed in the store, and taken as cash.

They purchased picks and spades, and other articles required for their work on the claim, and disposed their purchases upon the pack-mule.

There were a good many prospectors coming and going in Tucker's Bar, but none of such a youthful appearance as Frank Richards & Co.

The schoolboys attracted some attention. The storekeeper directed them to the sheriff's office, the sheriff being the only legal official of any kind in the camp, and empowered to enter registration of claims.

"Cedar Creek Claim," as the chums named it, was duly entered, and Frank Richards & Co. had the proud consciousness of being its legal possessors.

It was late in the afternoon when the four schoolboys rode out of Tucker's Bar, giving themselves time to reach the claim before sundown.

They rode along very cheerily on the mountain trails, and Frank, remembering Yen Chin, kept an eye open for the little Celestial.

But he saw nothing of him, and he hoped that by that time Yen Chin had realised that the best thing he could do was to "make tracks" for home.

The sun was sinking towards the Pacific when the schoolboy explorers came in sight of their old camp by the mountain stream.

Bob Lawless uttered an exclamation.

"The notice is down!" he exclaimed.

"Hallo! Somebody's hopped in!" said Frank. "There's a camp-fire going! Look at the smoke over the trees!"

Chunky Todgers gave a howl.

"They're after our dust!"

"Bob's brow set grimly.

"The notice was plain enough for any galoot to understand," he said. "I guess there'll be trouble if anybody's jumping our claim. Look to your guns, my infants. We may want them."

The chums of Cedar Creek looked grave as they rode on.

In the mountains of the North-West, beyond the confines of the regular settlements, law and order did not exist as they had known them in the Thompson Valley.

Every man was a law unto himself, more or less, in the unexplored fastnesses of the Far North-West.

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But Frank Richards & Co., averse as they were from the very thought of violence, had no intention whatever of being "jumped" out of their claim.

They looked to their rifles as they rode up to the camp, and the weapons were in their hands as they dismounted.

"Look after the hosses, Chunky!" said Bob.

Frank and Bob and Beauclerc, rifles in hand, moved through the trees towards the claim on the creek, while Chunky Todgers tethered the horses.

An exclamation of anger burst from Bob's lips as they came out on the shelving bank.

The notice-board and the posts had been torn down and used for the purposes of a camp-fire.

The remnants of them were crackling away amid a pile of pine-cones and spruce-twigs.

An iron pot was boiling over the fire, apparently containing supper, being left to cook by itself, while the new campers were busy in the bed of the stream.

There were two of them, small in stature, lithe, and swarthy of complexion, Mexican by race, of mingled Spanish and Indian blood, as the schoolboys could see at a glance.

They had knives in their belts, but their guns were leaning against a tree on the bank, as Bob noted at once.

With a run he was between the two Mexicans and their firearms.

The coming dispute was likely to be much more amicable with firearms in the hands of only one of the parties.

The two Mexicans were busy, and did not for some moments observe the three schoolboys, but as Bob placed himself before the guns they paused in their work and looked up.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Bob.

The two Mexicans stared at him. One of them, a thick-set, black-bearded man, made a movement towards the bank.

"Stand where you are!" said Bob. "You're not touching these guns for a bit."

"What is it?" asked the Mexican, speaking in English. "Who are you? What do you want?"

"I guess we're the owners of this claim you're robbing."

"Oh!"

The Mexicans exchanged a quick glance.

The black-bearded man dropped his hand upon his knife, and Bob Lawless pushed his rifle forward at once.

"Let go that stick!" he said.

The Mexican half-drew the long "cuchillo," but his companion caught him quickly by the arm.

"Para! Para, Jose Gomez!" he muttered. "I give you a second!" said Bob Lawless, his eyes gleaming along his rifle. "If you want your arm smashed with a bullet—"

Jose Gomez released the knife.

"That's better, greaser!"

The black-bearded Mexican scowled savagely at the Canadian schoolboy.

"You knew well enough that this claim was pegged out," said Bob Lawless. "You'll hop out of that creek instanter!"

The Mexicans came up the bank, glancing towards their guns, but making no attempt to reach them.

"This is your claim, senior?" asked Gomez, forcing himself to civility, which was belied by the glitter in his black eyes.

"I guess so. You saw the notice-board you've pulled down."

"I do not read English."

"You speak it!" answered Bob.

"But that is not the same, senior."

"Well, the notice being there was enough to show you that the claim was pegged out," answered Bob. "You could see that it had been worked, too. You're a claim-jumper, Mr. Greaser!"

Gomez clenched his swarthy hands.

"You're the kind of galoot the miners string up on a branch," continued Bob. "Many a pilgrim would shoot you in your tracks for jumping his claim. That's the law of the foot-hills."

Gomez scowled more blackly, and his companion backed away with a look of alarm.

The claim-jumpers were totally at the mercy of the schoolboys, if the latter had chosen to use their rifles.

There were a good many prospectors in the Cascade Mountains who would have pulled trigger without wasting words in such a case.

"Vamonos, Jose Gomez!" muttered the black-bearded man's companion; and Bob, who had heard Spanish talked by Mexican

"hands" on the ranches, knew that that meant "Let us go."

Gomez hesitated.

"You say it is your claim, senores!" he exclaimed.

"I reckon."

"Give us our guns, then, and we will go."

Bob glanced at his comrades.

"It would be folly to give them firearms!" said Vere Beauclerc quickly. "It would mean shooting, Bob! Take their cartridges away first."

"Good!" said Bob. "I'll keep this rifle looking at them, Franky, while you take away their powder and shot."

"Hands off, senores!" shouted Gomez angrily, as Frank Richards came towards him.

"Vaya! Vaya!"

"You'll give up your cartridges, or you leave your guns here!" said Bob. "Take your choice!"

Gomez gritted his teeth.

He settled the matter by flinging his cartridge-belt to the ground, and his companion followed his example.

Then Beauclerc picked up the guns, and, first discharging them into the air, handed them to the Mexicans.

"Now light out!" said Bob Lawless, making a motion with his rifle. "Don't come moseying round this outfit again, or I shall shoot you on sight! That's a plain warning. Get!"

And the two Mexicans, with savage, scowling faces, "got."

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Jumped!

BOB LAWLESS watched the two claim-jumpers out of sight down the rocky valley before he dropped his rifle.

The Mexicans disappeared at last, however.

"Good riddance!" said Bob. "A pair of the biggest rascals this side of the Rio Grande, from their looks."

"I'm jolly glad they're gone!" said Frank Richards, in relief. "I was afraid that black-jowled ruffian was going to try to use his knife."

"There would be a dead greaser lying around if he tried it!"

"That's what I didn't want, old chap. I suppose they're gone for good," said Frank.

"I guess so. We'll keep a good watch to-night, all the same. You can't be too spy in the foot-hills. But I reckon we're not going to have our claim jumped, if we have to shoot as many greasers as there are between Vera Cruz and Acapulco!" said Bob Lawless emphatically.

The schoolboys camped for supper, which Chunky Todgers soon had ready, helping himself to the boiling pot left by the Mexican as prize of war.

"I'm blessed if I quite know what it is," said Todgers. "It smells jolly oily, but it tastes all right, and we're going to rope it in. Going without their supper will do those two buldozers good!"

Frank Richards & Co. made a good supper as the last rays of the sun disappeared beyond the mountain-tops, and then they turned in, intending to be up bright and early in the morning to recommence work on the claim.

The schoolboy explorers were accustomed to keep watch at night in that perilous region, and they were more careful than ever on this occasion, in view of the possibility that the claim-jumpers were still lurking in the valley.

Bob Lawless took the first watch till midnight, and then Frank Richards relieved him.

"All serene, Franky!" Bob said. "But keep your eyes peeled!"

"What-ho!" answered Frank.

He sat on a log in the shadow of a tree with his rifle across his knees, watching the valley.

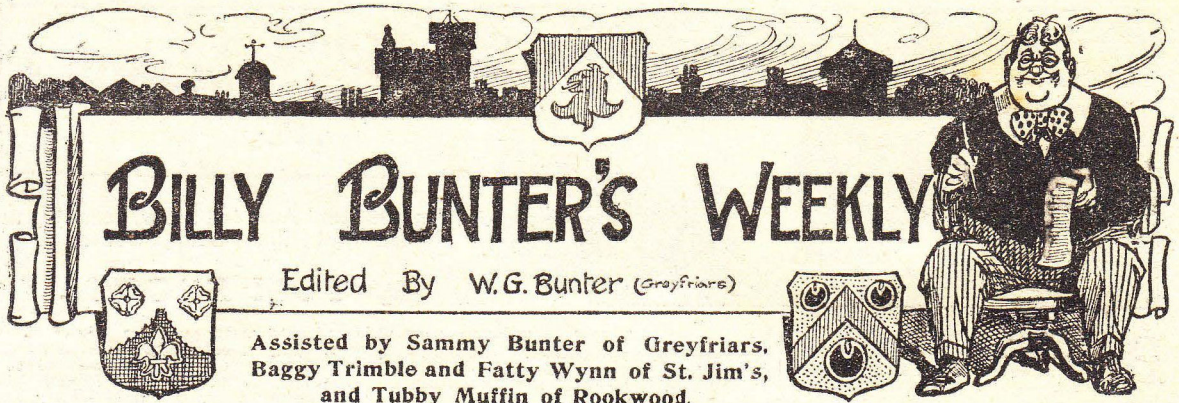
At length a faint rustle in the trees, louder than that caused by the night breeze, caused him to rise from the log, and look about him in the gloom.

The rustle was repeated, not a dozen yards from him, in the thicket of spruce.

It was probably an animal coming down to the stream to drink, but Frank Richards was not taking chances.

(Continued on page 16.)





# BILLY BUNTER'S WEEKLY

Edited By W.G. Bunter (Greyfriars)

Assisted by Sammy Bunter of Greyfriars, Baggie Trimble and Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's, and Tubby Muffin of Rookwood.

Supplement No. 115.

Week Ending March 24th, 1923.

## IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By BILLY BUNTER.

My dear Readers,—This is a number dealing with dreams and nightmares, visions, and a Lucy Nations.

I can't tell you eggsactly what a dream is, and I never yet met anybody who could. There is something very misterious about it. Of corse, we know the cause of dreaming. A heavy supper overnight, a vivid imagination, reading an eggssing story before going to bed—all these things produce dreams.

They say that a dream only lasts about a second. But I had a dream the other day, where the "action" was spread over a number of weeks. It seems impossibill that I could have dreamed it all in one short second.

This dream of mine will be described in detail on another page by Tom Brown.

Dreams, as a rule, are quite harmless. But a nightmare is a horse of another culler. A dreadful, terrifying, fearful, hideous, garstly thing is a nightmare. It makes your hare stand on end, and you wake up with inspiration streameing down your cheeks. I am sometimes afraid to touch a morsel of food all day for fear of getting nightmare. But I do get the beestly things, although I never take more than a duzzeh doe-nutts on retiring.

But never mind! Man is borne into trubble, as the balloonist said when he crashed into the church steeple.

All my fat subbs tell me that they dream dreams and see visions, so I am not the only one. And as there must be many thousands of my readers who dream, and are subject to Lucy Nations (whoever she might be), I thought a Special Dream Number would just about fill the bill. So hear you are, and weather you are painters or not, I hope this number of my "Weekly" will tickle your pallettes!

Yours dreamfully,

YOUR EDITOR.

## TUBBY MUFFIN'S NIGHTMARE!

By TEDDY GRACE.

When the solemn strokes of twelve o'clock

Booraced forth, our Tubby had a shock. Weird visitors approached his bed, And made him shake and quake with dread.

A rabbit-pie he saw quite plain, It danced upon the counterpane. It had a mouth and eyes and snout, On little legs it pranced about.

A dozen doughnuts then appeared, And danced and pranced in manner weird.

A big tuck-hamper joined the throng; On springy legs it bounced along.

Then Tubby gave a yell of fright Which echoed shrilly through the night. "Who are you, please?" he cried in fear. "And tell me what you're doing here."

"We are the ghosts of all the tuck That you've consumed, my fat young buck!"

Thus spake the rabbit-pie in glee, And danced a jig off Tubby's knee.

"Oh, fade away, ye spectres grim!" Cried Tubby, chilled in every limb. "I've never done you harm, you know (Apart from eating you), so go!"

The doughnuts and a saveloy Kept dancing with uncanny joy. The big tuck-hamper bounced and bobbed, And Tubby Muffin screamed and sobbed.

Then Jimmy Silver woke, and said, "Oh, aim a pillow at his head! It's Tubby dreaming hideous dreams, He's overfed again, it seems!"

A pillow then whizzed through the air, It fell to earth, I know not where. But Tubby Muffin knew all right! He didn't dream again that night!

## A MARTYR TO NIGHTMARES!

By Sammy Bunter.

For years I have been the victim of garstly nightmares, some of which I have in the day-time, so I suppose I ought to call them daymares.

I seldom go to sleep without getting a nightmare. I see terribul fantom figgers, and grizzly speckters, and goodness knows what.

The other day, I spoke to Dicky Nugent on the subject.

"What's the cause of these nightmares, Dicky?" I asked.

"Eating too much tuck overnight," was the prompt reply. "Go to bed without any supper, and you won't get nightmare."

I followed this advice, but it was no good. I had a worse nightmare than ever.

I told Dicky Nugent of my eggssperience, and he said, "The fact of the matter is, Sammy, you go to sleep on your back. Lay on your right side, and you can't possibly dream or have nightmare."

Accordingly, I laid on my right side next time I went to bed. But at midnight I was visited by the ghost of Greyfriars, and the fantom of Friardale. "Dicky," I said next morning, "I went to bed without any supper, and I laid on my right side, but I still had nightmare."

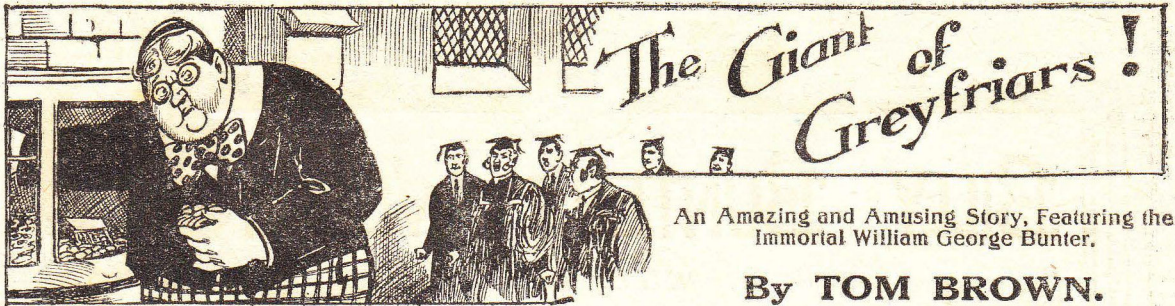
"Then you must try laying on your left side," said Dicky Nugent.

I tried this, but without rezult.

Bolsover minor said that if I took a sleeping draught I couldn't possibly get nightmare. So I went into the Common-room, where Gatty and Myers were playing draughts, and I picked up one of the draughts and swallowed it. My slumbers were more 'disturbed than ever that night! Finally, I tried the eggssperiment of going to sleep standing up, like a hoarse. And I found that it paid. I had no nightmare that night, so in future I shall always go to sleep on my feet. Rather a difficult feet at first, but easy enuff when you know how.

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An Amazing and Amusing Story, Featuring the Immortal William George Bunter.

By TOM BROWN.

**B**ILLY BUNTER crawled into the Head's summer-house. He had to crawl, for he was too top-heavy, as it were, to be able to walk properly.

Dinner was just over at Greyfriars. The second course had consisted of apple dumplings. Bunter had a distinct weakness for apple dumplings, and he had shifted six of them. In cold print, this may not seem a very big feat. But if you had seen the size of those apple dumplings, you would have blinked and gasped, and wondered how Bunter could possibly have got through half a dozen of them.

Anyway, he had! And the fat junior had now crawled away to a secluded spot where he might take "forty winks" after his orgy. For a feeling of drowsiness had come over him.

There was a rustic bench in the Head's summer-house. Billy Bunter flopped down on to it, and he was soon fast asleep. So soundly did he slumber that he failed to hear the bell for afternoon lessons.

An hour passed. Then Bunter opened his eyes.

"My hat!" muttered the fat junior. He sat up and blinked around him in astonishment.

The Head's summer-house seemed to have shrunk in size. Originally it had been a spacious place, big enough to hold a dozen Bunters. Now it had dwindled down to the size of a mere cupboard, and it was close and cramped and stuffy.

Billy Bunter was unable to rise to his feet, or his head would have crashed through the glass roof. He had to crawl out of the summer-house on all fours.

When he came out into the open further surprises awaited the fat junior.

Greyfriars School seemed to have shrunk also! It was about one-third of its original size. The old, weather-beaten tower now seemed like the midget tower of a fairy palace.

"M-m-my only aunt!" muttered Billy Bunter. "What on earth's happened? Has the school really got smaller, or have I got bigger?"

He looked at himself, but he seemed quite normal. Obviously it was not he who had altered. It was the school.

After pausing for a few moments to digest these extraordinary facts, Billy Bunter proceeded to the Remove Form-room. He had to

stoop as he walked along the passages for fear of bumping his head. And he was obliged to enter the Form-room in the same way that he had quitted the summer-house, namely, on all fours.

There was a great gasp of surprise when Billy Bunter appeared. Not only were the Removites surprised at Bunter's size, but he was equally surprised at theirs.

To Bunter, the juniors appeared like pigmies seated at tiny desks. And Mr. Quelch seemed a grotesque little dwarf.

To the class and Mr. Quelch, Billy Bunter appeared like a huge giant!

"Bless my soul!" gasped the startled Form master. "Bunter! What has happened?"

"That's just what I was going to ask you, sir. You all seem to have shrunk!"

"And you, Bunter, have assumed the proportions of a giant!" said Mr. Quelch.

Having crawled through the door successfully, Billy Bunter was able to rise to his feet. He simply towered over Mr. Quelch, like Goliath towering over David.

The members of the class sat speechless. As for Mr. Quelch, he blinked up at Billy Bunter for some moments before he spoke again.

"This is a most amazing affair!" he exclaimed at length. "Surely you are aware what has brought about this extraordinary change in your appearance, Bunter?"

"I haven't changed, sir. I'm just the same as I always was, and everybody else has shrunk! I'm beginning to wonder whether I'm at Greyfriars, or in Lilliput!"

"I—I am amazed, baffled, bewildered!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "But your gigantic statue shall not save you from your just punishment. You are nearly an hour late for lessons, Bunter!"

"Yessir."

"Have you any excuse to offer?"

"None, sir."

"Then I will cane you!"

Billy Bunter grinned broadly. Mr. Quelch was no longer a fearsome monster who could inflict heavy damage with his cane. Bunter, had he chosen, could have picked the Form master up by the scruff of the neck and tossed him out of the window.

In order to cane the fat junior, Mr. Quelch had to clamber up to the top of his desk. This was a rather undignified proceeding for a Form master, and the class chuckled.

When he had mounted his desk Mr. Quelch was on a level with Bunter's head, which was already outstretched.

Swish!

Mr. Quelch brought the cane down with all his force. But no yell of anguish rang through the Form-room, as was usually the case when Bunter was caned. Instead, the fat junior gave a chuckle.

Swish, swish, swish!

"I wish you'd stop tickling me, sir!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch, dancing about on the top of his desk, worked himself into a fury. He continued to lay on the cane with all the vigour of his right arm. But Billy Bunter was unhurt.

"It's for all the world as if somebody was tickling me with a feather!" he remarked.

Finally, when Mr. Quelch saw that he was making no impression upon the culprit, he desisted from his exertions. With a very flushed face, he got down from his perch and glared up at Billy Bunter's big, beaming face.

"I shall have to find other methods of dealing with you, Bunter, now that you have grown to such a colossal size," he said. "Go to your place."

Six fellows had to step from their places

in order to make room for Bunter to sit down. Only three juniors remained on the form—Skinner, Snoop, and Bolsover major.

The moment Bunter seated himself there was a mighty crash. The form broke in half and collapsed, and Skinner, Snoop, and Bolsover were buried among the debris.

Bunter himself collapsed with such a crash that he nearly went through the floor-boards, which groaned and creaked beneath his weight.

"Dear me!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "It is useless for you to sit on a form, Bunter. No form would bear your weight. You will have to sit on the floor."

"Ow! Very well, sir," said Bunter. And he planted his huge bulk on the floor, in the clear space between the Form master's desk and the front row of the class.

Needless to state, nobody was able to concentrate on lessons that afternoon. The fellows could only sit and stare at Billy Bunter, as if he were some strange creature from another world.

After lessons came tea. And now came the difficult problem of feeding the Greyfriars giant. Bunter had been a difficult person to satisfy before, but it was quite impossible to satisfy him now. A loaf of bread seemed no bigger than a penny bun to Bunter. And he could put three or four jam-tarts in his mouth at the same time.

Harry Wharton & Co. obtained all the supplies they could lay their hands on, and they brought them to Bunter in the Close.

The whole school turned out to see Bunter fed. And it was truly a remarkable sight.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy, "I'm awfully peckish, you know!"

"But you've had half a dozen loaves already!" protested Harry Wharton.

"I could eat another half-dozen with ease. Slice 'em in half, and put a pound of butter in the middle."

This was done. And at last Bunter's appetite was appeased. But only for a time. By supper-time he was as hungry as ever, and there were no more supplies to be had, unless he raided the tuckshop. And this he decided to do.

Bunter stayed out in the Close until darkness fell, for there was no room for him in Study No. 7. There had been no room for him before, as a matter of fact. His fat form had always taken up too much space. (Continued on next page.)



Mr. Quelch brought down the cane with all his force, but no yell came from Billy Bunter. "Stop tickling me, sir!" he grinned.

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Picking up the prefect by his collar, Bunter dropped him into the school fountain.

[Supplement II.]

**Billy Bunter is a Scream! Meet Him Again Next Week!**



And now the only thing to be done was to give Bunter Big Hall, or the Common-room, for a study. The masters were at that very moment holding a conference on the subject. It was suggested, among other things, that a whole dormitory should be allotted to Bunter for sleeping purposes, and that a long line of beds should be ranged together side by side, in order to make one big bed for Bunter.

Whilst the masters sat in council, Billy Bunter rolled away to the tuckshop. The place was locked up, but he hoped to be able to squeeze his huge form through the window. It was a large window, and he might just be able to get through at a pinch.

Loder of the Sixth happened to see Bunter making for the tuckshop, and he called to him.

"Bunter, where are you going?" "I'm hungry," growled Bunter, "and I'm going to loot the tuckshop!"

Bunter advanced until the angry prefect was within reach; then he picked him up by the collar and carried him, kicking and struggling, to the school fountain.

"Let go!" roared Loder. "If you dare to duck me, I'll—"

Before he could finish the sentence, Loder was floundering on the deep, wide bowl of the fountain. There was a yell of laughter from those who witnessed the occurrence.

Billy Bunter rolled away, leaving Loder to extricate himself from his cold bath as best he could.

Although he managed to force open the window of the tuckshop, Bunter found it quite impossible to squeeze himself through. But by thrusting his long arm through the window he was easily able to reach the shelves, which were stacked with good things.

"This is top-hole!" he muttered. And he started to make inroads into Mrs. Mimbble's supplies, until all the shelves were bare.

Loder, meanwhile, had scrambled out of the bowl of the fountain, and rushed away to change his clothes. He then went along to the Head's study, and announced that Billy Bunter was raiding the tuckshop.

The Head, with a procession of masters trailing in his wake, went out into the Close.

Dr. Locke thought it necessary to have a bodyguard, in case Bunter became aggres-

sive. There was nothing to prevent the fat junior dealing with the Head as he had dealt with Loder.

Bunter, however, decided that it would not be wise to cheek the Head, or to lay violent hands upon him. Such conduct would have resulted in expulsion, and Bunter didn't want to be expelled. He found the present scheme of things entirely to his liking. He wanted to stay on at Greyfriars, and make himself feared and respected by all the fellows.

The Head and his escort bore down upon the tuckshop. Bunter was just devouring the last dish of doughnuts.

"Bunter," thundered the Head, "how dare you invade Mrs. Mimbble's premises in this manner?"

"I was hungry, sir. I ate all the kitchen supplies at tea-time, but I soon got peckish again."

"He appears to have looted the entire shop!" exclaimed Mr. Prout, glancing through the window.

"For this outrage, Bunter," said the Head sternly, "you shall be publicly flogged."

This threat, which usually sent cold shivers down Bunter's spine, left him unmoved now. A general assembly was summoned, and the whole school trooped into Big Hall.

That public flogging was the funniest on record. It was impossible for Gosling, the porter, to take the delinquent on his shoulders, so Billy Bunter had to be pinioned to the floor. Then a couple of birchrods were lashed together, and the Head began to castigate Bunter's broad back.

"Stick it, sir!" said Bunter encouragingly. "I can't feel anything yet, but I may if you keep on long enough!"

The onlookers were fairly rocking with laughter. And the Head, growing more and more furious, brought the instrument of torture down with all the force at his command. After about fifty strokes Bunter experienced a slight tingling sensation—not sufficient to cause him any discomfort.

When the flogging was over, the masters again met in conference, and it was decided that Bunter would have to be sent away from Greyfriars. Not because of the tuck-raiding incident, but because it was impossible to

keep such a gigantic creature at the school. Bunter had already devoured the whole of the school supplies, putting the authorities to terrific expense.

An hour later Bunter was sent for by Dr. Locke, and he crawled into the Head's study on all fours.

"You sent for me, sir?" he said.

"Yes, Bunter. It has been decided that you cannot possibly remain at Greyfriars. You are so huge and clumsy that the lives of the community would be imperilled. Then, again, there is the question of food. It would cost about a hundred pounds a week to feed you. So in the circumstances you will have to go."

"But how can I travel, sir?" asked Bunter, in dismay. "I can't get into a railway-carriage!"

"We shall have to charter a pantechnicon for the purpose," said the Head. "I have wired to your father, and you will leave to-morrow morning."

At this Billy Bunter waxed indignant. And he was about to commit assault and battery upon the Head, when a hand suddenly fell upon his shoulder, and he started up out of his slumbers, to find himself in the Head's summer-house, which had reverted to its normal size. Bob Cherry and Harry Wharton were standing over him, and Bob was shaking him.

"Bunter, you fat duffer! We've been hunting for you all over the place," said the captain of the Remove. "You're over an hour late for lessons, you clump! Fancy going to sleep in the Head's summer-house!"

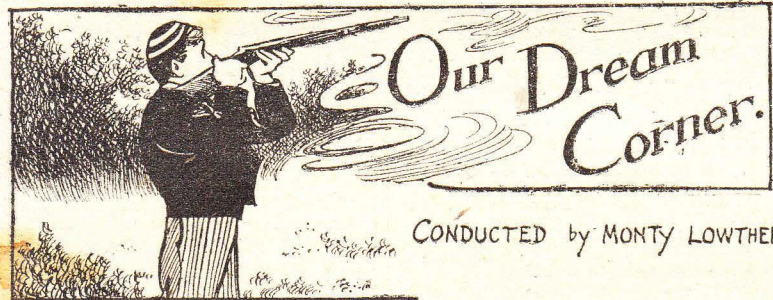
Billy Bunter sat up with a jerk, and rubbed his eyes, and blinked at his schoolfellows.

Gradually it dawned upon the fat junior that he had been seeing visions and dreaming dreams, and that "the Giant of Greyfriars" was only a dream-creation; after all!

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, who had been dispatched by Mr. Quelch to find Bunter, returned to the Remove Form-room. And Billy Bunter, like Eugene Aram of old, walked between—not with gyves upon his wrists, but with an uncomfortable feeling that he was going to get it "in the neck."

And he did!

THE END.



CONDUCTED by MONTY LOWTHER

(EDITOR'S NOTE.—Professor Lowther, the famous Dream Eggspert, needs no introduction to my readers. This week he replies to several of his schoolfellows who have been blessed—or afflicted—with dreams.—Ed.)

Aubrey Racke.—To dream of resin oozing from the bark of a tree means that you will shortly have occasion to rub some of this substance into your palms before going to Mr. Railton's study for a swishing! I've no doubt you've been up to some shady trick or other; and I hope you get it "in the neck." You won't have rubbed any resin into that part of your anatomy!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.—You say you dreamed that all the St. Jim's fellows came swarming around you with professions of eternal friendship. This is a sure sign that you are about to receive a "fiver" from your illustrious pater!

Robert Arthur Digby.—To dream of photography implies that Herries' bulldog will shortly take a "snap" at you! You'd better persuade Herries to muzzle the beast.

Reginald Talbot.—Rather a strange dream that you had, old man. You dreamed that you were wandering about on the football-field with a rifle, and you pressed the trigger four times. The explanation is quite simple. In your next match you are going to shoot four goals!

Jack Blake.—To dream of a public execution means that you are likely to "lose your head" in an emergency. Never mind! You'll soon "find your feet" again!

D'Arcy Minor.—To dream of a little lamb being shorn means that you will shortly pay a visit to the barber's! About time, too. For weeks past you've been going about like a long-haired poet!

Baggy Trimble.—Yours is a much

more hopeful dream than you seem to think. You say you dreamed that you were shunned on all sides. This is a good omen. It implies that you are going to be "left a-lone"!

Gerald Knox.—To dream of an epidemic of influenza at the school is a sure sign that you are going to "break out" again—via the box-room window, of course!

Bernard Glyn.—A dream of dynamite is always a hopeful sign. You are going to rise in the world!

Ralph Reckness Cardew.—I feel awfully sorry for you, and hardly like to give you the interpretation of your dream. You dreamed that you were given a job in a Government office. This means that you will shortly have an attack of sleeping-sickness! Hope you pull through all right!

George Figgins.—A dream in which you see stars and constellations is a bad omen. I believe you are having a friendly boxing bout with Dick Redfern in a day or two. Your dream suggests that he will knock you out!

Fatty Wynn.—To dream that you are short of "dough" means that you will only be permitted to have two slices of bread for breakfast in future, instead of the usual dozen!

Percy Mellish.—You say you dreamed that I gave you a black eye. This wasn't a dream at all. It was a premonition. Now that I've finished my article I'm coming round to present you with the black optic in question!

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## THE STOLEN CLAIM!

(Continued from page 12.)



He fixed his eyes on the thicket warily, and lifted his rifle to his shoulder.

With every sense on the alert he watched. The rustle came again.

Frank Richards was about to call out to his comrades, when he gave a start and a startled cry as a strong grip closed on him from behind.

For a moment he thought he was dreaming, or that one of his comrades had taken hold of him for a joke.

He spun round, but the grip was too strong for him, and he was forced to the ground, and in a dim light he caught a glimpse of a swarthy face—the face of Jose Gomez, the black-bearded claim-jumper.

"Bob!" yelled Frank. "Bob! Beau! Wake up!"

The next instant he was on the ground, flung there savagely by the muscular Mexican, and his rifle dragged from his hands.

At the same moment the other Mexican came running from the thicket.

Frank, as he rolled dazedly on the ground, understood how he had been tricked.

The Mexican in the thicket had deliberately rustled the foliage to draw his attention, while the other rascal stole upon him from behind from another direction.

Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclere started up from their blankets, reaching for their weapons as they did so.

But Frank Richards' rifle was in Gomez's hands, and he levelled it, his black eyes scintillating along the barrel.

"Hands up!" he shouted. "Up with them, senores, or I pull trigger!"

The rifle-muzzle was bearing full on the two schoolboys, within three yards of them, and it needed only the light pressure of a finger to send the bullet speeding.

"It's a cinch, Cherab!" said Bob Lawless coolly. "Pass, partner."

He put up his hands, and Beauclere followed his example. There was no help for it.

Even in the uncertain starlight, the Mexican could not have failed to kill at so short a range.

Frank Richards had striven to get on his feet, dazed as he was by the fall he had received, but Gomez's companion had grasped him, and a bright cuchillo glittered over the schoolboy.

The Mexican muttered something in Spanish which Frank did not understand, but he understood its import, and he lay still.

Bob Lawless' face was set, but he took the situation with his usual coolness.

"I guess this lets us out!" he remarked, keeping his hands up. "Your game, Mister Greaser."

"Keep your hands up!" granted Gomez. "You bet!"

The Mexicans had the upper hand, and for the present at least there was nothing to be done but to submit.

Gomez grinned savagely over the rifle. "The claim is ours, after all, I think, senores," he said. "Do not move," he added, his black eyes glittering at Bob Lawless.

"It's your game!" answered Bob tersely. "I'm keeping still."

"Juan!" snapped Gomez, addressing his companion, without turning his head. "Si, si!"

Gomez rapped out something in Spanish. His comrade had tied Frank Richards' wrists with a length of cord, and he now rose and advanced towards Bob and Beauclere and Chunky Todgers.

Under the threatening rifle of Gomez they could make no resistance, and Juan bound their hands together.

Then Gomez slung the rifle over his arm with a laugh.

"I think the claim is ours, senores," he said cheerfully. "But do not be disappointed—you shall work on the claim. Si, si! You

shall work—under my eye and under my rifle. Muy bien!"

Frank Richards & Co. sat down on their blankets with their hands bound. They were not feeling much inclined for sleep.

Gomez and his companion rummaged in the camp, and found food, and sat down to eat, grinning and chuckling, and talking to one another in Spanish.

They took no further heed of the schoolboys.

"What do you think their game is, Bob?" asked Frank gloomily.

"You heard what the galoot Gomez said. They're forced to keep us prisoners while they're jumping our claim, and they're going to make us earn our oats—working on the claim for them!"

"The awful villains!" groaned Chunky Todgers.

"I reckon the claim will peg out in a week or so," said Bob, "and then I calculate they'll vamoose, taking our dust and our hosses and outfit, and leaving us stranded in the mountains. That's their programme. But there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip, and I reckon we're going to down them somehow."

Bob Lawless spoke hopefully; but there seemed little hope in the situation for the claims of Cedar Creek.

And Frank Richards & Co. were not feeling cheerful when the dawn broke on the Cascade Mountains.

### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

#### Turning the Tables!

**C**LINK, clink! Pick and spade rang on the sand and the rock in the claim, as the morning sun climbed higher over the mountain peaks.

Frank Richards & Co. were at work. They worked with black brows and gleaming eyes, their thoughts busier than their hands.

On the rocky bank, Jose Gomez sat watching them, with rifle across his knees, and a grin on his swarthy face shaded by his big sombrero.

Juan, his comrade, stood on the sand, with a rope in his hand, for use, if the schoolboys flinched in their work.

Probably the two Mexicans, in their own country, had often worked wretched "peons" in the gold-mines in the same way, in the half-civilised Western States of Mexico, and it was nothing new to them.

But it was new to the Canadian schoolboys, and it made them grit their teeth as they worked and bided their time.

It was only the thought and the hope of somehow turning the tables upon the claim-jumpers that made them submit.

But resistance at present was out of the question.

Their weapons were in the hands of the two claim-jumpers, and Gomez sat, with his rifle ready to shoot, on the high, rocky bank, and he could have picked them off like rabbits if he had chosen.

Certainly he had no desire to risk a rope for his neck; but if the schoolboys had rushed on him with their picks, as they were strongly tempted to do, he would have shot them down without mercy.

Frank Richards blamed himself severely for having been taken off his guard in the night attack, though really he was little to blame.

The Mexicans had been too cunning for him, that was all.

Self-reproach was useless, however, and the question was, how to get out of the hands of the claim-jumpers.

There was a week's work ahead before the "pay-dirt" was washed out of the placer, and all the possible gold obtained.

It was Gomez's intention to keep the schoolboys prisoners till all was done—partly for his own safety and partly for their labour on the claim.

Pick and spade rang wearily under the brightening sunshine and the watchful eyes of the grinning Mexicans.

The work itself did not matter much; the schoolboys had intended to spend that day in hard work.

But working for themselves was quite different from working under compulsion for the benefit of a couple of thieves.

"Let 'em wait a bit!" murmured Bob Lawless, in a brief pause for rest. "I guess our end will come up soon. I know that I'll have a go at them with a pick, if I'm shot the next minute, before I'll let them walk off with our gold!"

"Same here!" said Vere Beauclere quietly. "But keep patient. Our only chance is to take them off their guard."

"Sigue!" called out Juan, with a threatening gesture of the rope.

"What does the rotter mean, Bob?"

"He means go on," said Bob, with a faint grin. "We'd better. Our turn will come!" And the labour was resumed.

A great deal of work was got through during the morning, and the two Mexicans grined with satisfaction over the result.

The "placer" was panning out well, though it was likely to be exhausted by a few more days of strenuous washing-out.

Frank Richards & Co. were dispirited enough as they ate a meagre lunch, and, after a short rest, they were turned back to work.

Bob Lawless grasped the handle of his pick hard, as Jose Gomez called to him, and the Mexican half-raised his rifle.

"You scum!" muttered Bob. "You pesky scum!"

"To work, nino!" grinned Gomez. "And listen to me! Any more of your black looks, and I will put a bullet through your leg, as a warning! To work!"

Bob choked back his feelings, and resumed his labour.

Under the afternoon sun the work on the claim went on.

The two Mexicans sat on the rocky bank under the shade of a tree, their firearms ready to their hands, and rolled cigarettes and smoked them incessantly, as they watched the labour they did not choose to share.

Suddenly the schoolboys started round from their work, and stared towards the bank where the Mexicans sat.

A loud and terrible cry had suddenly rung out, and, to their amazement, they saw Jose Gomez stagger forward, and roll helplessly down the bank into the sandy bed of the stream.

"What the thunder——" gasped Bob.

There was blood upon the Mexican as he rolled on the sand, clawing at it with his hands, and groaning.

The other rascal was on his feet, staring round at the trees behind where they had been sitting, rifle in hand.

Nothing was to be seen save the thick foliage, and the Mexican, in alarm and fear, fired into the trees.

Crack!

Bob Lawless gave a gasp. "Somebody heaved a rock at that galoot from behind!" he panted. "By gum, I reckon his head's got a pain in it! Buck up, you chaps!"

Gomez was sprawling helplessly on the sand, evidently hard hit.

A jagged chunk of rock, hurled from the thicket, had struck him on the back of the head, nearly stunning him, and for some minutes the Mexican was helpless.

The chance of the Cedar Creek fellows had come at last.

Bob Lawless rushed towards the fallen man, pick in hand.

Gomez, dazed as he was, saw him, and made an effort to get his rifle up to shoot. But before he could do so, Bob's pick crashed on his shoulder, and he sank back on the sand with a yell of agony.

The next instant Bob Lawless had caught up the rifle.

Juan, high up on the bank, was firing into the thicket, with a startled and furious face; but at his comrade's yell he spun round towards the creek.

His rifle was empty, but he crammed in a cartridge as he turned.

Bob raised Gomez's rifle.

But the Mexican on the rocky bank would have fired first, quick as Bob was; and Frank and Beauclere, as they saw it, felt sick at heart for a second.



But even as the Mexican above was pulling the trigger, a chunk of rock whizzed from the thicket and struck him in the back.

Juan pitched forward heavily, his rifle exploding as he fell, and the bullet crashing into the sandy bed of the stream.

Unable to save himself, the Mexican pitched forward, and rolled down the rocky bank, crashing within a yard of the sprawling Gomez.

He lay there and groaned.

"On him!" yelled Frank.

With a leap, Frank Richards reached the fallen Mexican as he sprawled on his face, and his knee was planted between Juan's shoulders, pinning him down.

The Mexican groaned.

The crashing rock on his back had hurt him severely, and he was in no condition for a struggle, even if he had had a chance.

Gomez had made an attempt to rise and draw the knife in his belt, but Beauclerc reached him, and his pick circled over the rascal's head.

"Quiet!" said Beauclerc coolly. "Let that knife go, or I'll knock your brains out where you lie, you scoundrel!"

Gomez, with a curse, relinquished the weapon.

Beauclerc snatched it from his belt and tossed it into the stream.

"I guess this is our game!" said Chunky Todgers, gasping with delight. "Keep those rotters safe, and I'll tie 'em up."

"Go it, Chunky!"

Chunky Todgers ran for a trail-rope.

Gomez and Juan made no resistance now.

They were injured, and they were under the threat of a rifle and a couple of picks—more than sufficient to keep them in a state of submission.

The chums watched them warily enough, however, till Chunky returned with the rope from the camp, and bound their hands.

The two Mexican's being secured, Frank Richards & Co. had time to turn their attention to their unknown rescuer, who was still hidden by the thicket above the bank.

"Show yourself, pard!" called out Bob Lawless.

Who it was that had attacked the claim-jumpers so opportunely for the Cedar Creek chums was a mystery; but Frank Richards thought he could guess.

And he smiled when the thicket rustled, and through the foliage a diminutive figure appeared, with a little yellow face grinning under a big Stetson hat.

"Yen Chin!" yelled Bob.

The Chinese grinned.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Beauclerc.

The little Chinese clambered down the rocky bank, and joined the chums of Cedar Creek on the wet sand of the claim.

"Allee light," he said cheerfully. "Me comee backee! Nicey ole Flanky glad to see pool lil' Chinee—oh, yes!"

And Yen Chin grinned at the astonished Co.

"Well, by gum!" said Bob Lawless at last, with a deep breath. "I guess this lets me out! You—"

"What you tinkee?" grinned Yen Chin.

"I thought you'd made tracks for home."

"No makee tracks without nicey ole pals," said Yen Chin. "Me tinkee stickee to ole Flanky—oh, yes! Me wanchee. Me see. See bad Mexican man makee pool ole Flanky walkee—oh, yes! Me comee quiet—cleepce—what you tinkee? Cleepce velly quiet in tlee. comee behind." The little Chinese chuckled.

"Heavee look at Mexican man—what you tinkee? Oh, yes!"

"I was never so jolly glad to see a rock heaved," said Bob Lawless.

"You came along at the right time, Yen Chin," said Beauclerc, with a smile. "We were in a bad fix."

Yen Chin nodded.

"Me knowee—oh, yes! Now allee light, you likee ole Yen Chin comee back—oh, yes?"

He blinked inquiringly at the chums of Cedar Creek.



Frank Richards & Co. worked with black brows and gleaming eyes. On the rocky bank Jose Gomez sat watching them, with a rifle across his knees. Juan, his comrade, stood on the sand, with a rope for use, if the schoolboys flagged in their work. (See Chapter 4.)

Frank Richards laughed.

There was not much question that the little heathen was to rejoin the party, after the service he had rendered.

It was owing to Yen Chin that the school-boy party had the upper hand of the claim-jumpers, and after that bygones had to be bygones, whatever the young rascal had done before.

"All serene, kid!" said Bob Lawless. "I suppose you can't help being a thundering little scoundrel!"

"No helpee," agreed Yen Chin. "But Chinee velly good boy now, nicey boy, bully boy with a tin ear, you bet! Oh, yes! Nevel playee cardee no mole, nevel steallee, nevel bollow money without askee first. You bet!"

"Till the next time," grunted Bob.

"What you tinkee?" grinned Yen Chin.

"Well, the blessed heathen's in our crowd again, anyhow," said Bob. "That's settled."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Frank and Beauclerc.

And Chunky Todgers nodded assent.

Yen Chin beamed with satisfaction.

"Nicey ole Bob!" he said. "Me likee nicey ole Bob velly muchee. Me going to be good boy, velly good boy! Now me killee Mexican."

Yen Chin drew his hunting-knife, and turned to the two Mexicans with a business-like air.

There was a simultaneous yell of terror from Gomez and Juan.

"Senor!"

"Vaya!"

Frank Richards caught the Chinese by the shoulder and dragged him back.

"Stop it, you young villain!" roared Bob.

"Bettee killee. Safee."

"Senores!" gasped Gomez. "Let us go! We will make tracks—we will leave—we will

hurry! Keep him away, with his knife! Carambo! Let us go!"

Bob Lawless searched the Mexicans for weapons, and completely disarmed them.

Then he broke off some sticks from the thicket and handed them round.

"Lay it on as they go!" he said.

The schoolboys formed up in two lines, grinning—Bob and Chunky and Frank on one side, Yen Chin and Beauclerc on the other.

Then Gomez was cut loose and told to run.

He was willing enough to run, and the sticks lashed on him as he ran the gauntlet, eliciting fiendish yells from the claim-jumper. He went running on, still yelling.

Then Juan was cut loose, and set running after him, with a liberal application of the sticks to his back to help him go.

The two Mexicans disappeared down the valley, yelling wildly, and vanished. They were not likely to return.

Frank Richards & Co. worked the claim for the following week, keeping a good look-out the while, but nothing more was seen of the claim-jumpers. They had had a severe lesson, and they gave the schoolboy goldseekers a wide berth.

Yen Chin, on his best behaviour now, worked as hard as any of the party, perhaps with some idea of atoning for his fault. But he was quite forgiven now, and the chums of Cedar Creek let bygones be bygones.

At the end of the week the "placer" was exhausted, and the chums rode down to Tucker's Bar with their gold—which weighed up to the tune of a thousand dollars.

Which, as Bob remarked with exuberant satisfaction, would be something to show the fellows at Cedar Creek when they came home after their holiday in the North-West.

THE END.

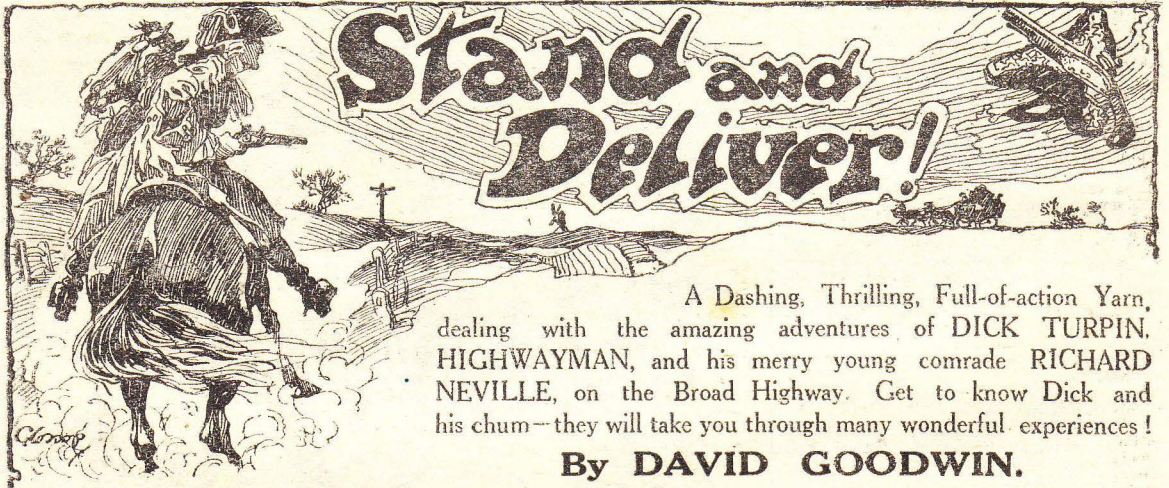
The Popular Chums of Cedar Creek, Next Week, in:—

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By DAVID GOODWIN.

#### BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Dick Neville, the young squire of Faulkbourne, is turned out of his rightful inheritance by the low-down treachery and deceit of an adventurer who calls himself Hector Neville, Dick's cousin. Hector is helped in his vile plotting by reason of the fact that Dick has fallen into disgrace with the Government, owing to the assistance he has rendered the famous highwayman, Dick Turpin. The young squire has also another deadly enemy in Captain Sweeney, a notorious footpad. Hector Neville is determined to obtain possession of the lordly mansion wherein Dick has taken up his abode. The roguish has foiled the first time, but he returns to the charge armed with legal warrants. Dick first of all resists Hector, but when news comes through that he has been outlawed, and that the King's Riders are after him, he

leaves Faulkbourne with Dick Turpin. Turpin is called away suddenly on a secret mission. Whilst he is away Dick falls into the hands of Captain Sweeney, but he escapes serious injury.

Having waited several days for the return of Turpin, Dick Neville decides to set out in quest of his comrade, fearing foul play. He makes inquiries at a Romany camp in the forest, but, thinking Dick to be an agent of the law on the highwayman's track, the gipsies make him a captive.

"As you are so keen on finding Turpin," said the gipsy chief, "you will wait for him to arrive here. Yonder he rides to the camp. Your reckoning is soon to come!"

(Now read on.)

gone through—since they parted, and his comrade listened attentively.

"Plague take that villain Sweeney!" said Turpin, when Dick had finished. "We must lay him low before he does us a mischief. 'Tis plain he seeks your life the most, since he has neglected me for you of late; and, in truth, you are lucky to have escaped after falling into his hands. As to Lord Durisdeer, he is a good friend, though in little better case than yourself, for all his fine house and his fortune. I fear his Stuart business may bring him low."

"I promised to ride with him, if the Pretender had wit enough to strike another blow," said Dick.

"And no harm in that," replied Turpin. "To help place a new king on his throne would win us our pardons. Though, pink me, if I care much for that, and I have no such great faith in pardons!"

"Nor I," laughed Dick, "since my own was plucked from me when it was scarce three weeks old, besides turning me out of Faulkbourne. But I have Hector Neville to thank for that."

"Touching that matter," said Turpin, "I learn that your worthy cousin is doing Faulkbourne little credit. Now that he has turned you out of it he has proved himself the most niggardly young miser in Norfolk, where the gentry are mostly open-hearted enough for any man. He starts himself even good food, gives not a farthing away in charity, has reduced the household to almost nothing, and turned away all your old family servants without their pensions."

"Now, by the black rood, this is too much!" said Dick furiously. "Faulkbourne to carry the name of a miser's house? And old Stephens and Wainford and Matthews and Jauret, and my faithful serving-men and maids flung—many of them in their old age, too—and without a living? Burn me, Turpin, this is atrocious!"

"It is the truth," said Turpin, as Dick began to walk savagely to and fro, with a black frown on his face.

"Even Vesey did not do that!" cried Dick. "I would have cared less had Hector done credit to the place he has cheated me of."

He sat down, and was silent for some time, thinking busily, while Turpin lay luxuriously on his back on the turf and smoked.

"Turpin," said Dick at last, "there are two things I feel the want of."

"And they are?" said Turpin, without moving.

"A good sword and a good dinner." "I thought you had them both at this moment," said the highwayman; "one outside your belt and the other inside it."

"Both might be better," returned Dick. "I have long felt the lack of my favourite Toledo rapier, which, in my hurry, I left behind me. For all this has been an excellent feast; change is a great thing, and I would my next were on a table, after all, with a little sauce, which I shall add on my own account and in my own manner. A

#### A DARING RESOLVE!

DICK, astonished by the unexpected attack and capture, wondered into what hands he had fallen, and who it was that he had to fear. By the old gipsy's tones he guessed that there was little hope for him, and he kept silence and awaited events.

Suddenly, out from the trees, Turpin himself trotted into the clearing, astride Black Bess.

"Hallo, brother!" he said to the old gipsy. "When have you caught?"

And then his gaze fell on Dick, tied to the tree.

"Dick!" he shouted, leaping down from the mare. "By all the powers, is it you? Burn me, Sapengro, you've hawked at the crow and caught the falcon! Cut him loose!"

"Well met at last!" cried Dick. "And now, what the plague do your friends mean by trussing me like a turkey?"

"Who is he?" cried one of the gipsies. "Dick Neville, at your service?"

"A thousand plagues!" cried the old Romany, hastily setting Dick free. "I crave your pardon, brother! But why did you not say so? The chal came here, Turpin, and offered us money to tell him where you were; so, of course we noosed him."

"Say; 'twas my own fault!" said Dick, laughing, as he shook hands all round. "I should have explained before, asking, 'I deserve it.'"

"Why, yes," said the gipsy. "Never offer money to a Romany! How were we to know you were not a spy of chokengres (constables)?"

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"Well, I'm glad he did not kill one or two of you before you made him fast!" said Turpin. "I would rather tackle Old Nick himself than Dick Neville—eh, Dick?"

"And glad I am that you took me so quickly," laughed Dick, "and especially that Black Satan was not among the trees, and did not see you attack me, or I should now have a brother or two the less."

"This is my good friend John Sapengro," said Turpin; "and, being a little hard pressed by the Riders, after an affair outside York, I have been lying low here for a day or two. I guessed you would soon find me, though I did not think to come upon you tied fast to a pine-tree. And now let us feast under the greenwood, and tell what we have befallen each other and what we are to do next."

It was a merry feast that the two friends and the gipsies sat down to round the campfire. The half of a fat young buck, delicately roasted, was the chief dish, and little of it did they leave.

"Pink me, if this isn't more to my taste than a meal with my knees under the mahogany and three servants at my back," said Dick; "and not even Durisdeer could put such venison on his table."

"It came from Sir Sutton Grinch's pack," said Sapengro, laughing.

"Without leave of his keepers," laughed Dick.

"Faith, yes!" chuckled Turpin, cutting another large slice of the savoury meat. "They might find themselves roasting over the same fire as the deer, did they have the hardihood to protest! And now, Dick, I've told you how I stopped the Nottingham mail, and cased the fat merchant outside York, where I was so nearly taken. Now tell me what has befallen you, and why you failed at the cross-roads, as we agreed."

Dick gave him a full account of all he had

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sword and a banquet! We should find them both at Hector's house, and, doubtless, a few bags of guineas besides. Turpin, we will go and dine at Faulkbourne!"

The elder highwayman sat up in astonishment. "And put your neck in the hangman's noose?"

"No doubt, if Hector expected us. But it's the last thing he will dream of. We will surprise him. Come, comrade, 'tis but two days' ride. On Thursday we will dine with my cousin!"

Turpin laughed aloud. "A merry jest, in faith!" he said. "Dick, I'm with you! Let us rest ourselves and the horses here to-night, and then, ho, for Faulkbourne!"

## BACK TO FAULKBOURNE!

**T**HERE is one thing I did not tell you," said Turpin, as, on the evening of the second day, they were cantering over Birtny Heath, after a pleasant but uneventful ride southward. "Although this precious cousin

of yours, with all your rent-roll and lands, stints himself and others like a miser, yet he has one great banquet on hand for the fifteenth, as I learned. 'Tis then the lord-lieutenant dines with him, and Hector, though the expense is torture to him, desires greatly to be on good terms with his powerful neighbour, and will give him of the best."

"The fifteenth!" exclaimed Dick. "Why, that is to-morrow!"

"So I believe," said Turpin; "though one day is much like another to me."

"Ah, but look you," cried Dick in delight, "it makes a vast difference in this case! All provisions for the banquet will be already in the house, ready for our noble selves! 'Twill add a spice to the jest to eat the lord-lieutenant's dinner. 'Twas the one thing that puzzled me—if Hector lives so badly, what sort of fare were we to get? But now that difficulty is over!"

"Ay, and well solved," said Turpin. "But since he has turned the household out of doors to save their wages, who is to wait on us?"

"Why, I consider I may prevail on cousin Hector to fill that post himself," said Dick with a grin; "and, if he does it creditably, I may go so far as to give him a shilling for his pains."

"There is much dignity in store for the new master of Faulkbourne, I can see," said Turpin. "But are those not the lights of the house yonder, among the trees?"

"Ay, 'tis but a mile farther," said Dick. "But who comes here—a foot-passenger?"

The two comrades were not wearing their masks, and a large, strong-looking woman, dressed in rough but neat clothes, made a curtsy to the horsemen as they passed. Then an exclamation escaped her.

"Master Dick!" she cried, staring.

"As I live," said Dick, "'Tis Janet, my old head-cook, and a better never served a banquet! And how goes the world with you, Janet?"

"Lawks, it do do my eyes good to see you agen, Master Dick!" said the big cook, dropping a deep curtsy. "An' they say you be turned highwayman an' all! Well, a Neville o' Faulkbourne may choose his own path a' please himself! As for me, sir, things be mighty bad. I never thought to be out in the cold an' penniless arter serving the Nevilles forty year, but yonder skinny jackanapes that calls hisself the squire now, turned me out neck an' crop, with all the other old servants o' the family, an' everything goin' to rack and ruin at the Hall, an' the plate never used, an' no decent food ever cooked, an' the cabbage-water all poured down the pipes instead o' out on the muck-heaps, an' Mrs. Puddephat says to me last Tuesday, as ever was—"

"Yes, yes," said Dick, "that's all very interesting, Janet, but I've got something to say to you if you can find time to hear it. Would you like to serve me again for a night? Then come to the Hall at five o'clock, and you shall do it, and at the same time we may be able to put right that little matter of your pension. There's

no cook like you in Norfolk, and I want you to do your best to-night. Bring all the serving-maids you want to help you."

"I'd serve you on my knees, an' for nothin' till the day I died, Master Dick!" cried Janet, the tears standing in her eyes.

"Nay, for one night only, Janet," said Dick. "But since a Neville has done you wrong, a Neville shall set you right. Only remember, say no word about it, either now or at the Hall, that you have seen me. If you do, it may mean my death."

"I would cut my tongue out by the roots first!" cried Janet.

"Five o'clock, then," said Dick, with a nod. And the two comrades rode on.

"Better and better!" chuckled Turpin. "Come, Dick, all looks well for our banquet. Plenty of fare and a good cook—what more can one want? And here we are near to the house. What's to be done with the horses?"

"We'll turn them loose in the little wood yonder," said Dick, "where nobody will find them, and they will yet be handy against our need. For it is not unlikely we may have to ride for our necks after this evening's sport."

The two highwaymen rode off towards the wood, and vanished amid the shade of the trees.

Faulkbourne Hall, as of old, stood peaceful and majestic at the head of the park, though at present, instead of the blaze of lighted windows that used to give it such a hospitable air at night, but two showed any light, and that of the dimmest.

## UNEXPECTED VISITORS!

**I**N the old banquetting-hall Hector Neville sat at meat with two others. One was his factor, a thin-faced, cunning-looking man, somewhat of Hector's own stamp. The other was James



"Spare me!" squealed Hector, grovelling on the floor, as Turpin reached for his pistols. "I am too young to die!" "You are of the age of Dick!" growled Turpin. "But I'll see you grow no older!" (See page 21.)

Clifford, a pompous local squire and magistrate, who had reasons of his own for cultivating Hector Neville's friendship, despite the meagreness of his table.

Hector's dark, furtive features wore a look of smug content. It could hardly have been the meal of the table that pleased him—a few sozzly cutlets and a jug of small beer. Perhaps it was the thought of the money he was saving, and which was the subject of his speech.

"Money moves all things, Clifford!" he said to the magistrate, his black eyes shining and twinkling. "Money makes the man! He is a fool who spends it on trifles, when he might keep it to gain him power. None can say I fritter money away on what spendthrifts call good living!"

"No, indeed," said Clifford, wiping his mouth after a pull at the small beer; "your worst enemy could not accuse you of that! Speaking of enemies, have you had any trouble with your cousin Richard, who, they say, has turned highwayman again? I doubt he was none too pleased when you took Faulkbourne from him."

Hector laughed loudly. "Od's faith!" he said. "No fear of trouble from him. A price on his head, and the noose awaiting him, he will never dare show his nose within fifty leagues of Faulkbourne! Ah, but I wish from my heart he would attempt it!"

"'Twould afford you a little excitement?" "Excitement? Bah! Child's play! I would soon have him fast, and dangling from Gorse Hill gallows! But, alas! the rogue fears me too much to show himself in Norfolk! Is it not so, Bennett?"

"It is indeed, sir," said the factor, with a flattering smirk. "He trembles at your very name!"

"So he does!" cried Hector valiantly, pulling at his pint pot again. "'Tis but a poor-spirited swashbuckler, this Dick o' the Roads—he trembles at my very name! He—What's this?"

The pint pot fell from his hand, and his cheeks turned white as ashes. Through the open door, calm and debonaire, walked Dick Neville and Turpin, side by side.

"Good-even, gentlemen!" said Dick suavely. "Mr. Clifford, your most obedient. Mr. Bennett, my respects. Cousin Hector, the wish of your heart, which I lately heard you express, is fulfilled. I have come to show my nose in Faulkbourne, by your invitation. But I fear the joy of seeing me has caused you to spill the ale down your coat."

Hector, who had collapsed into his chair, sat staring at him with horrified eyes.

"It is unthankful work to tremble at your name fifty leagues away," said Dick, "so I have come to delight you by doing it in your presence. Behold me tremble! Nay, cousin, edge not towards the pistol in the chimney-piece! 'Tis too far off to serve you."

"Blood!" cried Clifford, his eyes starting out of his head. "Are you Dick Neville?"

"At your service," replied Dick politely—"late of this manor of Faulkbourne, but now of the King's highways. Let me present my comrade, Richard Turpin, of the same estate."

"Your most obedient servant, gentlemen," said Turpin, bowing affably.

"Ring the bell, Bennett!" shouted Hector, at last finding his voice. "Ring the bell!"

But Bennett, observing Dick's eye on him, made no effort to move, fearing for his own skin.

"Come, Mr. Bennett," said Dick, "did you not hear the squire's command? Ring the bell!"

Vastly surprised, Bennett obeyed. Dick whipped from his pockets his pair of horse-pistols.

"Let me call your attention to these excellent weapons," he said. "They are of the finest finish and workmanship. It may have reached your ears that they are not given to missing their mark in my hands. I can promise you that if anyone moves, or cries aloud, or makes any signal, without my permission, they will give you proof of the fact instantly. Am I understood?"

The three men winced visibly as the pistol-muzzles delicately played over them.

"I will now put them out of sight," said Dick, replacing them in his pocket; "but let me beg of you to remember their existence."



"To which I may add," said Turpin arrogantly, "that I also have a pair of similar curiosities in my pockets, if you will take my word for so much. I will not produce them for your inspection, however, unless I am obliged, for they are not for show, but for work."

Mr. Bennett and the magistrate looked very blue. Hector glared like an angry cat.

"Having given this little explanation," said Dick, "we will now proceed to pleasure. Cousin, we will do ourselves the honour of dining with you."

"Leave the house!" panted Hector furiously. "Leave it, you felon!"

"Places will be laid for four," said Dick. "Really, Hector, you will oblige me to give you a small lesson in manners. Have you already forgotten the last one?"

Hector quailed before Dick's eye.

"Ah, here is the servant!" said Dick as a serving-man appeared in answer to the bell. "A new face—one I do not recognise. We shall inquire into that later. Here, good fellow, clear away this meat. My affection for you is great, Hector; but I feel sure you have a warmer welcome for me than chops and small beer."

The guests sat as if petrified; Hector fought for breath. Rage consumed him, yet, for his life, he dared not disobey Dick and give the servant any warning of what was amiss.

"There is nothing in the house!" he said hoarsely.

"Tut!" said Dick, with a wave of his hand. "Do not let us stand on ceremony, cousin. Plain fare will satisfy Turpin and me. We will make shift with the provisions you have ordered for the lord-lieutenant's dinner tomorrow night."

Hector leaped from his chair, his eyes starting from his head, the veins swelling upon his forehead.

"Ten thousand fends!" he shouted. "The constables! Send for the King's Riders!"

Dick's eyes fell upon his cousin, and the words died on Hector's lips.

A dead silence possessed all the company. The stupid-looking serving-man gaped vacantly, hardly understanding his master's outburst. Bennett and the magistrate sat uneasily on their chairs, fearing a tragedy. Hector himself, under Dick's grim gaze, trembled visibly, and bitterly repented his outburst of rage, expecting every moment to be shot. Turpin leaned against the mantelpiece with the air of enjoying himself hugely.

"I beg your pardon, cousin," said Dick coolly. "Do the King's Riders, then, serve your meals?"

Hector turned all the colours of the rainbow. He longed to denounce his rival, and order the servant to spread the alarm; but he knew Dick's hand inside his coat-pocket

grasped the ready pistol-butt, and that to give the alarm might well prove his last word on earth.

"I think, Hector, the small beer has got into your head," said Dick. "We will replace it with something worthier. Give your servant his order. I pray you!"

"Clear the table!" said Hector hoarsely to his man.

"And hark ye," added Dick, "move a little quicker, man, and tread more lightly. What is the noise in the servants' quarters?"

"If you please, sir," said the man, blinking stupidly, "Janet, the cook who used to be here, has arrived with an army of hand-maids and stormed the kitchen. She has turned the new cook into the scullery to wash the dishes, and boxed the footman's ears, and chased the others who were there out of the window, if it please you."

"It does please me," said Dick. "Desire Janet the cook to come up here."

"Od'so!" exclaimed Hector furiously, as the man went to obey. "That woman in my house again! I'll—"

"You'll hold your tongue, to begin with," answered Dick, "unless you wish to sup on a bullet. I shall not warn you again, Hector."

"Had I been you," murmured Turpin in Dick's ear, "I would have shot him when first he opened his mouth. It is always as well to teach a little lesson on these occasions, and it would keep the others quiet."

Dick grinned. "Nay," he said in an undertone, "I think it due to me to make him obey without shooting him, unless he obliges me to. Look at the rascal, Turpin, bubbling with rage, yet not daring to strike a blow in his own house—or rather, mine!"

"You shall pay for this—you shall pay for this!" muttered Hector, livid with fury, and still more so as the ample figure of Dick's old cook appeared in the doorway.

"Did ye send for me, Master Dick?" she said, curtseying.

"I did, Janet," said Dick. "I want you to do your very best, and serve us quickly the finest dinner for four that you can turn out. You'll find plenty of provisions in the store-houses."

Janet dropped another curtsey, and, with a delighted grin at the raving Hector, swiftly disappeared again. Even from the dining-hall they could hear her hustling the serving-people about like chickens on a flower-bed.

"I said four places," said Dick politely to the magistrate and Bennet. "I hope to have the pleasure of your company."

"We—we have just dined," said Bennett gloomily.

"Dined!" exclaimed Dick. "What, on chops and small beer? Od'so, sir, 't would be a dishonour to Faulkbourne to let you fast thus! I pray you, dine with me!"

"We cannot well refuse," said the magistrate uneasily.

"Ay, that's true," said Dick with a smile, patting his side-pocket affectionately. "And you, cousin, will also partake?"

"No, I will not!" snapped Hector. "And you shall not squander the costly viands I have ordered for the lord-lieutenant!"

"Shall not" is a rough pair of words to use," said Dick. "You surprise me, cousin, after my courtesy to you. It begins to dawn upon me that you hardly see how well you are off. It seems, after all, it would be simpler to shoot you, and help ourselves to what we want."

"And so say I!" exclaimed Turpin. "Come, Dick, let us empty a barker into his head and go on to the strong-room! Never mind the dinner!"

"Nay; I did but jest!" shrieked Hector, cowering.

"Your ways are a little abrupt, Turpin," said Dick. "We must not forgo our sport. But do you bear it in mind, cousin, or I may follow my excellent comrade's advice. There are two or three little matters that need my attention."

During the wait that followed Dick and his comrade wrapped their guests round with bland courtesy so delicately that the two men did not know what to make of it, and spent their time wondering whether they would eventually be shot, or robbed, or both.

Hector could hardly be induced to say anything, but sat glowering and growling, despite Dick's entreaties to make himself agreeable. Time and again he glanced towards the window, trying to make up his mind to dash out and raise the alarm round the neighbourhood, but his nerve was not strong enough, and Dick's grim smile warned him what to expect.

Soon the serving-man reappeared, and by Dick's order laid the table with the best and richest plate and crystal that Faulkbourne held. The finest wines in the cellar were brought up, and before very long the dinner was ready.

"Let it be served," said Dick. "Come, gentlemen, take your places! Cousin, as you refuse my hospitality, you shall have the honour of waiting upon us. See that you do it neatly, and I must warn you that Turpin always shoots anyone who spills wine over the cloth."

"What!" screamed Hector. "Wait—me wait?"

"With a little less noise than that," returned Dick. "Do not repeat my orders, but carry them out! Where is the serving-man? Come here, fellow! Place all the dishes as they are served upon the buffet yonder, and leave them. Turpin, will you take that end, while I preside? Is the soup ready? Hand it round, Hector, and spill it not at your peril!"

Hector looked as though he would have a fit on the spot; but Dick drew both his pistols and laid them by the side of his plate. The owner of Faulkbourne was convinced, and, swallowing an oath, served round the soup with a hand that shook dangerously, muttering to himself the while.

"Od'so, knave! You're drunk, sirrah!" said Turpin, turning on him fiercely.

Hector nearly jumped out of his boots.

"N-not I, please you, sir!" he quavered.

"I say yes, dog!" replied Turpin. "Dick, this serving-fellow of yours has been tipping till his hand shakes like a leaf! He ate but spilled the soup over me!"

"Have a care, rogue!" said Dick to Hector. "I will dismiss him with a week's wages after we have dined! For the present let us make use of him. Wine here for his worship the magistrate, fellow!"

Hector made haste to obey. He was not sure whether he stood on his head or his heels.



**PUNISHING A RASCAL!**

THE soup was excellent. The guests pledged each other. The wine was better still. The man from the kitchen brought in the second course, and laid it on the buffet. Hector handed it round.

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"The left side, you rogue!" said Turpin. "S' death, but you don't know the beginning of your business! Bring the dish to my left!"

"Wine here to Mr. Bennett!" ordered Dick. "Quick about it!"

The agent was but a dull dog, and could not rise to the occasion, still remaining ill at ease; but the magistrate proved himself a very jolly old cock after he had disposed of a bottle or two, and laughed, cracked jests, and ordered Hector about with the best of them. The owner of Faulkbourne himself, though he dared not disobey the commands of his dangerous guests, went about his work in sullen, burning fury. Dick, although appearing to consider nothing but the meal and his guests, watched him quietly, none the less.

"Come here," he said presently, "and carve a wing of this capon for his worship!"

Hector came to Dick's side, and took the carvers, and the young highwayman saw how his cousin's hands trembled with hate. Dick was jesting merrily with the magistrate, when suddenly, like a flash of light, Hector struck at Dick's breast with the carving-knife, with a force that would have buried it to the hilt.

A shriek burst, not from Dick's lips, but from Hector's. The point actually pierced

therefore hasten and put on those clothes!"

"Would you degrade our name thus?" said Hector sullenly. "I am a Neville, as well as you!"

"Cousin," said Dick sternly, "you have degraded our name with fraud and lies and treachery, with miserliness and broken faith, more than any garments can dishonour you! You will stand in an honest man's clothes for the first time in your life, and, therefore, put on that servant's livery, lest I rid Faulkbourne of you for ever!"

Thoroughly cowed at last, Hector, the double-dealer, doffed his own clothes, and stood up in his own serving-man's livery.

"Now, pick up yonder carving-knife, and carve as I bade you!" said Dick.

Hector fetched the knife and obeyed. Dick sat in his chair, with no weapon in his hands, smiling quietly, while he gave his cousin the same chance as before. A swift blow of the knife might still have meant his death, but Hector had learned his lesson. Courage such as Dick's was outside the understanding of Neville Vesey's son.

"Pink me!" muttered the magistrate. "The boy fears no peril under the sun! A wondrous cool head!"

"Gentlemen," said Dick, "do not let my servant's clumsiness spoil the feast. The sauce this way, rascal!"

over the chair you will find the keys of the strong-room, where there are two chests of gold. The economical habits of our friend here should have added a goodly store. Will you take two of the men and bring a few loads down here? The gold you will find in the leatheren bags."

"This," said Turpin, taking up his pistols, "is a task which suits me most amazing well. Come—you, and you!"

He picked two of the strongest men, and in a little time brought them back with a goodly load of bags that chinked merrily as they were set down. Dick poured out a heap of glittering guineas, and divided them rapidly into smaller heaps.

"It is the custom of Faulkbourne," he said, "to allow all faithful servants a pension. I think it doubtful, if I extracted a promise from my cousin Hector to pay, whether you would ever get your monthly doles. Therefore, let each of you over the age of forty take hence one hundred and fifty guineas in gold; and each under that age fifty—the reason being that the young may fight their way, but the old need succour. Come, then, and take the Faulkbourne pension, and ask no leave of him who stands there. Dick Neville holds the floor to-night!"

The old servitors came forward one by one,



Dick poured out a heap of glittering guineas, and divided them rapidly into small heaps. "Come now, you faithful servants!" he cried to the group of men. "Come and take the Faulkbourne pension!" The old servitors came forward one by one. (See this page).

the young highwayman's silken vest, but it went no farther. Dick had caught his cousin's wrist with a grip of iron, and gave it a sudden turn that upset Hector on the floor, and sent the knife across the room.

"So," said Dick quietly, "I was expecting that!"

"Spare me!" squealed Hector, grovelling on the floor, as Turpin reached for his pistol. "I am too young to die!"

"You are of an age with Dick!" growled Turpin, deliberately cocking his weapon. "But I will see you grow no older!"

"Nay, put up your pistol, Turpin," said Dick, "and ring the bell! This is my affair. Get up, worthy and respected cousin!"

Hector rose sullenly, and the serving-man appeared at the door.

"Here, sirrah," said Dick, "off with your coat and vest! Now your breeches! Be not bashful, but obey! Your cravat also, and shoes!"

Amid the laughter of the others, all save Hector, the bewildered serving-man took off his brass-buttoned livery, and piled it on the floor. Dick bade him go, and he left the room in his woollen underwear, convinced that he had to do with madmen.

"Now, cousin," said Dick, "you serve but ill in the clothes of a gentleman, neither do they become you. In the Faulkbourne livery you will know your duties better,

The banquet ended at last, and a sumptuous one it had proved. Even Dick admitted he had never sat down to a better.

"There remains a small matter to settle," he said, as they rose from the table. "Sound the bell once more."

The serving-man appeared. Everyone waited, wondering what was coming.

"Bid those who are waiting below to come up," said Dick. "I have a word to say to them."

The room was soon filled with a round dozen of folk—old and young, of both sexes—who saluted Dick, and waited respectfully. The young highwayman turned to his cousin:

"These," he said grimly, "are the tried and faithful servants of Faulkbourne. Many of them served our family for twice a score of years, and were faithful to the name of Neville. You turned them out upon the roads."

Hector looked down and gritted his teeth; yet he had the grace to seem ashamed.

"Those who serve the Nevilles have long learned to trust them," continued Dick. "To gratify your miserly desires you, the richest man in Norfolk, turned them out to starve! It is left to the outlaw and highwayman to return and see right done. I will set this matter in order."

He turned to Turpin. "Comrade, in the fob of yonder vest lying

many with tears in their eyes, for their young master of the good times that were gone, outlaw and highwayman though he might be, was more than gold to them.

Each took his dole of the gold with heartfelt gratitude, and Hector Neville stood and watched with a face such as a fiend might wear. No part of the hard lesson he had learned that night—the defeat and humiliation—touched him so deeply as did the loss of his gold. Wealthy though he was, it tore his very heartstrings.

Dick threw open the window as the last of the gold was being divided, and whistled loud and long. Soon came the answering beat of hoots, and Black Satan and Bess came out of the wood and cantered up to the house.

"Are you all well paid?" said Dick, as the servitors showered blessings on him. "That is well!"

"Three cheers for the rightful heir!" cried a voice. And they gave him three times three, whereupon Dick drove them out, for their claim upon Faulkbourne was cleared.

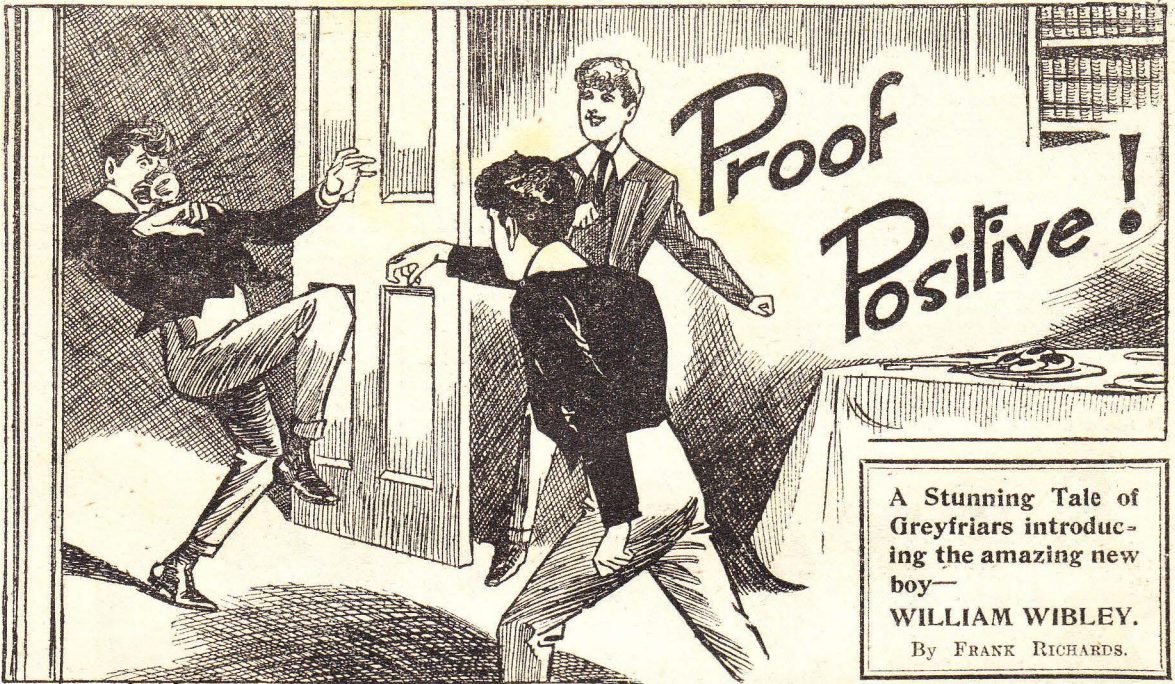
"And now we'll ride!" said Dick, stepping through the open window on to the gravel, and standing to Satan's stirrup. "Good-night to you, cousin!"

"We shall meet again!" Hector sneered. Dick turned in the saddle as he mounted, and looked him in the eyes.

(Continued on page 26.)



SCHOOLBOY AND ACTOR! William Wibley arrives at Greyfriars, and proves himself an actor of no mean ability!



A Stunning Tale of Greyfriars introducing the amazing new boy—  
**WILLIAM WIBLEY.**  
By FRANK RICHARDS.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
**The Ambitious New Boy!**

**H**ARRY WHARTON & Co. were at tea in Study No. 1. All the Co. were there—Harry Wharton and Nugent and Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who constituted the celebrated alliance known as the Famous Five; and Tom Brown, the New Zealander, Mark Linley, Dick Penfold, Bulstrode, Hazeldene, and Micky Desmond. The study was crowded—more crowded than was usual for a junior tea—but the occasion was important; for all the juniors present were members of the Junior Dramatic Society, and just now the Junior Dramatic Society was going strong.

Harry Wharton & Co. were preparing to take the cake, as it were, with a really wonderful representation of that great and thrilling play, "The Red Rover," and the representation was to be got up regardless of expense. The principal scene being laid on the pirate ship, the staging would be more than usually difficult; but the heroes of the Remove had risen to the task. The play, as Wharton said, was a ripper—a regular topper. And Wharton should certainly have known whether it was a ripper and a topper or not, as he had written it himself.

It was not up to Shakespeare; Wharton himself admitted that. He did not claim to turn out dramas equal to those of the great and immortal William, being more modest in that respect than some modern playwrights. But it was more suited to the taste of the prospective audience. As Wharton said, the fellows had got fed up on Shakespeare. They were tired of hearing Mark Antony "orate"; they didn't want to hear Hubert order the two murderers to beat him those iron hot; and they didn't care a brass farthing whether to be or not to be was the question, or whether it wasn't.

They wanted something new, something original, and something thrilling. And they were going to get it. Harry Wharton was going to provide it. Hence "The Red Rover."

Of course, all the members of the Junior Dramatic Society claimed the right of putting in a line or two. Every fellow who was playing a part thought he ought to be allowed to lick his own part into shape a little. The play, therefore, was contributed to by many hands. The only thing THE POPULAR.—No. 218.

Wharton insisted upon was that the number of lines allotted to each fellow player should not be increased. For if every player had been allowed to give himself as much "fat" as he wanted, the play would have reached an inordinate length, and instead of occupying one evening, it would probably have dragged its weary length over a couple of weeks, which, of course, was not to be thought of.

The prime object of the representation was to raise funds for the Remove Cricket Club, to start the season with a bang, as Bob Cherry called it.

If "The Red Rover" was a success—and why shouldn't it be?—and fellows flocked from near and far to see it, and paid to come in, then the fund for the cricket club would reach considerable dimensions, and there would be no difficulty whatever in starting the cricket season with the required bang.

There had been a good many rehearsals lately. Besides the regular rehearsals, when the junior actors turned up in force, there were many partial rehearsals, two or three fellows getting together to go over scenes and lines.

Fellows would be found in all sorts of unexpected corners, threatening death or pleading for mercy, or practising walking the plank.

For, of course, there was plenty of walking the plank in the play. Wharton believed in plenty of action, and the others heartily agreed with him.

Nearly half the Remove—the Lower Fourth—were in the cast in one capacity or another.

The Co. were in great funds just now, and they were spending quite a sum of money on the staging of "The Red Rover," determined to make it a much bigger thing than anything the Fourth Form had ever been able to display.

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, who was rolling in money and always ready to contribute to anything, had been allowed to stand a very handsome "whack" towards the expenses of the staging, and Vernon-Smith, who had the advantage of being the son of a millionaire, also came down very handsome. Harry Wharton & Co. had "put up" to a very handsome extent, and altogether, there were quite enough funds to see the thing through in the best style.

Hence the smiles of satisfaction that marked the faces of the juniors gathered in

Study No. 1 for tea on this especial afternoon.

There was a tap at the study door, and the new boy, Wibley, looked in.

William Wibley had only arrived that morning, but already he had come "up" against the Famous Five. Master Wibley, as Bob Cherry put it, was blessed with plenty of cheek for a new kid.

The study was so crowded that there wasn't much room for him to come in, but he came in. The Co. looked at him inquiringly.

"Well, what do you want, young shaver?" asked Nugent.

"Just looked in to see you," said Wibley. "I hear you've got a meeting of the Junior Dramatic Society here."

"Chief members," said Wharton. "Nothing to do with new kids. Buzz off!"

Wibley remained where he was.

"I suppose any chap in the Remove can join the society?" he asked.

"Are you in the Remove, then?"

"Yes; same Form as you chaps."

"Well, you can join, if you like. You have to pay the subscription in advance," said Harry. "It will come in handy now, for the matter of that. Nugent's the secretary. Take his subscription, Frankie, and push him out."

"Certainly," said Frank.

Wibley ascertained the amount of the subscription, and paid up cheerfully.

"That's all right," said Nugent. "There's your receipt. And there's the door."

"I want to speak to you—"

"No time now. This is an important meeting. Clear off!"

"Who's president of the society?" asked Wibley.

"I am!" said Harry.

"You give out the parts, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"And you're doing a play now—the 'Pink Pirate,' or something."

There was a chuckle from some of the juniors; and Wharton frowned severely.

"The Red Rover!" he said.

"Yes, I knew it was something of the kind," assented Wibley. "Well, I want to tell you that I'm a ripping amateur actor."

"Go hon!"

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The new boy smiled genially, quite unmoved by the laughter of the Removes.

He struck the Co. as being a considerably cool customer.

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"I'm willing to show you what I can do, if you like," he suggested. "I don't ask you to take me on trust, you know. Give me a chance—"

"Will you show us how quickly you can get through that door?" asked Harry Wharton politely. "Otherwise, we shall give you a chance of going out head first."

"I'm willing to take a part in this play—" "Well, of all the blessed cheek—when you haven't been at Greyfriars a couple of hours!" exclaimed Bulstrode.

"But I'm a good actor—and I don't suppose you chaps really amount to very much. Schoolboy actors don't, as a rule."

The amateur actors stared at him blankly. For sheer, cool, unadulterated "cheek," the new boy seemed to take the whole biscuit.

"Well, my hat!" Bob Cherry ejaculated.

"When you see how I can act, you'll want to give me the principal part," said Wibley, with refreshing coolness. "I tell you, I've done lots of this kind of thing. I'm really A1, and quite topping. Put me down for 'The Red Rover,' and I tell you I'll make the audience open their eyes."

"Great Scott!" "Is it a go?" asked Wibley.

"Yes, it's a go—for you—you're going!" said Harry Wharton, rising to his feet in towering wrath. "I won't slaughter you, as you're a new kid, and seem to have come here by mistake instead of going to a home for idiots—the proper place for you. Get on the other side of that door—quick!"

"But I tell you—" "Buzz off!" roared Wharton.

"Yes, but—" Wharton did not wait for anything more. He collared the new boy, and ran him out into the passage, bumped him down on the linoleum, and left him gasping.

Then he returned into the study, breathing rather hard, and closed the door.

"Of all the blessed 'cheek!' said Bob Cherry, with a whistle. "A blessed new boy, too! I wonder what Greyfriars is coming to?"

"I fancy I've nipped him in the bud, though," said Harry, as he sat down. "Now, were saying—"

Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is again!" The door opened, and Wibley looked in, rather breathlessly.

"I say, you know—" Squelch!

A fat jam-tart, unerringly hurled, caught the new boy fairly on the nose and mouth. He staggered back into the passage, spluttering wildly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Well bowled, sir!"

Tom Brown kicked the door shut, and it was not opened again. The meeting of the Junior Dramatic Society continued the discussion of business without any further interruption from the ambitious new boy.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
Cousin George!**

"I'll jolly well prove it!" said Wibley. "Rats!"

Harry Wharton & Co. made that reply with great unanimity.

They were in the Common-room in the evening, discussing the never-ending matter of the play, when Wibley "wedged" himself, as Bob Cherry termed it, into the conversation.

The new junior was firmly under the impression that the dramatic society really could not afford to leave him out, and the dramatic society were firmly convinced that they could leave him out with great advantage to the play and to things generally.

It was a point upon which they could not agree; but, as Wharton said, it was not necessary for them to agree about it. Wibley was at liberty to keep his own opinion, if he wanted to—only there was not any room in the cast of "The Red Rover." And Wibley's assertion thereupon that he could act their heads off, if he tried, was met with derisive laughter, and his assertion that he would prove it only elicited the ancient and polished reply of:

"Rats!" "Look here!" said Wibley. "I tell you, I've done lots of this kind of thing—"

"What kind of thing?" asked Johnny Bull. "Gassing, do you mean?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Acting!" said Wibley. "Acting the giddy goat, I suppose?"

"What you fellows call acting isn't up to my mark," Wibley pursued. "Why, I can make-up so that none of you fellows would know me!"

"Rats!" "Well, if I do it—" "Then we'll believe it!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"If I do it, will you make room for me in the dramatic society?" demanded Wibley.

"I'm afraid all the parts in 'The Red Rover' are booked," said Wharton blandly.

"Still, if you prove that you can act, we'll let you into something some time. Might give you a part as extra pirate this time, perhaps."

"Well, that's better than nothing!" grunted Wibley. "You see, I'm such a dab at acting that I really can't let my people know there's a play going on here with me left out of it! I generally take the lead in these things."

"No leads vacant at present in the Remove Dramatic Society," said Wharton, laughing.

"Well, anyway, I'll prove to you fellows that I can act, and you'll see!" growled Wibley.

"Go ahead!" Wibley grunted again, and walked out of the Common-room, evidently in high dudgeon. If he had been, as he said, accustomed to taking the lead in such affairs, it was, perhaps, a little hard on him to be left out; but, on the other hand, the dramatic society could hardly be expected to let in a new fellow who had been only a couple of days at Greyfriars. Their opinion was that he was sufficiently honoured in being made a member of the society at all, without wanting to act.

"Time for prep," Bob Cherry remarked presently, and the juniors adjourned to their studies. Preparation had to be done, whatever important business the juniors might have on hand; though really preparing the next day's lessons seemed a sinful waste of time to young actors whose thoughts were glued upon their business.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent settled down to work in their study, No. 1 in the Remove, and plunged into prep, and forgot all about Wibley, if not all about "The Red Rover."

"What a blessed row they're making in the passage!" growled Nugent after a time, looking up from his work.

Wharton nodded, with equal irritation.

It was bad enough to have to postpone all consideration of the play for a time, while they did their preparation, without being bothered by noisy juniors in the passage. They were not always the quietest fellows themselves, but that was a detail.

There was a sound of voices and laughter in the Remove passage, and it was evident that something was going on there.

Wharton rose at last, and opened the door of Study No. 1.

"What's all this blessed row about?" he demanded.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "It's somebody for you, Wharton."

"Somebody for me!" exclaimed Wharton, in surprise.

"Yes," grinned Bolsover major. "One of your poor relations."

"I don't know that I have any poor relations," said Harry, in wonder. "Who is it?"

"Your cousin George!" chuckled Skinner. "Rot! I haven't a cousin George."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover. "He won't own him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" said Snoop. "Why don't you own your poor relations?"

Wharton flushed angrily.

"If you want a thick ear, Snoop, you're going the right way to get it," he said.

Sidney James Snoop promptly backed away behind the burly form of Bolsover major.

"Well, why don't you own up?" he demanded.

"Own up to what?" "Your poor cousin. He, he, he!"

"I say, you fellows, I do think it's rotten!" said Billy Bunter. "Wharton oughtn't to be ashamed of his own people!"

"Even if they're people to be ashamed of!" grinned Skinner. "After all, blood is

thicker than water, and a chap oughtn't to be a snob!"

"You silly asses!" roared Wharton. "I tell you I haven't got a cousin George! What the dickens are you talking about?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Draw it mild!"

"Cheese it! Own up!" Wharton glared along the crowded passage. He could see no stranger there, and he supposed that it was some scheme to "pull his leg," though he did not understand it.

"Own up!" chortled Bolsover major. "After all, there's nothing to be ashamed of in having poor relations. Everybody's got 'em, though they don't all pay visits to a chap at a public school. E3, ha, ha!"

"Do you mean to say that somebody has come here calling himself my cousin George?" asked Wharton, perplexed.

"Yes, rather!" "Where is he, then?"

"Trotter's taken him into the Common-room. He wouldn't let him in at first, he looked so seedy," grinned Hazeldene.

"Didn't look much like a cousin of Wharton's, did he, you chaps?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No!" "You never know what a chap's people are like till you see them, you know," remarked Ogilvy. "But I must say this was a surprise."

"Rather rotten of such a ragged robin to turn up here," said Skinner. "Of course, he didn't let Wharton know he was coming."

"I guess not!" chortled Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder reckon Wharton would have stayed him off somehow—just a few!"

Frank Nugent had followed his chum out of the study. He looked at Wharton with puzzled inquiry.

"I suppose there's nothing in this?" he asked.

"Of course there isn't!" said Harry angrily. "It's some idiotic jape, of course. I don't believe anybody has come for me at all."

"Ask Trotter—here he is!" said Bolsover major.

Trotter, the page, was coming upstairs, with an exceedingly peculiar expression upon his face. He came towards Wharton.

"Master Wharton—" "Well?" snapped Wharton.

"There's a pusson to see you," said Trotter.

"Not a person—a gentleman!" said Vernon-Smith severely, and there was a fresh howl of laughter from the juniors.

Trotter evidently didn't consider the visitor a gentleman.

"A pusson!" repeated Trotter firmly. "He says he's your cousin, Master Wharton; and he wanted to come hup to your study to see you. I've took him to the Common-room, so—"

Trotter paused awkwardly.

"So that he shouldn't be seen, and disgrace you, Wharton!" grinned Skinner. "I must say that it was very thoughtful of Trotter."

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I—I thought it better to keep him outer sight, sir," stammered Trotter, colouring.

"He—he don't look like wot I call a respectable pusson, sir!" Wharton frowned angrily.

"I'll go down and see him," he said. "I tell you, it's all rot, you fellows. I haven't a cousin named George that I've ever heard of."

"Been kept out of sight, I suppose," said Bolsover major. "No wonder, considering what he looks like."

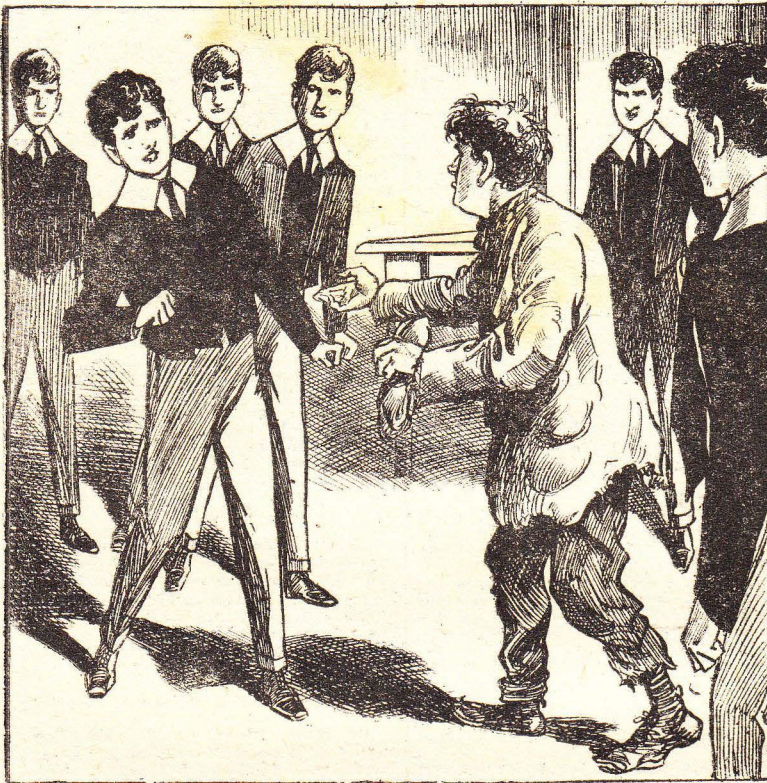
"Ha, ha, ha!" Wharton strode angrily down the stairs. The whole crowd of Removites followed him. They were eager to see the fun, as they regarded it. Wharton's own chums went with the crowd, looking puzzled and worried. They certainly did not believe Harry to be the kind of fellow who would be snobbish about poor relations; and yet it seemed incredible that a fellow should come there calling himself Wharton's cousin if such were not really the case.

Quite an army marched into the Junior Common-room with Harry Wharton. Some of the Remove were already there, and a good many of the Fourth. Temple, Dabney, & Co. of the Fourth were on the scene, evidently

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**William Wibley Has Proved Himself a Fine Actor! Read About Him Next Week!**





Wharton strode towards the stranger. "Who are you?" he asked. The ragged newcomer gave a little cry that choked into a sob. "Harry! Won't you speak to your own cousin?" He made a step towards Wharton with outstretched hands. (See Chapter 2.)

enjoying themselves. They were gathered round a forlorn figure sitting by the fire.

Temple looked round as Wharton came in, and called to him.

"Here's your cousin, Wharton."

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fry. "Here's your giddy cousin!"

Wharton strode towards the fire with a clouded, angry brow, and the forlorn figure there rose to face him. Forlorn indeed did the boy look. He was dressed in shabby old clothes, his boots were worn down at the heels, and looked muddy and dusty. There was dust on his clothes, as if he had tramped a long way, and dust on his face. His face was very pale, and his hair untidy. He held a rag of a cap in his hand.

His face, though pale, was dark, his eyebrows large and bushy, and his eyelashes jet black, giving him a slightly foreign appearance. He looked like a tramp—or, at least, a person who had been on the tramp for some time. He looked tired and worn, too—a pathetic figure, which really moved compassion in the breasts of some of the fellows.

Wharton stared at him blankly.

"Who are you?" he exclaimed.

The stranger gave a little cry that choked into a sob.

"Harry! Won't you speak to your own cousin?"

He made a step towards Wharton, holding out both his dirty hands.

Wharton stepped back sharply, waving him off.

"Rot!" he exclaimed. "You're an impostor, or else you're mad! You're no cousin of mine, anyway!"

The boy opened his lips as if to speak, but a sob choked his voice. He flung himself into the chair again, and covered his face with his hands, still sobbing. And looks of deep compassion were cast at him by the juniors, who were no longer laughing, and towards Wharton their glances went with disgust and contempt, and there was a buzz: "Shame!"

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.  
A Very Painful Scene!

"SHAME!" Harry Wharton started—as if a whip had stung him, as that cry fell upon his ears.

He gazed round furiously at the condemning faces of the juniors.

"I tell you—" he began.

"Shame!"

"But I—"

"Shame! Shame!"

"Speak to the poor chap!" exclaimed Russell. "Can't you see he's worn out—hungry, very likely? After all, he's your cousin!"

"He's not my cousin!" shrieked Wharton, in bewilderment. "I tell you, I've never seen the fellow before, and he doesn't know me!"

"He knew you the instant you came into the room!" said Temple. "How could he call you Harry if he doesn't know you?"

That was a poser!

"Well, I—I suppose he knows me; but I don't know him!" said Wharton. "I haven't set eyes on the chap in my life!"

"Draw it mild!"

"Rats!"

"Bosh!"

"Piffle!"

"Speak to him!"

"Give him something to eat!"

"Give him some tin, anyway. You've got plenty!"

"It's disgraceful!" said Snoop. "Just remember the things Wharton said about me when I had my uncle here, and wasn't proud of him! Snob and rotter, and things like that! And now look at him!"

"So you were a snob and a rotter!" said Wharton fiercely.

"And what are you—now?" demanded Snoop. "You won't speak to your own cousin, or own him as a relation, just because he's down on his luck!"

"Shame!"

"I tell you he's not my cousin! I don't know him!"

"Shame!"

Wharton looked round almost wildly.

There was unbelief in almost every face. Even his own chums were looking very queer.

"Frank! Bob!" exclaimed Harry, his voice almost hoarse. "You don't think that of me? You don't think I'd deny it if the fellow were my cousin, do you?"

"I—I know you wouldn't!" said Bob Cherry; but his voice was halting.

"Of—of course not!" said Nugent slowly. "But—but it's jolly queer! There must be some—some mistake. Only—only there isn't another chap here named Wharton, you see. And—and how did he recognise you, anyway?"

"I don't know. But I don't know him. He's an impostor, and I suppose this is some trick to get something out of me!" said Wharton fiercely.

The sobbing boy in the armchair rose to his feet. His cheeks were wet as he removed his hands from his face.

Those signs of tears went straight to the hearts of the Remove fellows.

"Poor chap!" said Bolsover major, with unaccustomed compassion. "No wonder he feels it! Look here, you chaps, we'll make a collection for him, if Wharton won't help him!"

"Hear, hear!" said Hazeldene.

"We'll pass round the hat for Wharton's cousin!" said Fry.

"And I'll begin it with half-a-crown, blessed if I don't!" said Temple generously.

"And here's a bob!" said Bulstrode.

"And here's a tanner!"

"Same here!"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton furiously. "You sha'n't give him anything! I tell you he's an impostor, and he's on the make!"

"Harry!"

"Don't call me Harry, you rotter!"

"Harry!" The ragged boy's voice was broken and husky. "I—I didn't know you'd receive me like this! I'd have stayed away if I'd known!"

"You rotter! You know you're not my cousin, and you sha'n't get anything out of this trick, either!"

"Harry—"

"If you call me Harry again I'll punch your head!" shouted Wharton.

"Harry—"

Wharton made a stride forward, his fists clenched, and his eyes blazing. But Bolsover major and Skinner and several other fellows grasped him, and dragged him back. He turned upon them fiercely, but he dropped his hands when he saw that Bob Cherry and Nugent were amongst those who held him.

"You fellows, too!" he muttered.

"Thou, too, Brutus!" chortled Snoop; and there was a laugh.

"Better hold on, old pal," said Bob Cherry quietly. "This thing can't be settled by punching a fellow's head. If he's lying, it will be easy enough to prove it."

"If he's lying! I tell you he's lying!"

"Let's hear what he's got to say, anyway!"

"Yes, give him a chance to speak," said Penfold.

"Give the chap a chance, Wharton!"

"Keep your hands off your own cousin!" Wharton breathed hard.

"He can say what he likes," he said thickly. "But he's not my cousin—he's a lying impostor, and he's on the make, I suppose!"

"I'm not on the make!" said cousin George sorrowfully. "I've tramped here to see you, Harry, because I'm pretty hard-up, and I thought you might help me to pay my passage to Canada. I know you're ashamed of a poor relation, and I don't want to disgrace you. I didn't think all these fellows would see me, or I wouldn't have come. I asked the servant to show me up quietly to your room."

"Yes; I heard him," said Bulstrode. "A lot of us heard him!" remarked Peter Todd. "Perhaps he intended us to hear him, if he's an impostor!"

"Rot!" said Skinner. "He's genuine enough. I always considered Wharton a snob!"

"I say, you fellows, we ought to make Wharton do something for him. I think this disgraceful, you know!" said Billy Bunter, wagging his head sagely.

"Oh, rotten!" said Russell.

"Faith, and it's bastely of ye, Wharton!" said Micky Desmond sorrowfully. "I niver thought ye were that sort of a spalpeen intirely!"

"Let him speak!" said Mark Linley.

"Go it, kid!"

"I—I haven't much to say!" stammered



the unfortunate youth. "I—I hoped Harry might help me out, that's all. After I got to Canada, I shouldn't disgrace him any more. I can't help being poor!"

"Of course you cannot, my friend," said Alonzo Todd, with deep compassion. "Wharton, your conduct is really very hard-hearted. My Uncle Benjamin would be shocked at you—nay, disgusted!"

"I think we're all jolly well disgusted!" said Temple, with a sniff. "Blessed if I ever came on anything quite so disgusting!"

"Oh, rather!"  
 "And I'm not on the make!" pursued the forlorn youth. "I came here for help, I admit; but, as Harry has received me like this, I certainly shall not accept anything from him!"

"I wouldn't," said Bolsover major, with a nod. "We'll help you out!"

The boy shook his head.  
 "Thank you very kindly," he said; "but I cannot accept it, sir. I am not a beggar. I—I—" His voice broke again. "I—I thought I'd a right to ask my own cousin for help, as he's rich; but I couldn't accept help from anybody else. I can't beg!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bolsover. "We'll make it a collection, you know. We can make up a couple of quid for you!"

"No, no! Thank you most kindly, but I could not take it!"

The juniors looked at one another. This certainly was the right spirit, and it proved the genuineness of cousin George, if anything could. For if the boy was not "on the make," what had he come to Greyfriars at all for, claiming to be Wharton's cousin? If he were an impostor, on the make, he would certainly take all he could get, especially as it was clear that he would get nothing from Harry Wharton himself.

"By Jove!" said Bob Cherry unceasingly. "Do you mean that, young 'un?"  
 "I certainly mean it. I couldn't accept charity!"

"Well, perhaps you're right," said Temple, putting his half-crown back into his pocket. "But if that doesn't prove he's genuine, you fellows, I don't know what would. He's quite right not to accept charity, but Wharton ought to help him."

"He ought to be made to," said Skinner.  
 "Oh, rather!"

"I won't give him anything, unless it's a hiding," said Harry Wharton, between his teeth. "He's a lying impostor, and I don't know him."

"Shame!"  
 The ragged boy raised his head proudly. "I'm going," he said. "I won't trouble you any longer, Harry. But you've called me a liar and an impostor. These young

gentlemen have been very kind to me, and I think I ought to prove to them before I go that I've told the truth. I owe it to them."

"Certainly!" said Temple.  
 "Quite so!" said Vernon-Smith. "If you can prove that you're Wharton's cousin, we shall know what to think of him."

"He can't prove a lie!" said Harry.  
 "Let him speak!"

"I can prove it," said the boy miserably. "It's easy enough. Harry says I do not know him. I could tell you about our early times, if I liked; but Harry would deny it all, I suppose. How he used to work in the wood-yard with me before his uncle took him up and looked after him."

"Worked in the wood-yard!" said Skinner, with a whistle. "My hat, that is news! The noble and aristocratic Wharton has worked in a wood-yard, has he?"

"Oh crumbs! That's news!" said Bolsover major.

"It's a lie!" exclaimed Wharton.  
 "Of course you'd say so. You want to forget all about the wood-yard now!" said Snoop, with a sneer.

Wharton drew a hard breath.

"If I'd worked in a wood-yard, I shouldn't be silly idiot enough to be ashamed of it," he said. "I suppose anybody might work in a wood-yard if he had to earn his living. Linley here worked in a factory, and he knows that I never thought any the worse of him because of that."

"Quite true," said Mark Linley.  
 "But the fellow is lying," said Harry. "I shouldn't be ashamed of it, only I haven't done it, that's all. It's a falsehood!"

"He said he could prove it," said Peter Todd. "Go ahead with the proving."

"It's easy enough," said the ragged lad.  
 "Harry says I don't know him. Well, I can tell you he's got a scar on his arm just above the elbow. If I don't know him, how do I know that?"

There was a buzz at once. A good many of the juniors had seen that scar on Wharton's arm—in the dormitory or in the swimming-bath. There was no secret about that. But this ragged lad—how did he know—unless what he said was true? Wharton was wearing an Eton jacket, and certainly the ragged boy had had no opportunity of seeing his arm since he came into the Common-room.

Wharton himself looked almost stupefied. That statement, which convinced every other fellow in the room, staggered him. How did the fellow know that?  
 He looked at his chums almost wildly. Bob Cherry turned his head away. Nugent's

glance dropped to the floor. So they believed it, too!

"Bob," muttered Harry. "You—you—" "How does the chap know that?" asked Bob.

"I—I don't know."  
 The ragged lad made a movement.

"I'm going," he said. "I shall get to Canada somehow, Harry, and I shall never trouble you again. Good-bye!"  
 "You—you lying rascal!"

"Let's part friends, Harry!" said the boy softly, holding out his hand. "I'm not asking you for money now. I wouldn't take it now. Shake hands with me before we part for good."

Wharton struck the outstretched hand fiercely aside. There was a shout of "Shame!" from nearly every fellow in the room; and the ragged boy, with a sigh, turned towards the door.

Then he stopped. Mr. Capper, the master of the Upper Fourth, was standing in the doorway, and his eyes seemed almost to start through his spectacles as he looked at the ragged, forlorn figure of the boy who claimed to be Harry Wharton's cousin.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.  
 Proof Positive!**

**M**R. CAPPER'S portly form blocked the doorway, and the boy had to stop.

Mr. Capper was an important little gentleman, not much taller than the juniors themselves, but much broader, of course, and very imposing in his gown. He wore a pair of gold-rimmed glasses, perched on the bridge of his nose; and the name of the glasses, "pince-nez," was cruelly true in their case, for they certainly did pinch Mr. Capper's nose, imparting a bulbous appearance to it, and causing it to glow with the glow of a warm sunset.

Mr. Capper stared at the ragged youth in blank amazement.

His astonishment at seeing such a figure in the Common-room of Greyfriars caused his jaw to drop, and he was quite open-mouthed as he stared at cousin George.

The latter looked decidedly uneasy. He could not pass Mr. Capper in the doorway, and he had to stop; but plainly he did not like it.

Mr. Capper spoke at last. His voice had a rumble like distant thunder.

"Who is this? Who are you, sir? What does your presence mean? Explain yourself at once."

But cousin George seemed at a loss to explain himself. He looked nervously past

(Continued on page 26.)

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Mr. Capper towards the doorway, as if turning over in his mind the possibility of making a bolt for it.

But there were plenty of fellows present who were quite willing to make the necessary explanation for him. Quite a chorus broke out:

"It's Wharton's cousin, sir."

"His cousin George, sir."

"One of Wharton's relations, sir."

"He's come here to see Wharton, sir."

"Wharton won't own him, sir; but he's his cousin."

Mr. Capper seemed more astounded than ever.

"Wharton's cousin!" he exclaimed. "Really, Wharton, you should not have your relations here in this—this unfortunate state of—of attire."

"He's not my cousin!" shouted Wharton. "I haven't a cousin George at all. He's some rascal, sir, pretending to be a relation of mine."

"Shame!" roared Bolsover.

Harry Wharton turned on him fiercely, with clenched fists.

"You cad!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Capper angrily. "Keep order, please. This matter must be seen into, Wharton, you say that this—this person has come here claiming to be your cousin, and that he is nothing of the kind."

"Yes, sir."

"Boy!" Mr. Capper fixed his eyes upon the ragged youth—"you say that you are Wharton's cousin?"

"I said so, sir," faltered the boy.

"Ah, you admit now that it is not the case?" exclaimed Mr. Capper.

"Yes, sir."

"What!" howled Bolsover.

"Why, you rotter!" yelled Bob Cherry, in surprise and relief. His faith in his friend had wavered, and he was ashamed of it now. He pressed Wharton's arm. "I—I'm sorry, old man. I—I was taken in."

"Ah, you are an impostor, then?" said Mr. Capper magisterially.

"Oh, no, sir!"

"What! You claimed to be Wharton's cousin, and now you admit that you are not his cousin. Why have you done this?"

"It was a joke, sir."

"It was a kind of joke that will get you into trouble, then!" said the Fourth Form master grimly. "You are evidently an impostor, and I shall detain you here and telephone for the police."

"Oh!" murmured the juniors.

All eyes were fixed upon the ragged lad. He had completely taken in the whole crowd; indeed, Harry Wharton himself had almost wondered, in his bewilderment, whether he really had a cousin George or not. But the impostor had not ventured to keep up the deception to the Form master; and the fellows expected him to look scared at the mention of the police. But he did not look scared. He was grinning! The juniors could scarcely believe their eyes. But there was no doubt about it—he was grinning—and Mr. Capper, as he noted it, frowned Joy-like.

"You understand!" he rapped out sternly. "You will not be permitted to leave this building."

"Please, sir, I don't want to."

"Ah, you don't want to?" said Mr. Capper sarcastically. "You are willing to remain and abide by the result of your conduct, then?"

"Oh, yes, sir! I don't want to leave Greyfriars. You see, sir, I belong to Greyfriars."

"What!"

"What the dickens—"

"My hat!"

"He's dotty!"

"It's some escaped lunatic!"

"Faith, and he's off his chump intirely!"

"Boy!" thundered Mr. Capper. "Who are you?"

"If you please, sir, I'm Wibley of the Remove!"

"Wha-a-at!"

"Wibley!"

"Great Scott!"

"Begad!"

"Howly Mother av Moses!"

The disguised junior looked round at the amazed crowd with a grin. Even yet they did not recognise him; but now they knew his voice. While he had been playing the part of cousin George it had been quite different—utterly unrecognisable. Now he

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was speaking in his natural voice, and they knew Wibley's tones at once. But the skillful make-up on his face still baffled them.

"What—what does this mean?" stuttered the astounded Mr. Capper. "What is the meaning of this—this ridiculous masquerade, Wibley—if you are Wibley?"

"If you please, sir, it's only amateur theatricals," said Wibley meekly. "Wharton thought I couldn't act, sir, and I undertook to prove to him that I could, sir. That's all. I think Wharton will admit now that I can act, sir."

"Oh!" murmured Wharton.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "So that's it. Oh, my hat!"

"There's no harm done, sir," said Wibley. "I was going to keep it up a bit longer, as a joke on Wharton, sir, but of course, I couldn't keep it up with you. I was afraid of being impertinent, sir."

Wibley evidently understood the efficacy of a soft answer in turning away wrath.

Mr. Capper's face broke into a smile.

"Well, well, if it's only a joke there is no harm done," he said. "Certainly, it was very cleverly done. I did not recognise you myself, Wibley. But you must not play these jokes. However, as you are not in my Form I shall not concern myself about the matter."

And Mr. Capper retired from the Common-room, still smiling.

Wibley was surrounded by the Removites the next moment. Some of them shook their fists at him, very sore over the way they had been taken in. Bolsover major was very much inclined to wipe up the floor with him. But most of the fellows enjoyed the joke on Harry Wharton. Even his faithful followers did not really object to seeing him "floored" every now and then. And he had undoubtedly been floored this time.

"Oh, you spalpeen!" said Micky Desmond. "Ye took me in intirely!"

"And all of us!" said Mark Linley, laughing.

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "But it was rather a rotten joke on old Wharton, don't you know?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So Wharton didn't work in a wood-yard, after all, in his giddy youth!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wibley grinned at Harry Wharton. The latter's face was a study. He was greatly relieved to find that it was only Wibley, but he hardly knew whether to be angry or not. He was feeling decidedly "edgewise" over the jape. For a time, at least, he had been made to look like a snob, and his word had been doubted, and he could not get over that very easily.

"Well," said Wibley cheerfully, "do you believe that I can act now, Wharton?"

"My hat!" said Nugent. "I think he can, Harry!"

"He can act the giddy goat, at all events!" growled Johnny Bull. "I think he ought to be bumped for his cheek!"

"The bumpfulness ought to be terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "This sort of jokfulness is past the esteemed limit."

"Are you satisfied, Wharton?" asked Wibley, still grinning. "Do you think I'm up to taking part in 'The Red Rover'?"

Wharton frowned.

"I don't!" he said curtly. "The parts are all allotted, and you can go and eat coke! I won't hammer you, but if you play any more of your rotten japes on me, I'll wring your silly neck!"

And Wharton strode out of the Common-room and went up to his study to finish his interrupted prep. He was followed by a yell of laughter. However Wharton took Wibley's peculiar proof of his abilities as an actor, there was no doubt that the Remove and the Fourth thoroughly enjoyed the joke against the "high and mighty," as Skinner & Co. called Wharton.

Wibley had proved his case—he certainly could act. But he has chosen his victim rather unfortunately in selecting the president of the dramatic society. It certainly did not improve his chances of getting into the cast of "The Red Rover."

THE END.

(There will be another long complete tale of Harry Wharton, & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars, entitled: "Wibley's Wonderful Wheeze!" a topping story you will all enjoy reading.)

**"STAND AND DELIVER!"**

(Continued from page 21.)

"We shall," he said quietly, "and in a different fashion; but the day is not yet ripe. When that day comes, Heaven help you, Hector!"

And the two highwaymen cantered away into the night, leaving Hector Neville biting his nails at the porch of Faulkbourne.

"Od's bodikins, Dick, that cousin of yours makes my very blood boil!" said Turpin as they galloped over the heath, and left Faulkbourne behind them. "But that I was your guest, I could not have refrained from emptying a pistol into him. He is not fit to live!"

"He is no very savoury character, truly," said Dick; "yet, you see, he is a man of wealth and position now that he enjoys my estates, while I have nothing. I am an outlaw, with all the King's men riding after my brush! It argues, therefore, that he is my superior in one way, since he robs me of everything, and is respected by everybody—whereas, I rob him of a few guineas, and am marked for the gallows!"

"He is indeed your superior," snorted Turpin, "in trickery and lies! As for your outlawry, you owe that to having sheltered me from the law, like a staunch friend as you are, though I begged you to let me take my chance. I am owing you a big debt, Dick, and I must see that it's paid."

"There are no debts between us, Turpin. I owe you half a dozen lives since first we rode together."

"But, all the same, you should have shot Hector Neville. What the plague, man! You can fare no worse. Your life is forfeit already."

"Zounds!" exclaimed Dick, pulling up suddenly. "Out on me for a blockhead! I have forgotten my sword!"

"What sword, man?"

"My old rapier—the chief reason I came back to Faulkbourne for. The sport we had put it out of my head. Trot on, comrade, and I will overtake you in a little."

"Dick," said his companion, "do not go back now! 'Tis unsafe! The Riders—"

But Dick was already galloping back like the wind, and Turpin, protesting vainly, turned and trotted after him. At first he would ride to Faulkbourne with Dick, but on second thoughts he rode up a steep knoll, whence he could see the roads. He looked southward anxiously, and presently made out a loose troop of horsemen riding hard along the main highway; but hardly had he spied them when the thud of Black Satan's hoofs broke the silence again, and Dick arrived at a hard gallop.

"I have it safe!" he cried, touching the handsome James II rapier at his side. "I've left the other driven through the slack of Hector's breeches, which is the fitting place for him to wear a sword."

"Spur forward," said Turpin. "We must ride hard. The Riders are coming up the main road."

"As I guessed they would be, Faulkbourne was humming like a beehive. Ho, ho! Hector little thought to see me back again."

"Why didn't you stick the sword through his plaguery hide," growled Turpin, "instead of playing the fool?"

"Nay; I have a use for Hector before it's ended. Turpin, Faulkbourne shall be mine again, in spite of all England! I begin to see my way, and I'll beat this miserly cur before they hang me! The time will soon ripen, and there's hot work coming. We've shaken yonder dunderheads off the trail, Turpin. Let us breathe the horses."

"Nay. Turn through the woods here, and double down the other," said the elder highwayman. "The P. growing too sharp for my liking. them no opening. Yonder is the Road. We can go easier there."

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Fun and Excitement in Next Week's Rollicking Tale of Greyfriars I



## THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR!

(Continued from page 10.)

"No, sir!"  
 "You did not set off in pursuit of him?"  
 "No, sir!"  
 "Then what did you do?"  
 "I waited till Sir Jeffery Manning came round, sir—he had been knocked down unconscious—and then he said to me: 'My gallant boy, you have saved my life!' or words to that effect. And I didn't contradict him."  
 "You allowed him to think you had fought the footpad, and driven him off?"  
 "Yessir!"  
 "And you claimed a reward from Sir Jeffery?"  
 "No, sir. I didn't claim it. He insisted on giving it to me."  
 "You accepted the sum of fifty pounds from Sir Jeffery, through his secretary?"  
 "Yessir!"  
 "Have you spent all that money?"  
 "I've got about fourteen pounds left, sir."  
 "You will hand it over to me at once, Trimble."  
 The fat junior obeyed.  
 "Have you anything else to say, Trimble?" asked the Head.  
 "Only this, sir—that I hope you will not punish me?"  
 The Head frowned.  
 "I fear you hope in vain," he said. "You have behaved abominably, Trimble! I am willing to believe that you did not realise the enormity of your conduct. You are a notoriously obtuse boy. Had a boy of higher intellect committed such an offence, I should have expelled him without a moment's hesitation. But in your case, one has to make allowances for your inherent stupidity, and your utter inability to distinguish between right and wrong. I shall not expel you, Trimble—"  
 "Thank you, sir!"  
 "But you will receive here and now, a most severe flogging!" Baggie didn't say "Thank you, sir," the second time. A public flogging was gall and wormwood to him. He started to whimper.  
 "Please, sir, let me off! I'll never do it again, sir! Honour bright, sir! This is my first offence—"  
 "Boy!" thundered the Head. "How dare you say that? You have been before me times without number for serious misdemeanours!"  
 "Oh crumbs! Please let me off, sir. I'm not fit. I can't stand a flogging—"  
 The Head signalled to Taggles, the porter.  
 "Take this boy on your shoulders, Taggles!" he commanded.  
 "Werry good, sir!"  
 The Head then produced a fearsome-looking birch, which he proceeded to wield in a manner suggestive of the village blacksmith swinging his heavy sledge.  
 Swish, swish, swish!  
 "Yaroooooh!"  
 The yells of the victim rang through Big Hall.  
 Baggie Trimble kicked and struggled, but Taggles pinioned his arms firmly.  
 The Head administered a dozen strokes in all, and Trimble was quite limp by the time the castigation was over.  
 It was one of the most severe floggings Baggie had ever received. And no one in that vast assembly felt a spark of pity for him. He had behaved in a despicable manner; and he had now been made to realise that the way of the transgressor is hard.  
 The Head laid aside the birch. He was panting from his exertions.  
 "I trust that will be a lesson to you, Trimble," he said. "I have written to your father telling him the facts, and asking him to be good enough to refund to Sir Jeffery Manning the money which you received. Doubtless, your father will stop your allowance of pocket-money for some considerable time."  
 "Ow-ow-ow!" groaned the hapless Baggie.  
 "The school will now dismiss," said the Head.  
 Baggie Trimble was the last to leave Big Hall. And he crawled, rather than walked, to the door.  
 The fat junior had received a lesson which, if it did not last him for life, would at any rate last him till the end of the term.  
 Trimble's days of affluence were over. He would not have any money to throw about at the tuckshop, and elsewhere, for some time; and he would not be able to engage any more football teams in an attempt to take a rise out of Tom Merry & Co.  
 Baggie Trimble found himself decidedly unpopular during the days that followed. He was practically sent to Coventry by his fellows; and he bitterly repented the part he had played, which had brought him wealth and happiness for a time, but disgrace and disaster in the long run.

THE END.

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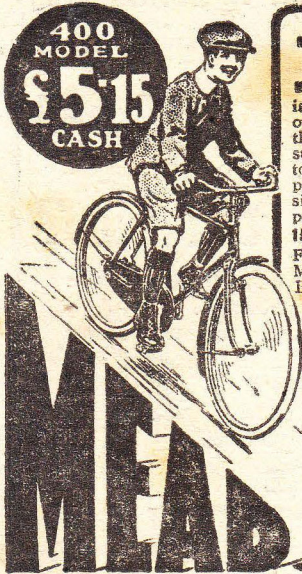
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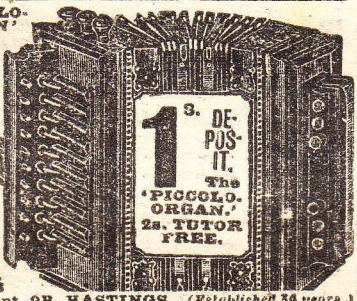
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