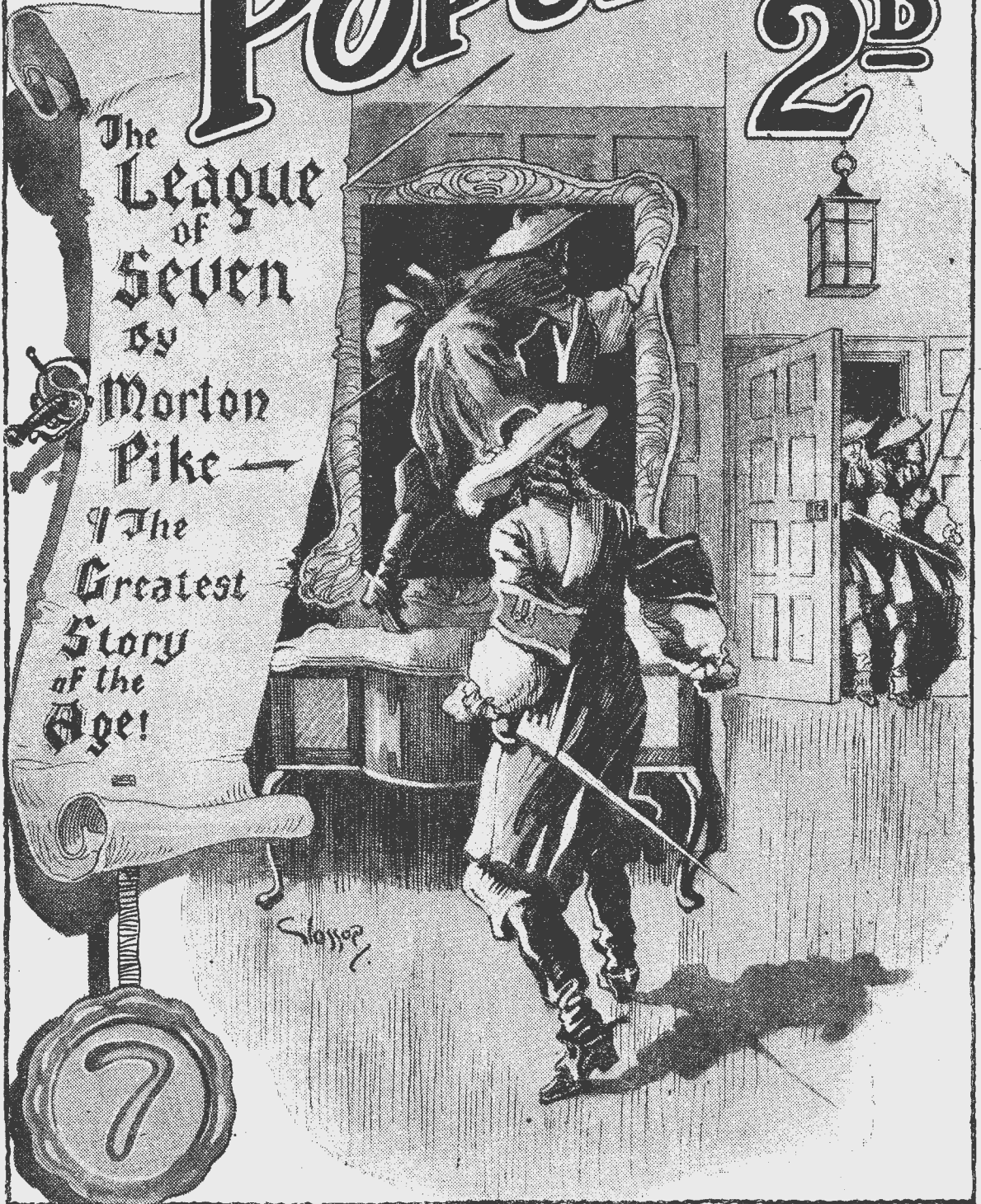


LOOK! £300 IN CASH PRIZES INSIDE! LOOK!

Week ending July 21st, 1923.  
New Series.  
No. 235.

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



**THE CONSPIRATORS ESCAPE Through the Secret Picture!**

(A Dramatic Episode from the Wonderful New Romantic Serial Inside.)

# A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR!

**GREAT NEWS!**

The POPULAR scores again! Below you will find our Grand New Cricket Competition with THREE HUNDRED POUNDS in Prizes! The sweeping intelligence has been held up till now. It has come with a bang. I was out to give all my chums a really big surprise. It is a splendid coup for the famous Tuesday complete paper.

**A RECORD PRIZE LIST.**

Just read through the particulars given in this number of the POPULAR. Then get to work. You all know lots about cricket. This is the psychological moment to put your information to even better purpose than usual. The prize list is tremendous. Forecasting comes right down easy to keen students of the game.

**SEND IN YOUR COUPONS.**

You will see at a glance that this competition is bigger and brighter than anything yet. It is worthy of the POPULAR. Now for the coupon, with your best thought out prognostications!

**OUR STORY PROGRAMME.**

As usual, the POPULAR next week will be a regular boom number, and its complete yarns of school life are all winners. First in the field comes the Greyfriars story,

**"SMITHY'S ROUGH LUCK!"**

Here you have a yarn steeped in drama. The central figure is the Bounder. We see again some of the troubles which dog the footsteps of a fellow who has had a few bad slips in the old days. Vernon-Smith reformed, but he could not evade all the consequences of past actions. This time it is an old acquaintance of his reckless times who pops up unexpectedly. The results are disagreeable in the extreme, and the story grips all along just because of its splendid realism. Past happenings cannot be shaken to the winds like scraps of paper out of a hat. Still the Bounder has turned over a new leaf, and you will be interested to see how he meets the new peril to his peace of mind, and his position at the school.

**"SAVED BY HIS SON!"**

This is the masterly tale of the Backwoods School, and shows Vere Beauclerc in quite a new light. It likewise introduces an extremely strange character in the person of a remittance man. We all know the remittance man. He is the sort of fellow who waits for things to turn up, and calls at the post office on mail day for the money which some kind friend despatches to him. You will take due note of the trouble in which the remittance man finds himself, and of the spirited action of Vere Beauclerc. For whatever could he have to do with the matter? That's the question.

**"THE MISSING CAPTAIN!"**

There is a rollicking yarn of Jimmy Silver's school next week. Owen Conquest deals with some of the prime favourites of the famous Sussex establishment, and there is much doing. Come to think of it, Rookwood is never short of sensations. There is an extra special one next Tuesday. The Rookwood section of the POPULAR programme was never better represented.

**"A FIGHT FOR FREEDOM!"**

That mystery of the strange old mill has caused no end of trouble. Mr. Martin Clifford has set himself the task of clearing up the affair next week. The astounding disappearance of certain well-liked juniors put the cat among the pigeons, so to speak. Whether any useful discovery would ever have been made as regards the amazing mystification, had it not been for the entry on the scene of Herries and his bulldog, the trusty Towser, is a matter of speculation. Anyhow, Herries and Towser take up the case, and this circumstance, allied to sundry other dramatic events, leads to surprising incidents.

**A VACATION NUMBER.**

This is the kitbag period. Holidays are on the tapis, and no one need jib at the good old French word for carpet, which has nothing to do with being carpeted. Anyhow, the new supplement will supply a long-felt want. Holidays want treating in the right way. They ought to be packed full of enjoyment. You will get a few useful hints in the coming issue of that sportive weekly, the "Greyfriars Herald," for the Editor knows his job, and his subs are all alert fellows, keen for scoops.

**"THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN."**

An intensely interesting instalment of our serial will appear in the POPULAR next week. The thread of the fascinating story is carried on in splendid style, and the excitement never flags. You get a clearer notion of what the redoubtable League really meant for England in those far-off days when the country was astir, and the murmur of revolution was heard all over the country. They were bad times, and young Trevor plunges right into the vortex of the trouble. I know how greatly appreciated stories which deal with real happenings always are.

Your Editor.

## GREAT COMPETITION FOR CRICKET LOVERS! FIRST PRIZE £100. SECOND PRIZE £50. THIRD PRIZE £30. AND 120 PRIZES OF £1 EACH.

### CAN YOU FORECAST HOW THE COUNTIES ARE GOING TO FINISH UP?

WE offer the above splendid prizes to the reader who is clever enough to send us a list showing exactly in what order the seventeen first-class County Cricket Clubs will stand at the end of the season.

For your guidance we publish the order in which each of the clubs stood last year, which was as follows:

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Yorkshire.       | 9. Sussex.            |
| 2. Nottinghamshire. | 10. Somerset.         |
| 3. Surrey.          | 11. Derbyshire.       |
| 4. Kent.            | 12. Warwickshire.     |
| 5. Lancashire.      | 13. Gloucestershire.  |
| 6. Hampshire.       | 14. Leicestershire.   |
| 7. Middlesex.       | 15. Northamptonshire. |
| 8. Essex.           | 16. Glamorgan.        |
|                     | 17. Worcestershire.   |

What you have to do is to fill in on the coupon on this page your forecast of the order in which the counties will finish up. To the reader who does this correctly we shall award a prize of £100, and the other prizes in the order of the correctness of the forecasts.

In the case of ties any or all of the prizes will be added together and divided, but the full amount of £300 will be awarded.

All forecasts must be submitted on coupons taken from this journal, or from one of the other publications taking part in this contest.

You may send as many coupon forecasts as you like. They must all be addressed to "Cricket Competition," Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, and must reach that address not later than Thursday, August 16th.

You may send in your forecasts at once if you like, but none will be considered after August 16th.

The decision of the Editor in all matters concerning this competition must be accepted as final and binding, and entries will only be admitted on that understanding.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete. This competition is run in conjunction with "Football Favourite," "Sports Budget," "Magnet," "Young Britain," "Champion," "Boys' Realm," "Boys' Friend," "Pluck," "Union Jack," "Rocket," "Nelson Lee Library," "Boys' Cinema," and "Gem," and readers of these journals are invited to compete.

THE POPULAR.—No. 235.

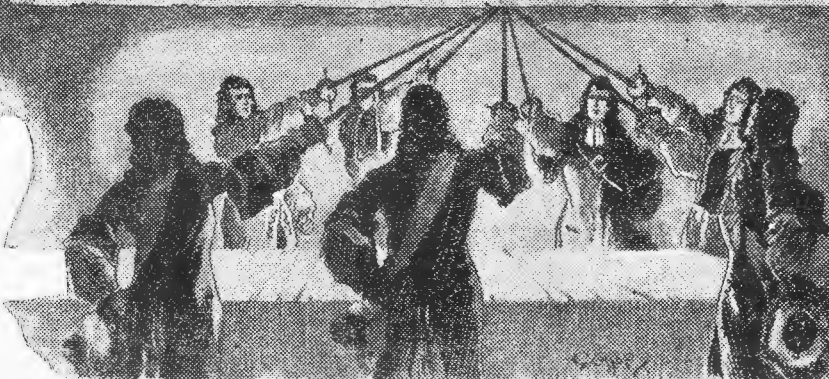
I forecast that the Counties will finish the season in this order:	
No. 1	
No. 2	
No. 3	
No. 4	
No. 5	
No. 6	
No. 7	
No. 8	
No. 9	
No. 10	
No. 11	
No. 12	
No. 13	
No. 14	
No. 15	
No. 16	
No. 17	
I enter Cricket Competition in accordance with the Rules as announced, and agree to abide by the published decision.	
Name .....	
Address .....	
Closing date, August 16th, 1923.	
POP.	

ON THE EVE OF THE REBELLION!

Dick Trevor finds himself caught up in a network of intrigues and a chain of amazing circumstances. He feels the presence of the Mysterious League and the undercurrent of its workings. He stands on the edge of a yawning chasm, knowing only the astounding present and little of the future.

STIRRING TIMES AND GREAT DEEDS!

# THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN!



A WONDERFUL STORY  
OF THE GREAT  
**MONMOUTH  
REBELLION**  
By  
**MORTON PIKE**  
Author of *THE OUTLAW KING*  
Pictured by  
*Cecil Glossop*

Four horsemen rode to the North and South, East and West, and the men who saw them pass knew that ere long the great flaming Torch of War would be seen throughout the land.

## Introduction.

DICK TREVOR, a young adventurer, who has come to London to seek his fortune, is walking through the city, visiting the places of interest, when he comes across a purse lying in the gutter. He picks it up, and, turning a corner in a road, is just in time to see a man running for his life down the street, and behind him he sees a crowd of yelling townsfolk bearing down upon him. They see the purse in Dick's hand, and at once take him to be the thief they are pursuing. Dick realizes his peril, and thinking discretion the better part of valour, turns and flees from the mob. He comes to a large house near the river, and finding the door open, slips into the dark passage beyond. Suddenly out of the darkness a hand clutches his wrist, and he finds himself confronted by the mysterious gentleman he had the day before rescued from the clutches of two highwaymen, whilst on his way to London. Captain Harry Lavender hears Dick's story, then, taking him by the hand, leads him through the house into a room at the back. On the way they had passed through a long chamber, in which were gathered several mysterious-looking men. Afterwards Dick learns from Lavender they are conspirators, members of a league, plotting against the throne of King James II., for the Duke of Monmouth. Lavender is the leader of the strange company.

The captain takes the purse from Dick, and leaving the boy in the room, returns to the men gathered in the long, dimly lit chamber. "I have bad news for you all," he says, and turning out the contents of the purse, reveals several papers belonging to an absent member, Sir Anthony Trevor, Dick's uncle. Every paper shows clear proof that Sir Anthony has betrayed the league to the King.

"And the young whelp in the next room is his nephew, you say," exclaims one member. "Let us, at any rate, kill him. He is a spy!"

(Now read on.)

In which fortune favours the bold, and the mysterious League escape from the clutches of the King.

ERE any could reply, or Harry Lavender could place himself across the door of the closet, a sharp tap was heard upon it, and, as it opened, without

ceremony, Dick Trevor put his head into the room.

"Gentlemen, for your lives!" he cried. "There are soldiers mustering in the alley."

Captain Lavender leaped past him to the window, and, peering down, saw flambeaux flaring and the glitter of red coats.

"Hark!" cried one of the conspirators, as a hollow thunder of musket-butts on the outer door rolled up through the silence of the panelled staircase.

"Open, in the King's name!" cried a stern voice, accustomed to command. "Resistance is useless! The house is surrounded!"

Captain Harry Lavender remained for several moments peering down through the secret shutter-hole.

The resinous stench of the flambeaux came up to their nostrils, and they could plainly hear the rattle of accoutrements in the silent alley below.

Dick was at the captain's elbow, one hand on his sword-grip, one eye upon the conspirators behind him—especially the Army officers, who had half-drawn their weapons.

At length Lavender turned.

"Gentlemen," he whispered, "how now? The garden passage is open. Why do you linger? The door will be broken in in another minute, and all will be lost."

"But what of you?" asked one.

The captain swung angrily upon him.

"For Heaven's sake be gone!" he said. "The certain death to you all when they enter. Harry Lavender can shift for himself. 'Tis mine own company below, and I shall pass them easily enough."

Two of the officers and the other members of the League, bowed, and disappeared, all but one remained. He hesitated, and approached Lavender, with a curious glance at Dick.

"And this person?" he said meaningly.

"Goes with me, Daventry!" snapped Harry Lavender, his eyebrows meeting in a straight line above his aquiline nose. "If you are not satisfied, my friend, I will be more explicit at another time." And he touched his rapier. "This continued doubt of Master Trevor here reflects on mine own honour, which I hold to be above suspicion!"

Daventry muttered some words, which were lost amid the renewed thunder of musket-butts against the outer door.

The next moment Dick and his new-found friend were alone in the oak-panelled closet, with the wavering light of the solitary candle shining on the polished walls.

The boy looked at him, but the captain raised his finger warningly.

"Follow me as closely as my shadow, and make no sound," he whispered, leading the way through the inner room.

He snatched a bundle of tell-tale papers from the table, as he passed, and thrust them into the breast of his scarlet doublet.

Then he took a blue cloak from his shoulders, and flung it round Dick Trevor.

"Pull your hat well over your brows," he said. "You are a young lord of the Court come with me to witness the capture. If you are addressed, smile your sweetest, and point to me for explanations. Now we will see how the land lies, and trust everything to a bold front."

He stole on noiseless feet to a curtained window at the other end of the room, and looked out into the night.

Dick, peeping behind him, saw that a walled garden lay beneath them, and away beyond the coping stretched a gleam of the river, perhaps five hundred yards off.

Harry Lavender's face was set and stern.

"Why do we not seek the secret passage with the rest?" whispered Dick.

"Because there is no room in the two skiffs at the waterside for us," was the reply.

"Our course is a hazardous one, but 'tis the safer. See, they grow impatient, and are coming into the garden."

Dick saw a black object against the moon-lit glimpse of river. It was a musketeer astride of the wall, and he slid over, holding his musket high in one hand, as he dropped noisily among the shrubs.

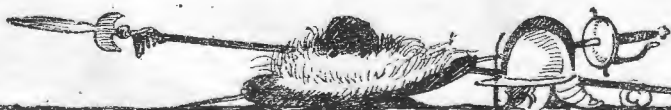
Another followed, and another. They counted thirty in the space of as many seconds.

"There are two companies of my regiment upon this hunt to-night," whispered the captain. "This treachery has been sudden, else had I heard of it at our quarters. I wager this detestable uncle of thine is not far off, and my rapier itches for his heart, boy!"

There came from below a deafening crash of splintered wood, and the sound of a heavy door falling into the passage.

At the same moment a voice in the garden cried:

"Break in this window, sergeant!"



And instantly there arose a great shivering of glass, and the tread of running feet in the silent house.

**A Clever Ruse!**

DICK looked at the captain, and whipped out his blade, but Harry Lavender shook his head.

"Put it back, youngster," he said. "You cannot slay a hundred men of the King's Guards, for all your skill. Come this way." And he stole across the room once more.

The candles guttered on the long table; grim portraits glowered at them from the walls, and Lavender stopped in front of one of them.

Running his hand along the bottom of the carved frame, the portrait suddenly moved inwards out of sight, leaving in its place an oblong opening.

The captain pointed to it, and Dick stepped inside. A hand fell upon the door handle without, and Harry Lavender entered the concealed hiding-place and closed the panel just as two officers burst into the room with drawn rapiers, and behind them a mob of redcoats handling their muskets.

"Sife, they are gone! Ho! scatter there, all over the house!" cried one of them. "This impossible that they can have escaped if the others have held close ward over the garden."

Dick heard nothing of this. Dense darkness enveloped him, and he felt Captain Lavender take him by the cloak and draw him after him.

His heart beat violently; the secret way was close and stuffy. Twice his rapier-sheath knocked against the masonry, and each time his conductor gave him a warning tug.

Then they reached the head of a staircase, and the conspirator whispered into his ear:

"Now is the moment of danger," he said. "All depends on a bold front and absolute calmness. Count twenty steps and be ready. At the twentieth you will see me stride out into the torchlight. Follow without a word, and we are safe. Now, begin!"

Dick counted under his breath. "One—two—three," and so on until they reached the twentieth, and with it the ground floor.

Instantly he saw the scarlet of his friend's uniform lit up before him, and found himself in the hall beside the shattered door.

Six soldiers, with their dagger-like bayonets fixed in the muzzles of their firelocks, stood there, and a drummer held a flaring torch.

Harry Lavender had drawn his sword. "Aught of the rogues, sergeant?" said he, with eagerness, advancing with an air of authority.

The men fell aside, presenting their weapons in salute. The sergeant alone grew pale as death.

Harry Lavender strode towards the alley-way, and the sergeant touched his sleeve.

"Captain Lavender," he muttered, in an awe-struck voice, yet so low that the men could not overhear him, "What do you in this place, sir? Know you not that your name is in the list of those we are come to take? I overheard it by chance, yet 'tis true enough."

"I know it, Grainger—none better," whispered the captain. "Give me the pass-word for to-night—what is it, man?"

"'Tis 'Tangler,' sir," replied the sergeant; "but for mercy's sake begone! Here comes the colonel down the great stair, and we are both lost men if he sees us speaking together."

Harry Lavender slid a gold carolus into his hand.

"I shall never forget this night's work, stranger," he said. "Who is in charge of the patrol at the alley-head?"

"Mr. Arbutnot," replied the terrified man.

Harry Lavender raised his voice and said: "Let no man forth, sergeant, no matter what his business. The house is full of traitors, and we must have them, even if we burn them from their holes!" And then, in a whisper to Dick: "Come, and swiftly!" And he passed into the darkness of the alley without.

The lantern at the street corner had been relighted, and showed a group of the guards drawn across the mouth of the lane.

"Halt!" said a voice, the voice of a very

young man, rather startled at finding himself in command, with the prospect of trouble brewing.

"Halt be hanged, Jimmy!" replied the captain, laughing. "Haet thou no eyes?"

"By gad, Harry, you are welcome, for 'tis a plaguey business, this traitor-hunting! And we were sitting down to the dice not an hour since, when in comes the colonel, with instant orders to the mustering," cackled the talkative ensign, tapping his snuff-box. "Odd's fish, I never saw the old man's brow so black! But who is your friend, Harry?"

Lavender whispered in his ear, and Mr. Arbutnot bowed low to Dick, with a fine sweep of his plumed beaver.

Dick bowed in his turn, and Lavender, glancing over his shoulder, motioned the musketeers to stand aside.

"I return in a moment, Jimmy, when I have placed my lord in his chariot at the lane end," he said carelessly, and with another courtly bow from the unsuspecting ensign, Harry Lavender and Dick passed up the narrow street. At the first turning Lavender laid his hand upon the blue cloak again.

"You are unknown here, boy," he said, in a sad tone. "I must conceal this gay coat, which I wear to-night for the last time. And now we must make what haste we can to a certain place I wot of, where we will take horse."

And the captain fell into a mighty stride, speaking no word until they had placed half a mile of street and alley behind them. He stopped suddenly.

"Master Richard," said he gravely, "perchance I am taking too much for granted in my haste. I have no right to drag you into our troubles, knowing nothing of your mind. Yet do each owe his life to the other, and, by my boots, boy, I have such liking for thee that I would ask no better than opportunity to explain myself at some length."

"As for that," said Dick, holding forth his hand, which the captain grasped, "save for old Reuben, the coachman at home, I have no friends, and I would as lief go with you as not. I seek adventure, and in truth, I have found it to-night."

"Ay, but 'tis not to-night only, but to-morrow, and the days that are to come," said the Guardsman; "and it shall never be said that Harry Lavender led any man into danger with his eyes shut. Still, we shall be safe at the house whither I shall go now, and there I can give you some inkling of what is in the wind."

"With all my heart!" assented Dick Trevor stoutly. And the two friends struck out side by side into the fields.

"Have those other gentlemen had our own good fortune and got safely away?" asked Dick, after they had gone some distance.

"Yes. The passage was so artfully constructed that though the whole house and

garden were surrounded by a regiment, anyone knowing it could gain the river. 'Tis well that your uncle, Sir Anthony, had not yet been informed of its existence, else King James had made a fine haul to-night, and the executioner's axe would have been busy enough," replied Captain Lavender. "As it stands, Sir Anthony will be laughed at for his pains, though, faith, we must all fly the country, and that right speedily, unless—"

"Unless what?"

Harry Lavender dropped his voice to a scarcely audible tone, and whispered: "Unless the new king comes in the meantime!"

Dick looked at him in the darkness. "Have patience a moment longer," said Captain Lavender. "Our retreat is hard by, and, by my boots, a flagon of Canaries will do neither of us much harm ere we fall to talking."

They had reached the highway which conducted the traveller from the Newgate to Oxford, and, turning to the left, they found themselves amongst houses once more, straggling on either side the road.

It was then about ten of the clock, and few folk were abroad.

Lights shone in some windows, but the greater part were closed for the night, and the little diamond panes glistened in the moonlight, which threw deep shadows from gable and cornice on the front of the old timbered dwellings.

"Yon is Gray's Inn, behind the high wall," said the captain, "and the open country lies beyond. Morning must see me far on the road, and you, too, if you elect to come with me."

As he spoke he passed into a paved yard, where a bright glare showed the presence of a tavern; and, tapping upon one of the casements with his gloved fingers, it was quickly opened and a man's head thrust forth.

Harry Lavender made a motion skyward, and the man nodded.

"Keep your hat well over your face," whispered the captain, "and follow me upstairs."

With which he entered a flagged passage, in which was the smell of a lamp just extinguished, and Dick groped his way after him.

**In Hot Pursuit!**

DICK TREVOR found himself in a long, low room, whose windows, shrouded with red curtains, overlooked High Holborn.

Harry Lavender threw his hat upon the table, flung himself into a carved chair, and heaved a mighty sigh of relief.

At the same moment there entered the man who had looked out at them as they came into the yard, and he carried a pair of candles in his hands.

He was a stout, muscular fellow, with close-cropped hair, having left his wig below, and his carriage was that of an old soldier, who could still strike a hard blow if it should be necessary.

"Peter," said the captain—"Peter Pouch, my worthy friend, the thing is discovered, and all is in the fire."

Peter Pouch pursed his lips, raised his eyebrows very high indeed, and gave a long whistle.

"Discovered! That means betrayed!"

"Even so, Peter, Anthony Trevor has revealed us to the King, and we have but now escaped," said Harry Lavender. "The others made off by a secret way, and took boat. We, thanks to the fools sending mine own company upon the business, got safely through them, and here we are."

Peter Pouch fixed his eyes upon Dick.

"Ha, you are thinking that this is a new face, Peter," said Lavender, smiling. "And so it is, for 'tis Sir Anthony's own nephew, and my friend, Peter; I'll answer for that. But bring us wine, for, by my boots, we have come at some speed, and there is much to be done by daylight."

The tavern-keeper went out, and Dick noticed that there were no less than five doors leading from the room.

Harry Lavender intercepted the glance he threw round the apartment.

"A wise soldier provides for retreat, when such is necessary," he said. "And not only is this house kept by an old corporal of my regiment, but 'tis so full of stairways that 'tis possible to leave it in eight different directions."



**CAPTAIN HARRY LAVENDER,** the leader of the League of Seven, the most amazing character ever created.

The Landing of the Duke of Monmouth! See Next Week!



BETRAYED BY A MEMBER OF THE LEAGUE!



There was a sharp tap upon the door, and it opened. Dick Trevor put his head into the room. "Gentlemen, for your lives!" he cried. "There are soldiers mustering in the alley, and they have surrounded the house."

"I begin to have quite a taste for conspiracy," laughed Dick, his eyes sparkling; "there is so much of interest and excitement. Now, supposing a troop of horse rode into the yard below, what course should we follow?"

"'Twould depend on whether we could gain the stable and ride forth into the lane; or, if not, and we had to fare on foot, then that door at your elbow would carry us into a gallery whence we might reach a house three doors below this tavern—a house with an opening to the rear of Staples Inn. But here comes our host."

Peter Pouch entered with a flask of French wine, and Harry Lavender emptied his glass at a draught.

"Zounds, Peter, but I have a throat like Tangier on a June day!" said he. "Who is below?"

"None of any account, captain," replied the tavern-keeper. "A few citizens, who will be gone ere the half-hour is spent, and two apprentices who ought to have been abed long since."

"Is young Ned here to-night?"

"He is, sir."

"Then warn him, for it may chance that I shall have a mission for him; and he might do worse than keep his ear open to the sound of any coming this way."

"He is even now at the yard head, listening on the outward post, captain."

"Good!" said Harry Lavender. "And now leave us for a spell, Peter. I will summon you anon."

The old soldier withdrew, and the captain of the Guards faced his young friend.

"Listen to me," he said, lighting a pipe of tobacco at one of the candles and blowing a blue wreath of smoke, that went curling across the room. "I will give you a short

lesson in politics, and you shall come at your opinion."

Dick set his elbows upon his knees, and was all attention.

"King James II. sits on the throne of this realm. 'Tis now the month of June, and far spent, so that 'tis less than five months that he has been king, and already trouble is brewing."

"Those of us who knew his Majesty when he was Duke of York know him to be a cold, hard man, tyrannical, and a bigot."

"He has made promises which he will not keep, and the liberties of all men that differ with him are at stake."

"Now, I would have you understand that I want not everyone to be of the same faith, yet equal right to all to worship as they please, be they Protestant or Papist; and had James but kept to the vows he made, to respect the civil and religious rights of all, I had never conspired against him."

"He has already displaced many of the chief officers in favour of his own creatures, and he has packed Parliament in the same way, by men who will vote for any measure he shall choose to bring forward—all of which must embroil England before long, and bring back the old, unhappy days of the Civil War."

"All this," concluded Captain Lavender, draining another draught of wine, "must be stayed with an iron hand; and certain of us—good men and true—have sought to send King James upon his travels once more, and to place in his stead one who shall be minded to govern more wisely; or, what is more to the point, to allow Parliament to govern for him. You wish for military service, and 'tis a good wish. Offer your sword to James if you will, but I warn you that in a brief period you will have no master. Throw in your lot with us, and I promise you

advancement—if we succeed. The third course open to you is to hide your time, until you see which party conquers."

And Harry Lavender took some more tobacco and pressed it into the bowl of his pipe.

"And if not King James, to whom must I pledge myself?" Dick asked.

"To another of the same name," whispered the captain, glancing cautiously round the room. "To James, Duke of Monmouth, the late King's son, who will land before many days are passed. He is but a weakling in matters of head, yet all the better for that matter, since he will be the less likely to interfere with his subjects. And this reminds me, boy—your house suffered greatly in the wars of Charles I., did it not?"

"It did," replied Dick, frowning. "My father ruined himself in the King's cause, and petitioned King Charles II. every year to repay some of the money he had lent to his Majesty's father."

"And did he receive it?"

"Not a single carolus," said Dick bitterly. "Nay, more; when he died, my uncle, Sir Anthony, who had the King's ear, inherited our house and what land there was left, and I have naught but my father's sword."

Harry Lavender's eyes flashed, and he laughed aloud.

"'Tis a right good blade, boy," he said. "Yet pause; I would not urge you unduly."

"I need no urging, Captain Lavender!" cried Dick stonily. "I will draw it in the cause on which you are staking your life to-night. My mind has been made up from the first; so here is to King Monmouth, and the sooner he comes the better!"

They rose to their feet, and clinked their glasses together, and when they had emptied

them Harry Lavender tapped on the floor three times with his boot heel.

Peter Pouch appeared so quickly in one of the five doorways that Dick had shrewd suspicions he must have been within earshot all the time.

They could hear the revellers below leaving the tavern noisily.

"Peter," said the captain, "bid Ned come hither. Master Richard here has stabled his mare at the Black Bull at Charing Cross, together with his saddle-bags. These must be brought to the end stable, and my black roadster placed there also."

"There well the young gentleman should give a line in writing," said Peter, "and then I warrant me the mare shall be where you wish in an hour."

Dick dipped a pen in the ink-horn, and wrote, tendering also a gold piece in payment of this reckoning; and when Peter had disappeared again silence fell over the tavern, and the two new friends sat down once more to converse in low tones.

An hour went by, and the candles guttered in their sockets.

The night without was very still, broken only by the distant call of a watchman, or the bark of a wakeful dog.

On a sudden they heard the mad gallop of a horse, and sat up to listen.

Dick felt his heart pounding against his ribs, and even the captain, inured to danger in a thousand forms, whitened to the lips.

"Put out the candles, Dick," he said, his hand upon the window fastening; and when it had been done he pushed the casement open, and leaned forth into the summer night.

"'Tis one rider," he whispered over his shoulder. "Yet no man risks his neck at this speed unless he be pursued."

Dick had his own thoughts and imparted them to the watcher.

"Is it not the lad you called Ned?" he said. "He may have roused suspicion at the inn."

A deep voice immediately behind him made him start.

"The lad you call Ned never rouses suspicion, young gentleman," said Peter Pouch. "He is back from your errand these five minutes, and your mare stands ready for you where the captain can find her, beside his own horse. And in truth you will be in the saddle ere long, for this is a warning. Hark! I am right!"

And a shower of sparks gleamed beneath the window, as the galloping rider swung his steed round, and dashed under the archway into the yard.

Harry Lavender closed the window instantly, and turned; but Peter had vanished through one of the mysterious doors, and was gone.

There seemed barely sufficient space for a man to dismount before one of those doors flew open once more, and a cloaked figure staggered into the room, followed by the tavern-keeper with another candle.

It was Captain Daventry, with whom Harry Lavender had come so near crossing swords on Dick's behalf.

"Odds fish, man, what is't?" cried Lavender.

Daventry snatched up the wine-flask and drank deep. The sweat rolled from his face and neck, and pattered on the table like rain.

"Bad news, Lavender—the worst of bad news!" gasped the exhausted officer, leaning heavily against the fireplace, and wiping his brow with his coatsleeve. "Every one of our hiding-places is known, and surrounded, all the roads are watched, and a party of horse is on the way hither. I have escaped them by a miracle; for they fired their pistols at ten paces, and gave hot chase."

"A plague upon it!" said Harry Lavender. "If the roads are patrolled, 'tis passing serious. Surely the fields about Pancras village are open to us if we mount at once?"

Corporal Pouch laid his horny hand upon the flame of the candle, and the room was plunged in darkness.

"Do you hear that?" he muttered. "No riding for any of you to-night, captain."

A body of horsemen had clattered under the window. A stern voice called "Halt!" and Dick Trevor, for the second time that

night, looked down upon the red-coated soldiers of King James.

The front of the tavern threw a black shadow half way across the roadway, and his Majesty's Second Troop of Lifeguards of Horse sat half in the shadow, half in the moonlight, which shone brilliantly on their drawn swords and polished cuirasses.

Not a man moved; all remained motionless, gazing up at the tavern, their curled hair hanging upon their shoulders, their mustaches twisted fiercely.

From the back of the tavern came a trumpet-note, short and sharp, like a signal. The trumpeter at one end of the line raised his instrument and replied, and instantly those stolid men swung out of their saddles, and ran forward into the blackness of the shadow, leaving half a dozen in charge of the horses.

"Go!" whispered Peter Pouch. "If your steeds neigh it is all over with you—"

But the remainder of his words were drowned in a terrific report below stairs.

Warned by the non-success of their comrades of the Footguards, the newcomers had dispensed with any parleying, and, placing three or four carbines to the tavern door, shattered the lock and rushed in.

### An Unexpected Situation!

"LEAD the way, Daventry!" cried Harry Lavender. "I will keep the rear!"

And, before Dick could realise anything, he was pushed across the room, squeezing through a door which closed noiselessly behind them, and once more found himself in one of those mysterious secret passages.

Captain Daventry had taken his hand, and pulled him along at a quick pace; and from time to time he opened a panel, warned Dick to stoop or stride, or avoid some projecting piece of woodwork. And then Dick would hear Harry Lavender behind him, carefully barring the way, and hasten after them, breathing hard.

In this manner they stole on in complete darkness for some distance, muffled tramping and shouts coming dully to their ears.

"And now, young gentleman," whispered Captain Daventry, "we are at the critical point of all."

He slid back a carefully-oiled bolt, and drew another of those noiseless doors towards him.

A great shaft of moonlight fell into the passage, revealing long festoons of spiders'web hung all about them, and swayed in the draught of night air.

Peeping over the captain's shoulder, Dick looked down into a yard enclosed by high walls. The floor of the yard was many feet below that of the passage, and an almost perpendicular ladder led from the one to the other. He felt Harry Lavender's breathing close to his ear; but they waited in a thrill of silence for Daventry to speak.

At last he drew the door wide open, and Dick saw that its outer side was painted to resemble a window.

The smell of stabling came to their nostrils. "All is clear," whispered Daventry. "If we can descend into the yard there, and gain yonder building unobserved, we are safe. Do as you see me do."

And, turning round, he found the ladder with his foot, and climbed down as quickly as was possible in his huge, square-toed riding-boots.

Dick followed, with a feeling in his spine that all the King's horses and all the King's men must be watching his back.

As his head reached the level of the secret passage he saw Harry Lavender open another door at right angles to the mock window, and, throwing it wide, pull the window gently to, and descend in his turn.

Dick remembered the circumstance, trifling as it was, and a great deal was destined to turn upon it.

Once in the air, they could hear a mighty hubbub waking the silence of the night.

Men shouted to one another, windows were thrown open, and startled citizens clamoured to know the reason of the disturbance.

It was not possible to gallop three troops of horse into Sleepy Holborn, and blow the door of the Blue Dog to fragments without all the world coming from its bed.

They heard a loud voice, evidently that of an officer, replying to some question, and stayed their steps to listen.

### CAPTAIN LAVENDER'S PERIL



The men fell aside as the captain appeared with Dick. The sergeant came hurriedly forward. "Captain Lavender!" he said in an awestruck voice. "What do you in this place? Know you not that your name is on the list of those we have come to take?" (See page 4.)

"Have no fear, my good sir!" cried the officer. "We do but search for some plotters against the King's Majesty, that have their hiding-place in this murderous tavern. We will harm neither thee nor thy good dame, though we break thy slumbers."

Harry Lavender plucked the ladder from its position against the moonlit wall, carried it noiselessly across the yard, and placed it in a black corner full of shadow.

Daventry instantly mounted, and disappeared. Dick followed him at a warning push from Harry Lavender, and when the latter had joined them the two captains pulled the ladder up after them and closed the rickety door of ancient planks.

They were in a loft half filled with hay, and someone was moving beneath them.

Harry Lavender stole to the far end and bent down, at the same time imitating the scratch of a rat on the floor-boards.

It was instantly replied to by a similar sound from underneath, and the signal was understood, for Lavender whispered: "For your lives!" and disappeared so suddenly that Dick thought he must have fallen, but for the absence of any noise.

Captain Daventry followed next, and as he passed Dick he breathed into his ear: "The stairs are narrow, and the pitch is steep. Cling to the rope if you value a whole skin!" Then he also disappeared, and Dick, groping with his hands, half slid, half scrambled into still deeper gloom, to find his feet imbedded in soft litter, and the heavy panting of a laboured horse audible in the stillness.

A voice he had not heard before whispered: "Take your mare, sir. I thought I should never keep her quiet. The soldiers are outside. Listen!"

A shrill neighing rang upon the night, and Dick was only just in time to prevent Beauty from answering the challenge, as he laid his hand on her distended nostrils, and spoke into her ears.

After a short pause, Harry Lavender spoke. "They mean to take us this time, for they have surrounded the whole block in which the tavern stands. To attempt to escape, and those horsemen without, there would be instant capture or death. There is nothing to be done but to wait until the others tire of the search, and withdraw."

Daventry grunted his assent, and there was another pause.

"Yet, will they not seek for us here?" said Dick.

"'Tis so unlikely as to be almost out of the question," replied Harry Lavender, in explanation. "You see, Dick, we are now in an isolated building, standing by itself, and separated from the tavern by the entire length of five houses, through which we passed behind the panelling."

"May they not discover the secret gallery, and so come hither?"

"Yes, as far as the false window, which, since it opens inward, they will take to be the outer wall, and turning off through the door I left ajar before I came down the ladder, will go into the street."

"Captain," whispered the strange voice — it was Ned Pouch — "when they find the other door wide into the lane they will deem you have gone already, and go their way."

"Good lad!" said Lavender. "'Twas a golden thought of thine to open it."

"Nay, sir, I opened it not," replied Ned. "My father merely told your honour that 'twas bolted firm. I had but time to bring Captain Daventry's horse nither before the carbines were fired."

Lavender made an exclamation in the darkness.

"Everything is against us," said Harry Lavender bitterly. "'Twas the one chance I had counted upon to mislead them, and 'twill be daylight in three hours."

Outside they could hear the stamping of many hoofs and the jingle of stirrup-irons from the party that watched the rear of the tavern, and the narrow lane that encircled the quarter.

"Captain Lavender," said Dick, "I am going back to open that door."

Harry Lavender stretched his hand out, guided by the direction from whence came Dick's whisper, and said sternly: "'Tis no time for folly or for foolhardiness, Richard Trevor."

"I wish neither one nor other," said Dick very quietly. "If you will help me lower the ladder from the loft I can accomplish it almost before you realise that I am gone. If they take me, Sir Anthony

THE MESSENGER.



A cloaked figure staggered into the room. It was Daventry. "Bad news, man, the worst. We are surrounded!" (See page 6.)

hath the King's ear, as you know too well. If you are discovered—" And Dick paused significantly.

It took full five minutes, however, before Harry Lavender would consent, but at last, backed by Daventry, Dick had his way, and set out on his perilous journey.

Lest the heavy boots, with their great spur-leathers and iron ribs, should betray them on the crazy staircase, Ned Pouch accompanied Dick to the loft, and helped him to lower the ladder.

He crossed the yard, opened the false window that was in reality a door, and, after listening in vain for any sound of the searchers in the secret passage, slipped down into the empty house, and placed his hand on the bolt.

As he did so, a great clatter of horsemen went by, and he waited, not without a terrible sense of tightening at the heart, and a strong inclination of the hair upon his head to rise.

The men rode past, and, pulling the door half open, he returned to the ladder, accomplished the descent in safety, and in ten minutes from the time he left it, was back again in the hayloft, blowing like a young grampus.

There was a thrill of wild excitement in Ned Pouch's whisper as he gave Dick his hand to help him.

"They have gone, Master Richard," said Ned Pouch.

"Then 'twas they that passed me at the door yonder?"

"Nay, I mean not only the soldiers, who moved off almost as you did, but the captains," whispered Ned. "I am to guide you after them when 'tis safe."

(Another long instalment of our powerful new romantic serial, "The League of Seven!" next week.)

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR BOYS!

Lever Brothers' plan to enable Boys to Learn Business while they Earn Money in their Spare time.

"CHILDREN are a nation's greatest asset," said Archbishop Duhig, of Australia, commenting upon child education.

Two great problems are ever uppermost in the minds of those responsible for the government of our country, of conscientious parents and teachers, and of leaders of juvenile organisations. One is the training of our growing boys to take their places in the business world, and the other the suitable employment of juveniles who have left school.

It is estimated that there are approximately two or three hundred thousand unemployed in England, Scotland, and Wales between the ages of 14 and 18 years.

Lever Brothers, Limited, whose interest in children and their welfare is universally known, have conceived the idea of enabling boys, while still at school, to learn modern business methods, and earn money in their spare time, thus preparing themselves for a successful business future.

In order to effect this, a plan has been devised, known as "Lever Brothers' Sales and Vocational Guidance Plan," having as its object the training of boys to take their places in the nation's Industrial Field. Not as square pegs in round holes, but as efficient and interested workers, an asset to the nation and a credit to their parents.

We understand from Mr. Arthur S. Roberts, manager of Lever Brothers' Vocational Division, that boys will first of all be required to serve a short probationary term as recruits, after which they will be admitted to membership in the Lever League of Student Salesmen, which is embodied in the Vocational Guidance Plan.

Student Salesmen will solicit orders from the housewife for high-grade soaps and other commodities manufactured by Lever Brothers, Limited, and their associated companies, and pass to the grocer. Each member who meets the requirements of the League will receive periodical promotion, each successive step earning for him the League's Badge of Merit and an Honours Certificate.

Finally, after his attainment to the highest honour conferred by the League — that of Master Salesman — the Student Salesman is eligible to avail himself of Lever Brothers' offer to recommend him for a position with a dependable employer.

Student Salesmen receive liberal cash commissions for their sales, together with prize-vouchers, which are exchangeable for useful and valuable prizes; and to maintain their interest and enthusiasm in their work, competitions are arranged from time to time.

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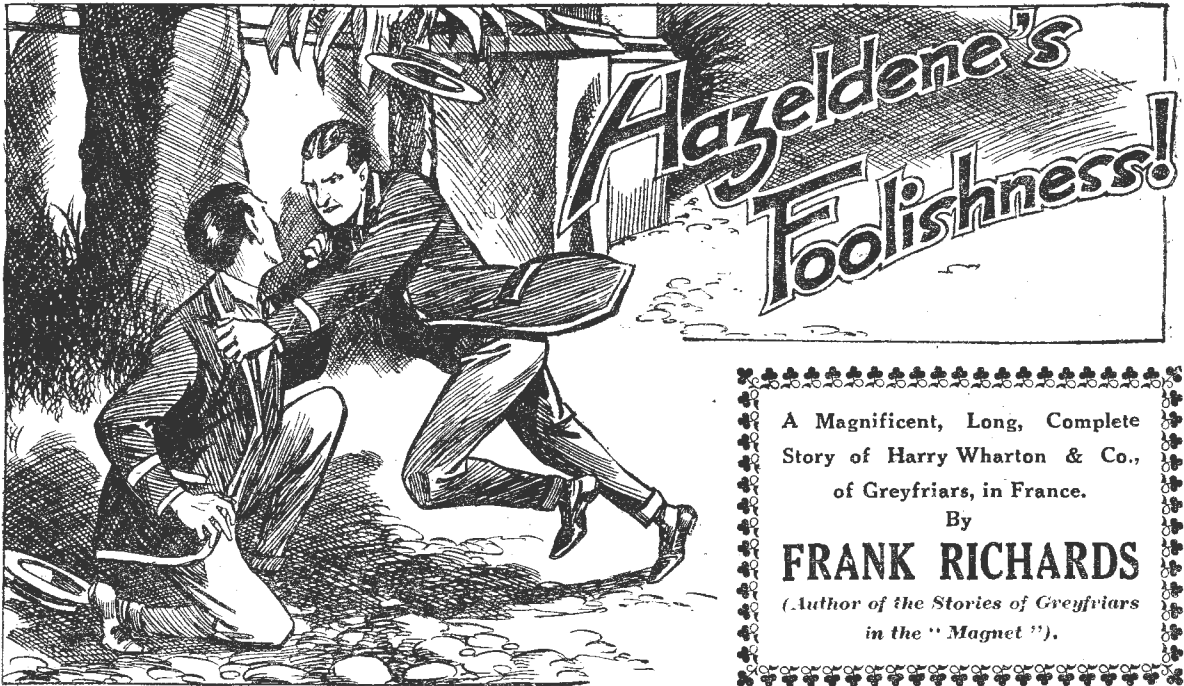
(Continued on page 28.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 235.

The Gathering of the Clans—and the Call to Arms!

**PETER HAZELDENE—RASCAL AND THIEF! MORE ADVENTURES OF THE GREYFRIARS CHUMS IN FRANCE!**

*Trouble was expected as soon as Peter Hazeldene set foot on the shores of France with Harry Wharton & Co. The lure of the Casino proves too much for the weak junior, and he is held in its vice-like grip.*



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

By  
**FRANK RICHARDS**  
(Author of the Stories of Greyfriars  
in the "Magnet").

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
"The Theft!"

**T**HIS is prime! I must say you're doing us well, Smithy!" Bob Cherry of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, said that in tones of great satisfaction. He was with his chums, Harry Wharton & Co., and Vernon-Smith, and they were enjoying the latter's hospitality in France.

With the party were Peter Hazeldene and his sister Marjorie Hazeldene, of Cliff House School, who had also accompanied the party with her friend, Clara Trevlyn.

The Bounder, as Vernon-Smith was known at Greyfriars, was fortunate enough to be the son of a millionaire.

His father kept him supplied with pocket money to an extent which took away the breath of the Remove.

There had been a time when Vernon-Smith had flounced his money before the eyes of his schoolfellows, but that had been all left behind long ago. When he had a fat remittance from his father, Vernon-Smith generously shared it with his friends.

On this occasion a fat remittance had enabled Vernon-Smith to take a party over to France, and, as Bob Cherry remarked, Vernon-Smith was "doing them well."

But there was one thing that marred the happiness of the party. Hazeldene, who for the best part of the journey from Greyfriars had spent his time in turning over sheets of paper covered with figures, disappeared as soon as they landed.

But Vernon-Smith was not going to let Hazeldene upset the arrangements he had made for entertaining his guests. The party mounted a tram and rode out in the country for an hour, enjoying every revolution of the wheels, so to speak.

When they got back it was the Bounder's intention to show Harry Wharton & Co. and the Cliff House girls what life was really like in a Casino—an adventure that was keenly looked forward to by the Greyfriars trippers.

The tram took them right up to the entrance of the Casino. Bob Cherry was the first to alight, and he was just turning to assist the Cliff House girls to leave the tram when a well-known figure outside the Casino attracted his attention.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "There's Hazeldene!"

The rest of the party looked towards the

Casino. The Bounder, who probably guessed now the reason for the wayward Removite having suddenly disappeared, frowned and bit his lip.

Hazel was evidently waiting for them. He did not look as if he had been having a particularly good time.

His face was paler, his eyes had a troubled look, with little wrinkles round them, and his lips were hard set, but had a trembling movement every now and then.

He was feeling anything but fit, after an afternoon spent in a hot and crowded room, instead of the open air.

He came running towards the party as he sighted them. He had been scanning the crowd that was passing in at the gates, on the look-out for them.

"You've got back!" he exclaimed ungraciously. "I've been waiting a jolly long time for you!"

"Why did you leave us?" asked Nugent.

"I had something else to do than gadding about on silly trams," growled Hazel.

"Smithy, I want to speak to you."

"Well, we're going in," said Vernon-Smith.

"Come on! Have you got a ticket?"

"Yes."

"You have been in, Hazel?" Marjorie asked.

He grunted.

"Of course I have! What do you think I've been doing?"

"Hazel, you—you haven't been gambling!"

"I've been trying a system," said Hazel sullenly.

"That's what I came over here for, if you want to know. Don't look like that; there's nothing wrong about it. Everybody who comes here does it."

"It is wrong, all the same."

"No worse than betting on horse-races, I suppose?"

"That is wrong, too."

"Oh, rot! But you needn't give me a lecture; I've had a lesson," said Hazel bitterly.

"I'm cleaned out."

"Was that what you wanted money for?"

"Of course it was!"

"I didn't know. Oh, Hazeldene!"

"Don't 'Oh, Hazeldene!' me!" growled her brother.

"I tell you, I've had rotten luck. I haven't a franc left for a cup of coffee!"

"Well, you cannot play any more, then," said Marjorie, brightening a little.

Hazel made no reply to that.

Vernon-Smith had taken the admission tickets, and Hazeldene drew him aside as they

walked on. The Bounder gave him a look of ironical inquiry. Hazeldene understood its meaning, and flushed angrily.

"No, it hasn't worked," he growled. "It went all right at first. I got four louis ahead—eighty francs. Then—then there was a run of wrong numbers. The system is all right. I've proved that. If I'd had enough capital to hold out a little longer, and—double the stakes at the right moment, I should have won hands down. But just when my luck was turning, I ran out of money. I had to stand there and see my numbers come up, and I hadn't a sou to put on them!"

said Hazel, clenching his hands. "If you'd stood in with me, it would have been all right."

"Rot!"

"I tell you it is so. I backed cinque-number five—eight times running, to my last piece. After that, it was bound to come up. But the very first time I didn't put any money on it, up it came!"

"Fathead! The man had his eye on you, and made it come up, to tempt you to go on."

"You can talk as much as you like, but I don't believe it. Look here, Smithy, you've got a good bit of cash left, I suppose?"

The Bounder nodded. He knew what was coming, and, like Pharaoh of old, he hardened his heart.

"Ten pounds?" asked Hazel.

"Twenty!" said the Bounder calmly.

"Lend me half of it—"

"To play again?"

"Yes, of course!"

"I won't lend you sixpence to play with," said Vernon-Smith icily. "You've lost all your own money; but you're jolly well not going to lose mine!"

"It won't be lost! I tell you—"

"Rats!"

"Lend me a quid, then."

"Not a sou!"

"I—I tell you, I feel desperate!" muttered Hazel, with shaking lips. "I tell you, I must have money from somewhere. I tell you, I can get back all I've lost, and a lot more besides—quite easily."

"You can come and have a feed with us," said the Bounder. "I'm standing treat. You can have anything you like—except gambling. You've had enough of that—too much, I should say. Enough said!"

"Smithy, look here—"



Vernon-Smith moved away and joined the others. Hazel bit his lip till the blood came. He was in a mood for anything; the mood of the gambler who feels that his luck is on the turn, and that only a little more capital—always a little more capital—is required to recover all losses, and win great sums. If Hazel could have possessed himself of the Bounder's pocket-book by violence at that moment, there is not the slightest doubt that he would have done so. As it was not possible, he had to contain himself as best he could. He bit his lip hard, and dug his nails into his palms. He was suddenly, savagely silent as they went in.

The party were dusty enough after their afternoon out, and Vernon-Smith, who knew the place well, led the way to the "wash and brush-up" department. Hazel came in with the juniors, his eyes turning with a strange gleam in them upon Vernon-Smith. Marjorie and Clara had gone into the ladies' room. The juniors, busy revelling in cold water, and removing the dust of the afternoon, had no eyes for Hazel. Vernon-Smith had taken off his jacket, and placed it with the others, and Hazel hung his on the same peg. Hazel brushed his hair hastily, with trembling fingers. His eyes hardly left the Bounder for a moment. Vernon-Smith had plunged face and head into a basin of water, when Hazel moved over to the jacket. He slipped a jacket on, and went to the door.

"Wait for us, Hazel!" said Wharton. "All right; I'll wait in the vestibule," said Hazel.

The big door swung to behind him. The juniors finished their toilet in a leisurely manner. Vernon-Smith took a jacket down from his peg and slipped it on. Then he gave a little start.

"Hallo! This isn't my jacket," he said. "Nor mine!" said Bob.

"Nor mine!" said Johnny Bull. "Hazel's taken the wrong jacket," said Wharton. "You're the same size. Call him; he's waiting outside."

A strange look came over Vernon-Smith's face. His pocket-book was in that jacket, in the inside-pocket. Had Hazel—

He hardly finished the thought that came into his mind. Hastily throwing the jacket on, he hurried out into the vestibule.

Hazelidene was not to be seen. The Bounder, compressing his lips, strode away quickly towards the gambling-rooms.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs." The monotonous voices of the croupiers greeted him.

"Les jeux sont faites." "Rien ne va plus."

The tables were crowded. In the crowd Vernon-Smith sought eagerly for the figure of the black sheep of Greyfriars.

Hazel was not there. "Le cinq!" announced the croupiers, as the number came up.

Vernon-Smith was still seeking. He quitted the gaming-rooms at last, and hurried back to the vestibule, where he found the juniors waiting for him. Marjorie and Clara had not yet appeared, and Vernon-Smith was glad of it. The expression on his face started the Co.

"What's the matter?" asked Wharton quickly. "Can't you find Hazel?"

"No!" "His jacket does all right for you," said Frank Nugent. "You can charge back when we come across him. I dare say he's sulking again."

"It isn't the jacket," said the Bounder grimly.

"What, then?" "My pocket-book was in the pocket." Harry Wharton's brow clouded.

"Hazel couldn't have known that," he said.

The Bounder laughed—a hard laugh, quite like the Bounder of other days. "That's why he's taken it," he said.

"What?" "You think—" "Smithy—"

"I don't think—I know!" said the Bounder crisply. "Hazel couldn't make a mistake in the jackets. That's all rot! His was hanging over mine. I never looked for this. If he'd sneaked the pocket-book I'd have spotted him. There's an elastic on it to keep it in the pocket, you see, and he couldn't have got it out easily. I never thought of such a dodge as taking my jacket instead of his own. But that's what he's done."

"Then he's been playing here and lost all his money?" said Wharton slowly.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "Smithy! You think he's taken your pocket-book on purpose, to play with your money?" said Johnny Bull, in a low voice.

"I know he has!" "Then you'll find him in the gambling-room," said Nugent.

"I've been there." "And he isn't there?" "No."

"Then it can't be for that—" "He wouldn't try to play here with my money. He'd know I should be after him in a few minutes," said the Bounder. "He's taken it and bolted. Gone to Le Coin by this time."

"My hat!" "Was there much money in it?" asked Wharton.

"Twenty pounds in English banknotes, and a hundred francs in French. But that's not all. Our return tickets were in it, too. Hazel doesn't want them, but they've gone with the rest, and we can't get them back without getting him."

There was a grim silence and grim looks among the juniors. It seemed almost incredible that Hazelidene could have been guilty of such baseness. Hazel—Marjorie's brother—was a thief!

It was the natural outcome of the fever of gambling. But it came as a shock to the juniors.

And there could be no doubt about it. If Hazel had taken the Bounder's jacket by mistake, where was he? He had said that he would wait for them in the vestibule. But there was no sign of him.

"What on earth's to be done!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"We've got to get hold of him somehow," said Vernon-Smith. "The rotter—the unspeakable rotter!"

Johnny Bull gave him a grim look. "It comes from the gambling," he said.

"I know that!" "Well, who was it first took Hazel into one of these thieves' dens and showed him how to play that rotten game?"

The Bounder bit his lip. "You did, on your previous vacation in Switzerland," said Johnny Bull. "This is where it comes home to roost, Smithy."

"No need to rub it in," said Vernon-Smith very quietly. "It's true enough. But that doesn't excuse Hazel. Mind, not a word of this before the girls. Marjorie must not know."

The juniors concurred most heartily. They had all thought of that, and they were a little surprised to hear the suggestion come from the Bounder. They had hardly expected him to think so much of Marjorie's feelings at the moment when her brother had robbed him of all the money he had.

"You think he's gone to Le Coin?" asked Wharton, after a pause.

"Yes." "There are a lot of places along the train-lines when he might have gone—Wimereaux, and other places—"

"I think he's gone to Le Coin. I've reason for thinking so."

Wharton looked at him sharply. "Did you know he had any idea of gambling in his head, Smithy, when we came here?"

"I promised him to say nothing. He told me in confidence," said the Bounder. "Now he's done it, and you know, there's no harm in my saying so, I suppose. I didn't know what he was going to tell me when I gave him my word. He had a system, and he's tried it. It was my fault in the beginning, I suppose. Now he's gone to Le Coin—with my money."

Wharton frowned darkly. "We've undertaken to catch the early boat back," he said. "If he's gone to Le Coin at this time, he can't get back in time for the boat."

"I don't suppose he's given that a thought."

"And if we go after him we shall lose the boat ourselves."

"I can't afford to lose twenty pounds," said the Bounder quietly. "Besides, there are our return tickets. We can't get back to Greyfriars without them."

"I dare say we could raise enough money to pay for the tickets home," said Johnny Bull. "But—but we can't go and leave Hazel here."

"Impossible!"

"But—but the girls must go back to Cliff House," said Bob Cherry. "Old Miss Primrose will be tearing her hair if they don't come home in time."

"It's all right," said the Bounder. "You fellows can get new tickets and take the girls home, and I'll go after Hazel."

"But—" "Hush! Here they are!"

The two girls, looking very bright and fresh, joined the juniors. They had no suspicion that anything was wrong, and the juniors did the best they could to conceal it.

"Now for the restaurant," said Miss Clara cheerily. "I could eat a wolf!"

And they went into the restaurant, and the bowing and smiling garcon bowed and smiled them to a table by the window in view of the broad gardens, when the dusk was falling and the lights were beginning to gleam.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Left Behind!

"ISN'T Hazel coming?" Marjorie asked, as they sat down.

"I think he's had a feed," said Wharton uncomfortably.

"Sulks again!" said Miss Clara. "I'll bet you a hat that he's been playing and lost his money! You've got his return ticket?"

"It's in my pocket-book," said Vernon-Smith.

"Then he'll have to turn up in time for the boat, or he won't be able to get home at all!" said Miss Clara, laughing.

Vernon-Smith did not tell her where the pocket-book was.

The juniors were in a most uncomfortable frame of mind. They could imagine Hazel, speeding away in the tram, bound for the Casino at a distance, where he would be able to expend the stolen money unmolested. The trams did not start frequently; it was hopeless to think of overtaking him. But Vernon-Smith was not thinking of the tram. He thought rapidly, and rose from the table.

"Let's have a stroll round and look for Hazel, Wharton," he said.

"Right-ho!" said Harry, realising that the Bounder had something to say to him that the girls were not to hear.

They left the restaurant. In a deserted corridor, by a big group of palms, the Bounder paused. There was a hard and grim expression on his face.

"The girls must be taken home," he said; "and Marjorie's to know nothing about what's happened. You understand that?"

"Of course! And it's very decent of you to keep it dark, Smithy," said Harry earnestly.

"Well, if Marjorie knew, she'd probably say, like Bull, 'Who first took Hazel into one of these dens?'" said the Bounder bitterly. "He's become a thief now, as well as a gambler; and she'd put it down to me. I don't say I'm not to blame. That isn't the point. And I'm not really thinking of myself. I want to spare her feelings."

"I understand that."

"Whether the money's recovered or not, I shall say nothing about it. If I lose it, I'll take it as a punishment for my old sins," said the Bounder, with a curl of the lip. "But I'm not going to lose it if I can help it. And—and not only that, but I feel bound to look after Hazel, rotter as he is. I first led him into this, and—and it's up to me to see him through. I'm going after him. You can simply tell Marjorie that he's missed the boat—that's true enough—and that I've gone to look for him; that's true enough. You fellows can take the girls home and get back to Greyfriars."

Wharton shook his head.

"We're not going to leave you in the lurch," he said. "I'll stay with you, and Bob, too. The others can see Marjorie and Clara home."

The Bounder nodded.

"It's a bare chance that I may catch him and get back to the boat in time," he said. "I'm going to Le Coin after him now."

"But the tram—"

"I can get a taxi here. I've enough loose money in my pockets to pay for that. I've

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about a hundred francs in gold and silver; only the notes were in the pocket-book. If I can, I'll get to Le Coin ahead of the tram, and stop Hazel, and bring him back. Once I'm with him it will be all right. You fellows can have your dinner now. And mind you, don't let the girls suspect there's anything wrong. Tell 'em I'm gone to look for Hazel. I'll get a sandwich and a taxi."

The Bounder hurried away before Harry could reply.

Wharton returned thoughtfully to the restaurant.

"Smithy's gone to look for Hazel," he explained. "He thinks he knows where to find him."

Marjorie looked at her little watch. "It's only an hour before the boat goes," she said. "I do hope Hazel will not miss it. It would mean trouble for him at the school."

"Well, accidents will happen, you know," said Wharton, as lightly as he could. "If Hazel misses the boat, some of us will stay behind, too, and then we shall all be in the soup together. It will only mean lines for us."

Harry Wharton & Co., fortunately, were in funds, especially as the outing had cost them nothing so far. When the "feed" was over, Wharton settled the bill. It was an extensive one, and very nearly cleared him out. Vernon-Smith and Hazeldene were still absent.

"Are we going without them?" asked Miss Clara, drawing on her gloves.

"They'll be at the boat," Wharton explained. "If Smithy finds Hazel in time, he's going to bring him there."

They left the Casino, and walked down to the quay. The steamer was there, and already in a bustle with passengers going aboard. But among the crowd that surged towards the boat, there was no sign of Hazeldene or the Bounder.

"Better get on the boat," said Harry. They went on the boat, Marjorie looking very worried and troubled. The suspicion was in her mind that Hazel had obtained money from somewhere, and had stayed behind to gamble again. She little dreamed how he had obtained the money. The girls were found deck-seats, and then the juniors drew aside to consult in low tones.

"The girls must be seen home," said Harry, with knitted brows. "But we can't all go and leave Smithy in the lurch. How much tin have you fellows got—enough for the tickets?"

The juniors compared notes as to their funds. There was enough for five tickets home, and something over.

"Bob and I will stay for the Bounder," said Wharton. "You other fellows see Marjorie and Clara to Cliff House, and then get back to the school. We can't all go, anyway—there isn't tin enough. That's agreed?"

"Right-ho!" said Johnny Bull; and Hurree Janset Ram Singh said that the right-hofulness was terrific. Nugent nodded assent.

"Better get off now," said Bob, with a glance round. "We shall be starting soon."

They returned to Marjorie and Clara. "Bob and I are going to wait for the others," Wharton explained. "We can't go, anyway, as the tickets are in Smithy's pocket-book. Good-bye, we shall have to get back to the quay now, or they'll be carrying us off!"

"I am sorry that Hazel should be giving you all this trouble," said Marjorie, in a low voice.

"Oh, that's nothing!" said Harry cheerily. "It's been a ripping day out."

"Topping!" said Miss Clara. "I never used to like Smithy, but I think he's a brick now—a regular brick!"

"It's very kind of him to look after Hazel, as he seems to be doing," said Marjorie.

"He is a brick!" said Bob Cherry. "Top-hole, and no mistake. Come on—time we were off. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!"

Harry Wharton and Bob ran back to the quay.

A few minutes later the big passenger boat moved out, and Marjorie and Clara waved their handkerchief to the two juniors standing on the quay, who waved their caps in return.

The big, lighted steamer glided away into the dusk of the sea. Bob Cherry jammed THE POPULAR.—No. 235.

his cap on the back of his head as the steamer disappeared.

"Well, this is a go!" said Harry. "We shall get into a row at the school for missing the boat and getting back late—and I hope nothing worse will come out. I promised Quelchly that there should be no—what Hazel's done."

"Well, you couldn't help that—you didn't know it was his little game," said Bob comfortingly. "No sign of them yet."

"Hazel may have dodged him at Le Coin. Let's get down to the tram-line."

At the stopping-place a tram was about to start. A tram had just come in from the country, but among the passengers who poured out of it, Hazel and Smithy were not to be seen.

"Come on!" said Harry.

"Whither bound?"

"Le Coin. The Bounder's gone there after Hazel. We shall find both of them there, I expect. Anyway, it's better than doing nothing."

"Right you are!"

And the two juniors boarded the outgoing tram, and it rolled away into the darkness of the country road.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Struck Down!

VERNON-SMITH had lost no time.

Immediately after leaving the Casino he had taken a taxicab, and was speeding down the long, white road towards Le Coin.

Hazel had undoubtedly taken the tram, and the taxi, of course, was much quicker. The Bounder was not without hopes of overtaking the slower vehicle on the road, long as was the start Hazel had obtained.

"Le Coin—vite!" was his order to the chauffeur; and the man made the taxi "buzz" with more than the usual recklessness of a French driver.

But the speed was pleasing to the Bounder.

The dusk was deepening on the road, and changing to darkness. Ahead of the taxicab the lights of the tram appeared at last. They had already passed one tram, and the Bounder's rapid and unerring glance had ascertained that Hazel was not in it. Was he in the one whose lights the Bounder now saw—just stopping at the "arret" of Le Coin?

The taxi halted alongside the halted tram. Out of the latter passengers were screaming—a crowd going to the casino in the wood for an evening "flutter" and a music-hall entertainment.

The Bounder sprang out. His quick, sharp eye was upon the passengers alighting from the tram. In the dusk he thought he caught a glimpse of Hazeldene.

He paid the chauffeur quickly, and ran in the direction of the casino. From the road, where the tram-lines were, a long path led up to the gates of the casino grounds, deeply shaded by overhanging branches. The Bounder hurried on, scanning everyone he passed. Almost at the gates his hand dropped upon a familiar shoulder, and Hazeldene of the Remove swung round with a sharp cry.

"Caught!" said the Bounder calmly. Hazel stared at him with a white face.

"You!" he muttered.

The Bounder nodded. He was elated, and it showed in his face. The boat had been lost—there would be ructions at Greyfriars; but he had caught Hazel before that reckless young rascal had had time to waste his money in the casino. As for dealing with him, the Bounder had no doubts. He could have knocked Hazel into a cocked hat if it came to real trouble—and he was determined that it should come to that, if necessary, to keep Marjorie's brother out of the casino.

"How—how did you get here?" stammered Hazel. "I—I thought—"

"You thought you'd have time to 'blew' my money first," said the Bounder coolly. "I came after you in a taxi—and just did it."

"Hang you!"

"Come on!"

"Come where?" asked Hazel, between his teeth.

"Back to Boulogne, of course."

"We—we should be too late for the boat, anyway."

"There's the next boat."

"You can go, if you like."

"Look here," said Vernon-Smith. "You've stolen my pocket-book. Hand it over!"

"I've borrowed it!"

"Without my consent," grinned the Bounder. "If there's any distinction between that and stealing, I should like to have it pointed out to me. Look here, Hazel; don't be a fool! I haven't said a word before Marjorie—she's not going to know that her brother is a thief; but you can't have the money!"

Hazel drew a sharp breath of relief.

"Marjorie doesn't know?"

"Did you think I would tell her?" muttered the Bounder.

"I don't know—it would be like you."

"Would it? Well, I haven't said anything—and I'm not going to. But you're going to come back to Boulogne with me—now!"

The passengers from the tram had all passed them now, going in at the gates. They were left alone on the shadowy path under the trees. Hazel's face was white and desperate. The lighted casino, to his foolish mind, was the great goal—there was fortune waiting for him with outspread arms, as it were. In the very sight of it he was caught—checked—baffled—like the Peri at the gate of Paradise—though the casino of Le Coin would have been better described by a name the very reverse of Paradise.

Hazel made no motion to hand back the pocket-book, or to stir from the spot. For the moment he was hardly a human being—he was a gambler kept from his darling vice—that is to say, something very like a wild animal barred from its prey. He was in a mood for anything just then. He knew that he was no match for the Bounder, but he would have fought him with blind rage rather than have parted with the means of trying his luck once more at the green tables.

Vernon-Smith understood, and he slipped his arm through Hazel's and drew him back towards the road. Hazel went with heavy and reluctant footsteps.

"Look here, Smithy!" he said, in a hoarse whisper. "Come in with me. Let's have a go! You used to be a sport."

"I used to be a fool and a blackguard, you mean!" said the Bounder, with a laugh. "Don't play the giddy goat, Hazel! You're not going in!"

"Lend me half the money—"

"Not a red cent."

"I'll give it you back—and double it—when—"

"When you've lost it?"

"When I've won on my system!" hissed Hazel.

"Same thing. Come on, and don't be a fool!"

They were half-way to the road now. The path under the trees was not lighted. Behind them was the glare of the lighted casino; but it made the darkness under the trees more dark still. The two juniors could hardly see one another. Vernon-Smith was on his guard against his companion, but he would have been, perhaps, more on his guard if he could have seen the white, wild desperation in Hazel's drawn face.

The wretched boy stopped, and tried to jerk his arm away.

"Come on!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Well, I can't carry you," said the Bounder, with a light laugh. "But you don't want to stay here without any money, I suppose. Give me my pocket-book."

"I won't!"

"I warn you that I shall take it by force, then."

"Smithy, don't be a rotter!" Hazel's voice was huskily pleading, but his eyes seemed on fire. "You owe me something! You first led me into this—you can't deny that! If I'm a gambler—yes, and a thief—you did it! You can't deny it."

"I'm not going to let you become a thief," said Vernon-Smith quietly. "If the money had gone, I'd have said nothing, because I know I've been to blame in the past. But it isn't gone; and I shan't let it go."

Hazel's eyes seemed to flame. His foot was knocking against a large, heavy stone on the ground. He glanced round him quickly. Darkness and solitude on all sides, save for the glare of the distant casino.

"Now, come," urged the Bounder. "Don't make me lay hands on you, Hazel; you know you wouldn't have an earthly."  
 "Do as you like. I won't come with you, and I won't give you the pocket-book. I'm going to try my luck again; and if you try to stop me, look out! You led me into it in the first place, and you can take the consequences. Take care!"

He dragged his arm away and started again towards the casino. The Bounder gripped him in a moment. Hazel closed with him, with a snarl like that of a wild animal, and struggled furiously. He dragged the Bounder down; but Vernon-Smith's grip did not relax. As he had said, Hazel had no chance in such a struggle. The Bounder was powerful enough to deal with two of him. But Hazel's right hand had released its grip; he was feeling for the stone in the darkness. He was hardly sane at that moment; there was only one thought clear in his mind—to get rid of the Bounder at any cost, and to get to the green table.

His fingers closed on the stone.

He panted.

"Will you let me go?"

"No!"

"Once more—the last time—"

"No! Oh, you scoundrel—oh!"

The Bounder's voice died away as the heavy stone crashed upon his head. It crashed again!

Hazel rose to his feet, shuddering. The Bounder lay still on the ground. There was not a movement in his stretched limbs. For a moment an awful thought came into Hazel's mind—a thought that banished for a second even the green table with the yellow numbers, and the piles of silver and gold.

He flung himself on his knees beside the Bounder, groped over him, and panted with relief. He had not done worse than he intended, though the momentary fear that he had made him almost sick.

The Bounder was breathing stentorously; he was stunned, and quite insensible. His forehead was wet—Hazel knew only too well with what!

Hazel rose again, panting. Vernon-Smith would come to his senses sooner or later; and before then—

He dragged the Bounder into the grass by the path, close under the thick, dark trees. Then he ran up the path, white-faced, panting.

The ruling passion was ruling again in his breast; remorse, fear—everything was banished but that. He paused for a moment outside the gates to pull himself together, and then entered, took his ticket, and walked into the casino.

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER.**

**The Way of the Transgressor.**

"HERE we are again!" said Bob Cherry.

The tram stopped. There were few passengers besides the two Greyfriars juniors. The passengers passed up the dark path to the casino; Wharton and Bob Cherry remained looking about them. The tram rolled on into the darkness and disappeared in the night.

Bob Cherry jerked his thumb towards the lights of the casino, shining like a beacon at the end of the dark path through the wood.

"I suppose we shall find them there?" he said.

"I suppose so," said Harry, puzzled. "I kept an eye on the trams that passed us going back; and only one taxi passed us, and that was empty. So they must be still here. But I don't see why Smythy should be in the casino; he must have found Hazel long ago. But he isn't here, that's a cert."

They turned into the path under the trees. Wharton suddenly stopped.

"Hark!"

A faint, low moan came from the blackness at the side of the path.

"Somebody's hurt!" said Bob. "Never mind Hazel and Smythy for a minute; let's see who it is."

He struck a match. The light gleamed out in the midst of the black shadows and disclosed a form lying in the grass.



**THE WAY OF A RASCAL!**—Vernon-Smith had plunged his head into a basin of water, when Hazel moved over to the Bounder's jacket. With trembling fingers he took it down and, slipping it on, went to the door. "Wait for us, Hazel!" said Harry Wharton. "All right, I'll wait outside for you!" replied Hazel. (See Chapter 1.)

The two juniors uttered a simultaneous cry:

"Smythy!"

They were upon their knees beside him in a moment. The match went out. Vernon-Smith was coming to his senses; he struggled into a sitting posture, with the aid of the juniors. His hand went to his head.

"What—what's this?" he muttered confusedly. "My head's wet! Oh, I remember! Where is he?"

"Who?"

"Hazel!"

"You don't mean to say it was Hazel who did this?" muttered Wharton, in low tones of horror.

Bob Cherry drew a gasping breath.

"Yes, it was Hazel." The Bounder spoke huskily, with difficulty. "I found him, and there was trouble. He wouldn't give up the money; and—and then he hit me with something. How long have I been here?"

"I don't know."

"I was stunned, I suppose." The Bounder groaned. "Oh, my head's throbbing! There's a stream under the trees yonder; you remember we passed it in our walk. Help me there, and I'll bathe my head. It feels as if it were on fire."

In silence the two juniors helped him to the stream. There was a break in the trees over the stream, and the starlight came clearly down. The Bounder bathed his face and his head and washed the blood away. He rose from the water, drying himself with his handkerchief.

He was cool again now, though with a throbbing head; the Bounder's coolness never deserted him for long.

"This is horrible!" muttered Wharton, with pale lips. "I should never have dreamed of this. He must have been mad, Smythy—simply mad."

"I rather fancy he was," said the Bounder composedly. "I didn't quite reckon on this, either. Don't look so scared; I'm not hurt. I've got a big bruise and a cut, but it's nothing serious. He only meant to get rid of me—and he did that,

by George! You fellows saw the boat off before you came?"

"Yes."

"That's all right. I must have been lying there more than an hour, then. I wonder what Hazel's been doing?"

"We can guess," said Bob.

"Yes, I suppose so. Wait till I've made myself look a bit more decent, and we'll go into the casino. It's all right about your promise to Quelch; if he knew one of the party had gone in to gamble, he would expect you to go in and fetch him out."

"Yes, yes; that's all right, I know! But—but to think that Hazel should come to this!" muttered Wharton. "If Marjorie knew—"

"Marjorie won't know," said the Bounder quietly. "I'm rather getting it in the neck, but it serves me right. Hazel said to me that I'd led him into it in the first place, and that I couldn't deny it. Well, I can't! I'm paying for it now. Mind, not a word about it to anybody—especially Marjorie. Hazel himself will be pretty sick about it by to-morrow, I fancy. The poor brute's got a conscience, of sorts. There, I'm all right now!"

"Come on, then; we must find him. I'm afraid your money will be gone, Smythy."

Smythy shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't care so much for that. I'm paying for having been a fool and a rotter long ago; I can't grumble. But we'll stop him if we can."

The Bounder had pulled himself together. The three juniors moved on towards the casino; and in the light Wharton and Bob looked at their companion. He was very pale, but the other signs of the assault had been removed. He was rapidly recovering from the effects of the hard knock he had received.

Bob Cherry took the tickets, and they walked in.

The gaming-room was crowded. But the crowd was not sufficient to hide a familiar cap—a cap in the Greyfriars' colours.

**"Smythy's Rough Luck!"—the Title of Next Week's Greyfriars Tale!**

"There's Hazel!" said Harry Wharton grimly, and they pushed their way towards him.

**THE FIFTH CHAPTER.**

**A Late Repentance!**

**H**AZELDENE was standing by the table; he was too restless to sit down.

His left hand was full of five-franc pieces, and he was throwing them on the numbers recklessly, backing three or four numbers at a time, in the hope of getting a winner among them.

He had had an hour or more in the casino to try his luck, and in that hour he had had plenty of time to test his precious system.

He had certainly tested it—changing banknote after banknote that did not belong to him for the purpose.

Banknote followed banknote, till the four fivers and the hundred-franc note were gone. The little wedge of silver pieces in Hazel's left hand was all that remained.

He had had some luck; he had even won once with a gold louis, receiving seven louis for his winnings on that great occasion. But it was not nearly so much as he had lost; and it encouraged him to play with gold instead of silver, and he did not win any more gold stakes.

He was reduced to silver again now, and he had a dozen big, round five-franc pieces in his hand to tempt Fortune further.

A savage and reckless look was on his face, and his eyes burned with an unnatural light. He was very flushed.

"There he is!" murmured Bob Cherry. "My hat! If the Head could see him now!" said Harry.

"Order of the sack!" "Come on!" said Smithy. "I don't suppose there's much of the money left; but never mind that. We've found him."

They moved round the table. Behind Hazel the crowd was thick, and it was not easy to reach him. They did not want to make a disturbance, and before they could get to his side he had thrown on the green cloth half the pieces he had left.

The croupier's rake disposed of them a minute later.

A movement of some of the players enabled Vernon-Smith to reach Hazel's side, and he stood beside him at the table. But the wretched youth was so engrossed with the spell of the game that he did not see him.

The Bounder touched him on the arm. Hazel turned round savagely, impatient, and started violently as he saw the Bounder. "You again!" he muttered.

"Turned up like a bad penny, you know," said the Bounder coolly. "How is the system going?"

Hazel bit his lip, and did not reply. He seemed to have forgotten the scene of the violence under the trees. He was thinking only of the green cloth and the glaring numbers.

"We've come for you," said Vernon-Smith, tapping him on the arm again. "I won't come!"

"Do you want me to call for a gendarme, and give you in charge for robbery with violence?" the Bounder asked grimly.

Hazel laughed—a hard, bitter laugh. "I don't care!" he said. "You can if you like! I'm not coming while I've got any money left!"

"How much have you got left?" "Look!"

"Thirty francs!" said the Bounder. "Is that all that's left of my twenty quid?"

"That's all!" "You fool!"

"Let me alone! Thirty francs are no good to you, I suppose?" said Hazel irritably. "Let me alone; luck may turn yet."

Vernon-Smith looked at the flushed, yet drawn, face, and felt pity for him. After all, it was he who had led Hazel into this kind of thing. And Hazel had not enjoyed himself, that was pretty clear.

"I don't care for the money," said the Bounder quietly. "Will you promise to come away at once when that's gone?"

"Yes, yes! Let me alone!" "All serene! I'll watch it go," said the Bounder, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Faites vo jeux, messieurs."

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The handle was grinding again, the wooden horses racing round in their grooves. Hazel desperately threw his last pieces on the table—four of them on cinq, and two on six. Then, with misery in his eyes, the wretched youth watched the racing horses. The final announcement came like the knell of doom to his ears.

"Le sept!" Number seven had won! Hazel clenched his hands hard, and drew a sobbing breath. The Bounder touched him lightly, almost compassionately.



"Come on, old chap!" Hazel turned on him feverishly. "Smithy, lend me a quid—lend me five francs—just one franc—"

He had forgotten he was speaking to the fellow he had struck down mercilessly in the wood—the fellow whose head was still throbbing and burning from that savage blow. The green table and the numbers filled his fevered brain.

Vernon-Smith did not reply; but his grip closed like iron on the foolish lad's arm, and drew him away from the table. Hazel did not resist. It was useless to remain there without money, and all his money was gone. He allowed the Bounder to draw

A wonderful chance for all  
**"POPULAR" READERS**  
**EASY CRICKET COMPETITION.**  
 See Page 2.

him away. He met the glances of Wharton and Bob Cherry with sulky defiance.

"All gone?" asked Bob. "Yes," said the Bounder. "Let's get out of this."

They left the casino, and walked down to the tram-line. Hazel did not speak; every now and then he drew a deep, sobbing breath—that was all. The reaction had set in after the unhealthy excitement, and he was as limp as a rag—almost sick.

"Oh, what a fool I've been!" the juniors heard him mutter at last. "What a fool—fool—fool! They've swindled me!"

"Go on!" said the Bounder humorously. "They've got some way of controlling that infernal machine," snarled Hazel. "I don't know how, but they can do it! I've watched that old thief—and I know! Once or twice I could see in his eyes which number he meant to win, and I scored on it, but—but not often enough. Oh, he's deep!"

"A little too deep for you to tackle," said Bob Cherry. "Still, it's something if you can see that you've made a fool of yourself."

Hazel made no reply; but he gave a sudden, choking sob, and the next moment he was weeping wildly, almost hysterically.



The heavy sobs that came from him seemed to shake him almost to pieces. The juniors looked at him helplessly. At the sight of that convulsive emotion all their anger and scorn vanished, and they felt only pity for the wretched boy, and a desire to comfort him somehow.

"For goodness' sake, don't do that!" muttered Wharton. "Hazel, old man, it's all over now; we'll stand by you!"

"Gambler, and thief!" muttered Hazel, choking. "Thief—just as much as if I'd picked pockets in the street! I shall be expelled for this, and serve me right. And—Marjorie—what will she say?"

He sobbed chokingly. "Don't!" muttered the Bounder. "Hazel, don't! It's all right; not a word's going to be said! We shall be home late; but we missed the boat, that's all!"

"That's all," said Bob. "Pull yourself together, kid."

"I—I've a good mind to drop into the sea," groaned Hazel. "I tell you your money's gone, Smithy, every cent of it. I've stolen it and gambled it away!"

"That's nothing! I give it to you!" said the Bounder cheerfully. "There, it's all right; you're not a thief if I give you the money!"

Hazel started. "Do you mean to say you don't want it back?"

"No, I don't want it. Forget all about it."

"Smithy! And—and that crack I gave you on the head—I must have been mad when I did it—a wild beast!"

The Bounder rubbed his head. "It's all right," he repeated; "I don't bear malice. It serves me jolly well right, as a matter of fact. I've got it on my conscience that I first took you into one of these thieves' dens, and, goodness knows, I'd do anything to undo what I did then! Hazel, old man, don't think about it any more, and you can rely on all of us to keep our mouths shut."

Hazel looked up in wonder. Was this the Bounder—the cold, hard, cynical Bounder—who was speaking?

"I—I—you're a good chap, Smithy! And you fellows, I don't know what you're troubling about me for. I'm not worth it. But—but after this—he tried to steady his voice—after this, there'll be no more of it. A lesson like this is enough even for such a fool as I have been. You'll see—it's all over now!"

And he meant it; and Harry Wharton and his comrades could only hope that it would last. The tram came along, and the juniors returned to Boulogne in time for the boat. In the darkness they glided out upon the Channel.

Hazel stood moodily staring at the dark waters as the steamer glided away towards England once more. The other fellows remained close to him, hardly knowing what he might or might not do in his present wild mood.

It was at a very late hour that the four juniors arrived, tired out, at Greyfriars. They received a hundred lines each, and, fortunately, Mr. Quelch did not inquire into their reasons for having missed the boat. They went up to the dormitory, and found the rest of the Remove fast asleep; but Johnny Bull and Nugent and Inky woke up to greet them.

"All serene?" asked Nugent drowsily. "Right as rain!" said the Bounder. And they turned in.

So ended Founders' day at Greyfriars. Hazel was very quiet and subdued the next morning. Of what had happened that day out he said nothing more, but he took up cricket again with a new zest, and seemed to be trying by his conduct to atone for what could not be recalled. And the chums of the Remove were glad to see it. And the Bounder did not go unrewarded.

Hazel probably told Marjorie all that had happened, for the next time the girl visited Greyfriars she was very kind indeed to the Bounder—all her old dislike and distrust of him seemed gone; and as Smithy, for reasons best known to himself, attached very great importance to the good opinion of Miss Hazeldene, he was, on the whole, very contented with the outcome of the Greyfriars excursion.

THE END.

(A story with thrills and surprising situations—"Smithy's Rough Luck!" a tale of Greyfriars, next week.)





# BILLY BUNTER'S

## WEEKLY

Edited By W.G. Bunter (Greyfriars)

Assisted by Sammy Bunter of Greyfriars, Baggy Trimble and Patsy Wynna of St. Jim's, and Tubby Muffin of Rookwood.

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**IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!**  
By **BILLY BUNTER.**

My Dear Readers,—In the summer a young man's fancy litely turns to thoughts of—picknix!

On a saltry afternoon, when the sun streams down in torrents, and it's too hot to chase the eloviose cricket-ball, your thoughts turn distinctively to a cool, shady spot by the river, where you can feast and feed to your hart's content.

I don't know who was the pioneer of picknix. The man who invented these delightful open-air repasts has been forgotten. His name is berried in obscurity. If I could only find out who he was, I would have a beutful marble statue erected to his memory. That man has done far more for posterity than Cromwell, Wellington, and all the war-makers that ever lived.

Of course, some fellows can't appreciate the joys of a picknick. They remind me of the person in Wordsworth's poem:

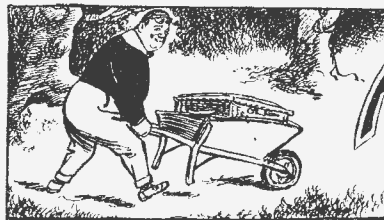
"A picknick by the river's brim  
A humble picknick was to him,  
And nothing more."

Such people are to be pitted. They take their plezzures sadly. Instead of throwing themselves hart and sole into the delights of a picknick, they sit down to it with solum faces, devour a cuple of doe-nutts, and then say, "We've had enuff." Bah! Such fellows put years on me!

I am satisfied, however, that most of my readers are fond of picknix. This Special Picknick Number comes as a boon and a blessing to them. They will farely revel in the feast of littersy fare which I have provided, and, like Wilkins Twist—or was it Oliver Micawber?—they will rise up and howl for more!

When it comes to writing about picknix, I am farely in my element. And so are my four fat subbs!

Yours sincerely,  
**YOUR EDITOR.**



### How to Prepare a Picnic!

By **TUBBY MUFFIN.**

First of all, you must find the funds. You can't have much of a feed without funds—unless you go on an orchard-raiding eggspedition. Then you can have as much froot as you like—all for nicks!

How much munny is rekwired in order to organise a suxcessful picnic? Well, that depends on the number of people you propose to invite, and the state of their appetites. If there are half-a-duzen of you, and you are all small eaters, you will find that a quid is ample. But if there are half-a-duzen fellows with the appetites of a Muffin, you won't get much change out of a five!

I always find it a good plan to choose fellows with feeble appetites, when I'm getting up a picnic-party. I invite people who suffer from cronnick indigestion. They will be satisfied with a peace of dry toast and a cup of weak tea. They won't touch rich cakes, and things like that. Those luxuries are left to me to polish off!

Having obtained your funds, and issewed your invitations, you should choose a sootable spot. A place right off the beaten track is best. You don't want to have a picnic on the side of the road, or every hungry motorist will draw up his car and eggspet you to "stay him with flagons, and feed him with apples."

A quiet, seklooded meadow, where there are no sheep, cows, bools, gotes, or other rodents, makes an ideal spot.

Now comes the question of transport. You don't want to have to carry the supplies on your back, in camel fashion. If you are welthy enuff, hire a taxi. If not, borrow a wheelbarrow.

You must make sure 'you have enuff crockery-wear to go round; also knives, forks, and spoons in abundance. Make sure the kettle isn't perforated with holes at the bottom, and see to it that the spout of the teapot is unbroken. Picnics have frekwently been spoilt through failure to observe these points.

Whatever you do, don't forget to take a tin-opener. Tins of sammon, pairs,

pineapple, etc., cannot be opened with your teeth. A fork will sometimes do the trick; but what you really want is a tin-opener.

Assuming you have a pound to spend, I suggest that you lay out the munny as follows:

	£	s.	d.
2 loaves of brown bread	.	.	9
1 lb. Butter	.	1	6
1 lb. Pot Storrberry Jam	.	1	3
1 lb. Shoogar	.	.	7
1 Good Fat Current Cake	.	3	0
Assorted Pastrys	.	3	0
1 tin of Sammon	.	2	6
1 tin of Pairs	.	2	0
1 tin of Pineapple	.	2	0
1 tin Kondensed Milk	.	1	1
Biskits (Patter-cake)	.	2	4
	£1	0	0

Of course, these prices are subject to flucktuation.

### BRIEF REPLIES.

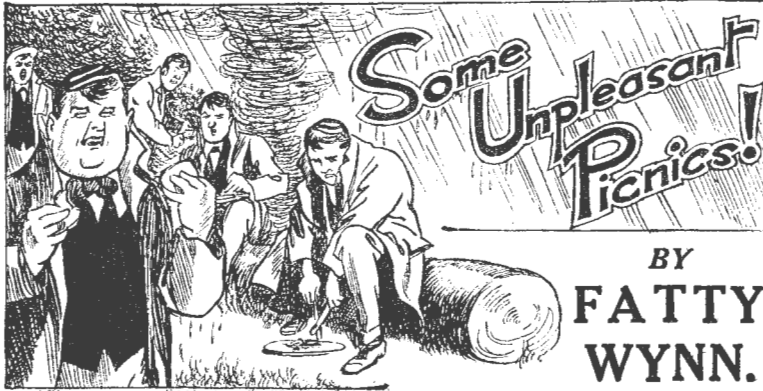
Joseph Evans (Cardiff).—"When are you going to have a Special Holiday Number of your 'Weekly'?"—Neckst weak, deer boy, neckst weak! Tell all yore Skottish chums to keep there opticks open for it. Lemme see. Cardiff is the kappital of Skotland, isn't it?

J. Carter (Birmingham).—"I can't quite decide whether you are hopelessly mad or merely stupid!"—You, my friend, are both—and jolly rood into the bargain!

H. Davies (Swindon).—"Does the Bunter family bear arms?"—Of course! We've all got out arms intact—although one of my ansestors lost a legg in the Battle of Bunter's Hill!

Reggie Fibber (Scarborough).—"I wish you would try to be more truthful."—And I wish you would refrain from being a Fibber!

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## BY FATTY WYNN.

Like all other pleasures, picnics have their drawbacks as well as their advantages. In fact, although I am awfully fond of a good feed in the open air, I can't help saying that I consider the pleasures of picnics are very much overrated.

The first picnic I ever attended was a "wash-out" in more senses than one. It pelted with rain the whole time, and our supplies of grub were simply soaked. The biscuits were as soft as pudding; the cakes and pastries were ruined; the grass was wet; and we all developed more or less serious chills. I want to forget that picnic as speedily as possible!

The weather plays a big part in picnics. No picnic can be successful in a deluge of rain, or a blizzard. One is at the mercy of King Sol. If he condescends to shine, all well and good; but if he hides himself away behind the clouds, a picnic is a gloomy affair.

Even in the best of weather, however, picnics often prove failures. So many tragedies can happen. I once went to a picnic which had been arranged on the top of a steep, grassy hill. The fellows who were to carry the hamper to the top of the hill found it a very tiring job; and when they were half-way up the slope they sat down and had a little refreshment. When the hamper eventually arrived at its destination, it was empty!

On another occasion, I was at a picnic in a delightful meadow, several miles from St. Jim's, when an infuriated bull took it into its head to join the party. It came stampeding towards us, and we promptly scattered. Then the brute trampled on our supplies, and tossed them into the air, and gored them. There was nothing worth eating by the time Bertie Bull had finished his merry antics!

It often happens, too, that something goes wrong with the preparations. The fire refuses to burn. The kettle, in sympathy with the fire, refuses to boil. Some silly ass makes the tea, and forgets to put the tea in the teapot. Result—we are served with cups of hot water! These, and many more calamities, take all the pleasure out of a picnic.

On yet another occasion, we had just settled down to a delightful picnic, when a wrathful farmer strode on the scene with a hunting-crop, and informed us that we were trespassing on his precious property. We argued the point with him, whereupon he waded into us, and his hunting-crop fell about our shoulders. We were obliged to flee, leaving the feed on the ground

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for the farmer's dog to devour at its leisure.

I have quoted these few instances just to show that a picnic is more or less of a lottery. It may turn out all right, and it may not. So when you are next invited to a picnic, don't throw your arms about like a windmill, and jump for joy. Lots of things can happen to mar a picnic. The grub may be raided; the weather may be wet; a mad bull or a mad farmer may take a hand in the proceedings.

This is rather a pessimistic article for me to write. The fact is, I feel in a pessimistic mood. If you read the complete story by Tom Brown in this issue, you will understand why!

## BAITING BUNTER!

(After "Hohenlinden.")

By Dick Penfold.

At Greyfriars, when the sun was hot,  
We sought a cool and shady spot.  
"A picnic! I will scoff the lot!"  
Said Bunter, rolling rapidly.

A hamper stood beneath the trees,  
Where several fellows sprawled at ease.  
"Let's join the party, if you please!"  
Said Bunter, rolling rapidly.

"I've had no grub for quite a week.  
I'm starving, and can scarcely speak.  
A good square meal I've come to seek,"  
Said Bunter, rolling rapidly.

"Bob Cherry, you're a heartless beast,  
Or you'd invite me to the feast,  
So that my weight could be increased!"  
Said Bunter, rolling rapidly.

"Keep off the grass!" Bob Cherry cried.  
"Rats! I refuse!" the Owl replied.  
And still the podgy form we spied  
Of Bunter, rolling rapidly.

And then the fat and foolish clown  
Heaved the big hamper upside-down,  
And he beheld, with startled frown,  
Ten brickbats, rolling rapidly!

Then rose a loud and scornful snigger,  
And, hurling clods of earth with vigour,  
We pelted the retreating figure  
Of Bunter, rolling rapidly!

## THE FAGS' PICNIC!

By Sammy Bunter.

It was Tubb's birthday. The fellow's always having birthdays. He had one last week, and a couple the week before—in fact, this is about the twentieth birthday he's had this year!

Being a Jenuerus sole, Tubb decided to sellybrate his latest birthday with a picnic, and he sent out invitations to all the fellows in the Third and Second.

I reseved one of the invitation cards. It was worded as follows:

"MASTER GEORGE TUBB rekwests the plezzure of MASTER SAMUEL BUNTER'S sossiety at an open-air picnic to be held in the woodshed on Wednesday afternoon next at 3 o'clock (funds and weather permitting).  
"R.S.V.P."

I asked Dicky Nugent to eggspain to me what "R.S.V.P." meant, and he replied:

"Rolls (Sossidge) Very Palatable."  
"And what does Tubb mean when he talks of an open-air picnic in the woodshed?" I asked.

"Goodness nose!" said Dicky Nugent. "Personally, I don't care whether it's in the open air or in the coal-seller, so long as it's a picnic."

When Wednesday came I was jolly eggstid. I went without my brekker and my dinner, so that I should be in grate form for the picnic.

After dinner I found a big cue waiting outside the woodshed. I fought my way to the front of the cue, and kept sniffing at the keyhole of the door, which was locked. Young Tubb was inside, bizzily preparing the feed. The scent of sizzling sossidges smote my nostrils.

"Buck up and open this door, Tubb!" I shouted. "I'm simply dying for the jolly old picnic to start!"

"You clear off, young Bunter!" was the harsh reply.

"What!"  
"You never replied to my invitation, so you're not coming to the spread!"

I was completely taken aback. You could have noked me down with a fether!

"I put 'R.S.V.P.' on my invitation-card, and you never replied!" Tubb went on.  
And then he informed me that "R.S.V.P." meant "Reply Sivvoo Play." I hadn't replied, and so I was not admitted to the feast.

Just my beestly luck!

## GREYFRIARS LIMERICKS.

A crusty old gent, name of Popper,  
Was out in his car—a non-stopper.

He encountered a lorry—  
We're frightfully sorry.

But all that we found was his topper!

Though Singh is referred to as "Hurree,"

He never does things in a flurry.

It took him an hour

By the clock in the tower

To sample a plateful of curry!

When Loder goes out after dark

He's often heard to remark:

"It's a sleepy place, quite.

So I'll set it alight.

Because I'm a lively young spark!"

Said Alonzo: "My dear Uncle Ben

Is the most tender-hearted of men.

He never eats eggs,

Not ev'n Uncle Clegg's,

Because it's so hard on the hen!"

[Supplement II,

Next Week—a Special Vacation Number! Don't Miss It!



# The Vanished Feed!

By Tom Brown

(of the Greyfriars Remove).



**B**ILLY BUNTER was in funds! When you have digested that startling statement, I will explain how he came to be in funds.

No titled relation had turned up trumps. No remittance had arrived for the fat junior by post. But a certain Old Boy had paid a visit to Greyfriars, and he had been keenly interested and amused by "Billy Bunter's Weekly." On leaving, he had given Bunter the princely sum of two pounds.

"Now, you are not to spend this solely on yourself," he had said. "You will expend it upon a picnic, to be shared by the members of your editorial staff."

Billy Bunter had thanked the Old Boy profusely, and consented to the arrangement. He invited his four fat subs—Sammy Bunter, Fatty Wynn, Baggy Trimble, and Tubby Muffin—to the picnic, which was to take place on Saturday afternoon.

Bunter felt thankful that the members of his editorial staff only numbered five. Had there been more, two pounds' worth of tuck would hardly have gone round. For Bunter and his sub-editors possessed appetites which would have turned a boa-constrictor green with envy.

When Saturday came, Fatty Wynn and Baggy Trimble travelled over from St. Jim's, and Tubby Muffin from Rookwood. Fatty Wynn came by train. The other two, not having the necessary fare had been compelled to cycle.

The trio wore their sweetest smiles, and so did Sammy Bunter.

Billy joined his fat subs in the school gateway.

"So you've all turned up?" he said, looking rather disappointed. "I was hoping that one or two of you wouldn't have been able to make the journey. Then there would have been more tuck for the remainder. I'm not greedy, but I like my fair share!"

"Where are you going to have the picnic?" asked Fatty Wynn.

"Let's come and choose a place now," said Billy Bunter. "There are some nice shady spots down the river."

The editorial staff of "Billy Bunter's Weekly" rolled away together.

About a mile down the river they found a spot which seemed to have been specially planned by Nature for picnics. It was ideal in every way.

"This is where we'll have it!" said Billy Bunter, stopping short.

"What about the grub?" asked Tubby Muffin, conscious of an aching void in his interior.

"You fellows stay here, and I'll go and get it. I'll ask Mrs. Mimble at the tuckshop to make us up a really ripping hamper!"

"Shall I come with you, Billy?" asked Sammy eagerly. "You'll want someone to give you a hand with the hamper."

"No I sha'n't. I can carry it on my shoulder."

"Don't start having snacks on the way!" said Baggy Trimble.

"As if I should!" said Billy scornfully. "I promise you I sha'n't meddle with the hamper at all. I'll bring it straight here."

"Hurry up, then!" said Fatty Wynn. "We're jolly hungry—ravenous, in fact!"

Billy Bunter rolled away in the direction of Greyfriars. On his arrival he went straight to the tuckshop.

It was marvellous how Bunter had managed to retain the two pounds intact without spending any of it. But he had done so.

The fat junior, however, could not resist having a little snack in the tuckshop while Mrs. Mimble prepared the picnic hamper. The "little snack" consisted of half a dozen doughnuts, half a dozen cream buns, and a large and delicious jam sandwich. These com-



The hamper gave a violent sideslip and toppled into the river with a mighty splash.

estibles were washed down with copious draughts of homemade ginger-pop.

"The hamper is ready, Master Bunter," said Dame Mimble, at length.

"Oh, good!"

"I don't know how you're going to manage it. It's very heavy."

"I'll carry it as far as the boathouse, and then punt it down the river," said Bunter. "It's a good idea. It isn't very far to the boathouse."

Having settled for the hamper, Billy Bunter heaved it on to his shoulders with a great effort, and staggered away with his burden.

The fat junior began to wish that he had accepted Sammy's offer to come and give him a hand. The hamper was like a ton weight, and it seemed to grow more and more heavy at every step.

It was a panting, puffing, and perspiring Bunter that eventually reached the boathouse.

To carry the hamper another mile would have been a sheer impossibility. Bunter dumped it down in the grass and flung himself down beside it.

When he had rested the fat junior proceeded to launch a large punt. He ran it down to the water and fastened the nose of the vessel to a stake; then he heaved the hamper on board.

Bunter seemed to think that a punt was the same as a pantechonicon—that there was no limit to the weight it could carry. He stepped on board, seized the punt-pole with one hand, and unfastened the rope with the other. Then he set off on his voyage.

The punt bore up bravely for a time. But it could not hold out long against the united weight of Bunter and the hamper. The latter was not fastened to the punt in any way, and it was gradually lurching to starboard.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Bunter. "The blessed hamper will be overboard in a minute!"

Even as he spoke, the hamper gave a violent sideslip. It toppled into the water with a mighty splash; and Bunter, making a wild grab at it, lost his balance and toppled in after it.

The hamper, weighted with its contents, went down. So did Bunter. The fat junior came to the surface again. The hamper didn't!

"Help!" gurgled Bunter.

There was a patter of running feet on the towpath. Wingate of the Sixth, boathook in hand, came rushing to the fat junior's rescue. The boathook was inserted in Bunter's coat-collar, and he was hauled to the bank.

Instead of pouring out his heart in gratitude to Wingate, Bunter merely said:

"Now you might fish up my hamper!" This, however, was a task beyond Wingate's powers.

"Ungrateful little beast!" said the captain of Greyfriars. "Instead of thanking me for hauling you out of the river, all you can think of is your wretched hamper! You'd better cut back to the school and get a change of clothing."

Billy Bunter rolled sadly away, bemoaning the loss of the tuck hamper. He was not the only one who bemoaned its loss. His four fat subs had something to say on the subject. And when they saw Bunter an hour later, they fell upon him as one man, and smote him hip and thigh.

It looked as if Fatty Wynn, Baggy Trimble, and Tubby Muffin would have to go away empty from Greyfriars. But Harry Wharton & Co. rose to the occasion, and stood them a first-rate feed in Study No. 1.

Billy Bunter is still bemoaning the loss of the tuck hamper. I believe he intends to ask the Head to have the river dragged!

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**THE MYSTERY OF THE MILL!**

**MARTIN CLIFFORD'S LATEST SUCCESS!**

Here is a story of gigantic mystery and strange adventure, written in the wonderful style of a master-writer, abounding in thrills and astounding situations, and always "on the move."

# CHUMS IN CAPTIVITY!

A Fascinating, Long, Complete Story dealing with the amazing disappearance of Tom Merry & Co., the Chums of St. Jim's.

By **Martin Clifford.** (Author of the Stories of St. Jim's appearing in the "Gem.")



**THE FIRST CHAPTER.  
Prisoners in the Mill!**

**T**OP of the morning, Tommy!" Monty Lowther sang out that cheery greeting. Monty had the happy gift of being cheerful at all times and in all places. He would have laughed through a howling wilderness. Tom Merry did not laugh. He could not even muster a smile. He sat up and blinked at the slumbering forms around him, and he grimly realised that he was not in the Shell dormitory at St. Jim's. He, and five of his schoolfellows, were prisoners in an old mill in the heart of Sussex.

It seemed like a bad dream to Tom Merry. But it was real enough. Without replying to Monty Lowther's cheery greeting, Tom Merry reviewed the events of the night.

A game of Jack-o'-Lantern had been organised. Figgus and Redfern, of the New House, had been the hares; and the Terrible Three, with Talbot, Blake, and D'Arcy, had formed the hounds.

After a long cross-country run in pursuit of the hares, the six juniors had seen a light glimmering in a valley. They had taken it to be the light of one of the lanterns which the hares carried. It had proved, however, to be a light burning in the window of an old mill.

Feeling very curious as to who could be in the mill at such an hour—for it was two o'clock in the morning—the juniors had gone to investigate. The door of the mill had been opened by an old man with white hair and a flowing beard. The man had been armed, and he had promptly taken the juniors prisoners. They were compelled to enter the curious old building, and to mount the iron ladder which led to the upper part of the mill. Blankets had been given them, and they had settled down for what was left of the night.

Many and varied were the adventures which had befallen Tom Merry & Co. at various stages of their school career. But surely this was the strangest adventure of all—to be incarcerated in a lonely mill, miles away, it seemed, from civilisation!

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What were the motives of the old man in making them prisoners? He did not intend to hold them to ransom, and he had told them so. He had said he was engaged upon important work of some kind. "The work will be finished in one week from now," he had added. "If I were to let you go, I'm afraid you might set people to spy on me, and I wish to carry out my work without disturbance. As soon as it is accomplished you shall be released."

What could be the nature of the work in question? Obviously it must be something shady, or the old man would not have feared being spied upon.

Utterly worn out by their exertions, the St. Jim's juniors had rolled themselves up in the blankets which the old man had provided, and gone to sleep. Four were sleeping still. Only Monty Lowther and Tom Merry were awake.

"You seem rather down in the mouth, Tommy," observed Lowther.

"I feel it, too," grunted Tom. Monty Lowther shook himself free of the blankets, and rose to his feet.

"Come, cheer up!" he said. "You know what the Royalist prisoner said, when he was shut up in a dungeon during the Civil War? 'Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage.'"

Tom Merry gave a snort. "I never could see the sense of that," he said. "We're up against hard facts. These stone walls make a jolly effective prison, and we're caged in by those iron bars which are fixed outside the windows. Of course, I know what the old Royalist Johnnie meant. He meant that you can imprison the body, but not the spirit. I suppose there's something in that."

"There's quite a lot in it," said Lowther. "Because we happen to be caged up in an old mill, that's no reason why we shouldn't be merry and bright. We sha'n't make our case any better by sobbing into our handkerchiefs. What's the time, Tommy?"

Tom Merry glanced at the watch on his wrist.

"Eight o'clock," he said. "Then it's high time the Old Man of the Mill brought us up our shaving water, and our early cup of tea," said Lowther humorously. "Shall I wake these sleeping beauties?" "Might as well," said Tom Merry.

Monty Lowther bestowed a kick upon the respective forms of Talbot, Manners, Jack Blake, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. Fortunately for the sleepers, Monty was wearing rubber-soled shoes. But his kicks were quite effective.

"Yaw-aw-aw! Rising-bell hasn't gone yet," yawned Jack Blake.

"And it won't go, you duffer!" said Lowther. "You're not at St. Jim's now. You're in the old rustic mill by the bridge, to misquote the old song."

The juniors sat up in their blanket-beds, and blinked around them.

Through the tiny barred windows streamed the morning sunshine. Outside the birds were twittering their morning carols. It was going to be a grand summer day, but the six prisoners would not be free to enjoy it.

"I say, deah boys, we're in a frightful fix!" said Arthur Augustus. "Pwisonahs for a whole week, bai Jove!"

"Another cheery optimist!" said Monty Lowther. "My dear old Gussy, we shall be out of this long before the week's up."

"But it's uttably impos. to escape—"

"We'll have a jolly good shot at it, anyway, when we've got our bearings. Wonder where this old mill's situated?"

Monty Lowther crossed to one of the small windows, and looked out.

"Why, there's a ruined castle about five hundred yards away!" he announced.

"This must be Granchester. My hat! We came a jolly long way last night. Granchester's a good fifteen miles from St. Jim's."

The juniors took turns at observing the view from the window. And a glorious view it was! The old Roman walls of the castle, clustered with ivy, had an imposing appearance. They had weathered the storms of centuries.

Away in the distance, as far as the eye could see, stretched green meadows and clumps of trees. There was not a house of any sort to be seen.

"We're miles away from anywhere," said Talbot. "I expect they will be getting anxious about us at St. Jim's. Searchparties will be sent out to look for us." "They won't come so far afield as this," said Tom Merry. "I'm afraid we must



The St. Jim's prisoners in the old ruined mill, waiting for the rescue which does not come!

**Tom Merry Makes Another Strange Discovery Next Week!**



make up our minds to spend a week in this place."

There was a chorus of groans at the prospect. Monty Lowther alone remained cheerful. And it was probable that even Lowther would soon grow weary of being a captive.

"I say, you chaps, I keep hearing a sort of whirring noise," said Manners. "Can you hear it?"

The juniors listened. The faint whirring noise of which Manners had spoken made itself heard.

"Sounds like the sails of the mill going round," said Jack Blake.

"But the sails aren't working," said Talbot. "I noticed that particularly when we arrived last night. They are out of order."

"What can be causin' the noise, then, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus.

"Goodness knows," said Tom Merry. "Sounds to me like machinery of some sort. And it seems to be a long way beneath us—under the mill, in fact."

"But there wouldn't be any machinery under a mill," said Manners.

"No, it does seem absurd. But that's where the noise seems to come from."

The mysterious sound continued, but the juniors were none the wiser as to what it was or whence it came.

"I feel awfully peckish," said Arthur Augustus. "I wondah if we shall get any bwekkah?"

"The Old Man promised to feed us well," said Monty Lowther. "And I think he'll keep his word. Of course we can't expect duck and green peas, or any little luxuries like that. But coffee and hot rolls would be jolly acceptable."

"Yes, rather!"

"Hallo! There's somebody coming up!" exclaimed Blake suddenly.

The trapdoor in the centre of the room was upraised, and the head and shoulders of the Old Man of the Mill appeared, followed in due course by the rest of his person.

The Old Man nodded quite genially to his prisoners.

"Good-morning, my boys!" he said.

Arthur Augustus, who was the very essence of politeness at all times, returned the greeting. The others remained silent, gazing at the upright figure of the old man, who was in his shirt-sleeves, and at the revolver which glittered in his belt.

It was only the man's white hair and beard that made him appear old. In all other respects he seemed quite youthful. His voice was not an old man's croak, and his bearing was as erect as that of a Guardsman. His face was not wrinkled, and his forearms were practically smooth.

"I expect you are hungry?" he said.

Tom Merry nodded.

"I will bring up your breakfast in a matter of a few moments," said the Old Man. "By the way, I shall charge you nothing for board and lodging."

"I should jolly well think not!" said Jack Blake wrathfully. "If you are wise you'll let us go, before the police get on your track. There will be a hue-and-cry all through the county, when it's known that we are missing from school."

The Old Man smiled.

"I told you last night—or, rather, in the small hours of this morning—that I didn't care a flick of the fingers for the police," he said. "They are not likely to penetrate to this lonely spot, in any case. In the time of the Romans Granchester was a flourishing and a populous town. It was linked up with other places which have fallen into decay—Silechester, Porchester, and so forth. To-day it is one of the most isolated spots in Sussex. That is why I chose to come and live here for a brief season."

"What sort of game are you playing?" demanded Tom Merry.

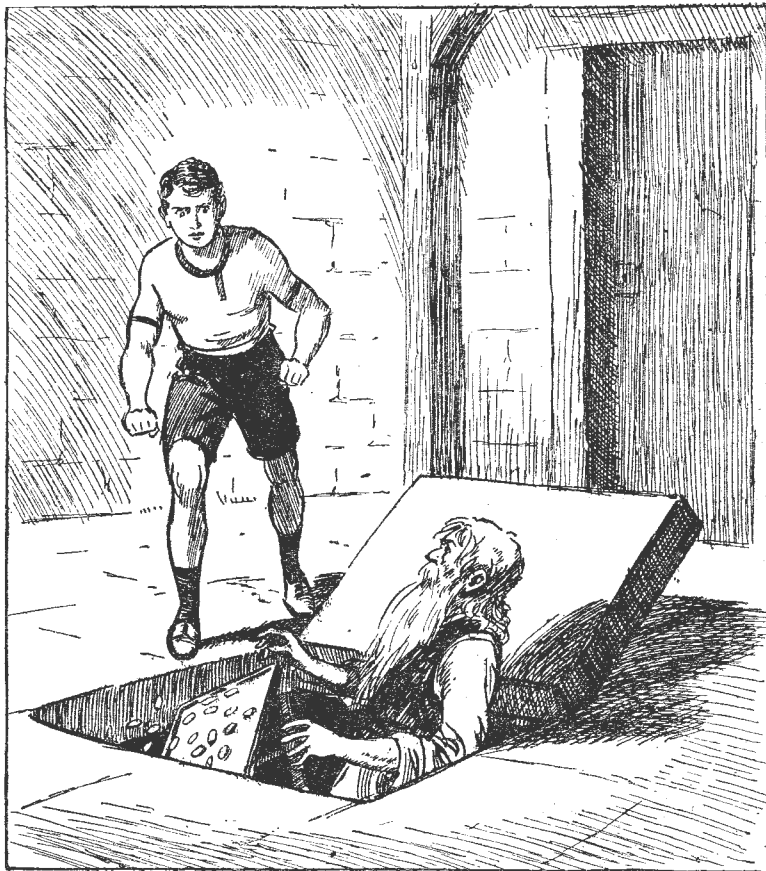
"That, as I told you before, is a matter which need not concern you."

The Old Man prepared to descend the ladder.

"Kindly leave this trapdoor open," he said, "so that I shall be able to pass your breakfast through on a tray."

Then he set foot on the iron ladder, and vanished from view.

Five minutes later the Old Man again



**A STRANGE DISCOVERY!**—The stone slab gradually rose upon a pivot, revealing an aperture. Tom Merry peered forward, and coming up an iron stairway was the Old Man of the Mill. He carried a tray, upon which were a number of glittering objects. But as he caught sight of the junior he dropped the tray with a low cry of anger. (See Chapter 2.)

ascended the steps, and passed a laden tray through the trapdoor.

"Make a good breakfast," he said. "You won't get another meal until tea-time. I'm too busy to cook four-course luncheons."

The meal which had been brought up to the prisoners was appetising enough. It consisted of cold chicken, bread-and-butter, and a large pot of steaming coffee.

It was a mystery how the Old Man of the Mill had managed to obtain supplies. But the juniors did not bother about solving the puzzle. They were ravenous, and they pitched into the meal with zest.

"Why, this is quite a treat!" exclaimed Lowther. "It beats the brekker we get at St. Jim's."

In spite of the good treatment the juniors were getting, it was anything but pleasant to be cribbed, cabined, and confined in the upper part of an old mill.

After breakfast the Old Man again appeared.

"I had intended to bring up a gramophone for your delectation," he said. "On second thoughts, I fear it might make too much noise, and attract the attention of anyone who happens to be prowling around. So I've brought you a pack of playing-cards and some books. There's a History of Granchester Castle here—also the famous ghost stories of Doctor James. They will help to relieve the tedium of your captivity. And now I must be getting to work, while you lay and laze all day. Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening—unless he happens to be in a Government office, in which event he leaves directly after lunch! Ha, ha!"

Chuckling at his own satire, the Old Man of the Mill started to descend the steps, shutting the trapdoor after him.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**

**A Startling Discovery!**

"QUEER beggar, isn't he?" said Jack Blake.

He was referring to the Old Man of the Mill.

All the juniors were wondering by this time why the Old Man was living such an isolated life—shut off from the outer world, as it were, like Eremita in his cell.

Manners suggested that the Old Man had bats in his belfry—in other words, that he was mad. But the others did not concur in this theory.

"He's sane enough, in spite of his queer ways," said Tom Merry. "He's up to some deep dodge or other, I'm certain of that."

"He spoke of going to work," said Talbot. "What work could he have meant?"

"Ask me another!"

"Let's open the trapdoor gently, and see if we can see him below," said Blake.

This suggestion was promptly acted upon.

Tom Merry knelt down, and raised the trapdoor very softly. He peered down, and saw that the apartment below was empty.

"He's not there!" muttered Tom, his voice trembling with excitement.

"Now's our chance to make a bid for freedom!" said Monty Lowther. "Pop down and see if the door's locked, Tommy."

Tom Merry was through the trapdoor in a twinkling. He hurried down the iron ladder into the roomy apartment beneath, hoping to find that the Old Man had gone out, and left the stout, heavy door unlocked.

Tom dropped lightly on to the stone-paved floor of the mill, and crossed swiftly to the door. He tried it, but it refused to budge.

"Locked!" he groaned. "The Old Man

**A Bid for Freedom and an Underground Flight!**

doesn't mean to give us any loophole of escape, that's certain."

For a moment Tom Merry paused irresolute.

The mysterious whirring noise, which had baffled the juniors that morning, could be heard more clearly now. It seemed to come from beneath Tom Merry's feet.

"There must be a cellar of some sort underneath the mill," murmured the junior. "And something's going on down there, though what it is I can't for the life of me imagine."

Tom Merry stood listening to the monotonous, muffled sound. He was very much mystified as to the why and wherefore of it.

Presently he felt a stone slab beginning to rise beneath his feet, and he sprang back with an exclamation of alarm.

The stone slab gradually rose upon a pivot, revealing an aperture about two and a half feet square.

Pulling himself together, Tom Merry went forward and peered down into the cavity.

Coming up an iron stairway was the Old Man of the Mill. He carried a tray, upon which were a number of glittering objects. It was not until his head had risen above the aperture that he caught sight of Tom Merry. Then he uttered a low cry of anger. Either by accident or intention, he dropped the tray, and it went hurtling down into the darkness of the cellar, and crashed upon the floor with its contents.

With amazing agility, considering his elderly appearance, the Old Man drew himself up through the aperture, and hastily closed down the stone slab. Then he spun round upon Tom Merry.

"You were spying, you cub!" he said harshly.

Tom did not answer. "Did you notice what I was carrying?" demanded the Old Man.

"A tray," said Tom.

"Yes, yes! But what was on it?"

"No need to ask me, when you know perfectly well yourself," said Tom Merry.

As a matter of fact, the junior had not been able to get a close view of the contents of the tray. But he could form a very shrewd guess as to their nature. However, he had no intention of telling the Old Man of the Mill how much he knew or guessed.

"You will return to the room above!" said the Old Man sternly. "I forbid you to leave it again under any pretext. I warned you last night that your taste for exploring might land you into serious trouble. And so it will, if you persist in it. You don't want to be trussed up like a fowl, do you?"

"No."

"Well, that is what will happen, if I find you roaming about again. I will truss you up with a rope—you and all your companions! They will have to suffer for your folly and intrepidity. Up you go!"

And the Old Man pointed to the iron ladder.

Knowing that the man was armed, Tom Merry dared not disobey. He mounted the ladder and rejoined his chums in the room above.

They crowded round him eagerly.

"What's happened, Tommy?"

"Tell us all about it!"

Tom Merry raised his hand warningly.

"Not yet," he said, in a voice that was little more than a whisper. "Wait till the coast is clear."

The juniors subdued their impatience as well as they were able.

As soon as Tom Merry was satisfied that the Old Man had gone back to the basement beneath the mill, he told his chums what had happened.

"I found the door locked when I went down," he said, "so I knew there was no chance of escape. And then I heard that same whirring noise that puzzled us this morning, and I stopped to listen. Then one of the stone slabs of the floor was lifted, and the Old Man came up from the cellar."

"Gweat Scott!" ejaculated D'Arcy. "Is there weally a cellah undah the mill?"

Tom Merry nodded.

"The Old Man was carrying a tray," he went on, "and as soon as he spotted me he dropped it. And what do you think was on the tray?"

"Our next meal?" suggested Monty Lowther hopefully.

"Don't rot, Monty. This is a jolly serious business. I won't swear to it, but I'm nearly certain the tray was full of half-crowns."

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The juniors stared at Tom Merry in amazement.

"Half-crowns!" exclaimed Talbot. "Ordinary half-crowns, do you mean?"

Tom Merry looked grim.

"I rather think they were spurious ones," he said.

"My hat!" gasped Jack Blake. "You'll be telling us next that there's a coiners' den underneath the mill!"

"That's exactly what I think," said Tom Merry quietly.

There was excitement on every face now.

Tom Merry's theory seemed rather far-fetched at first. But the more the juniors thought about it the more convinced they became that Tom Merry had hit the nail upon the head.

"A coiners' den, by Jove!" exclaimed Monty Lowther. "Whoever would have thought it?"

"I'm practically convinced that they were forged half-crowns that I saw," said Tom Merry. "If they weren't, why should the Old Man have dropped the tray? And that whirring noise we've been hearing. It's machinery. They've got a plant installed down in the cellar."

"You've hit it," said Talbot. "And I believe there are others here besides the Old Man. There's a whole gang of them. And they're keeping us prisoners until they've finished their job, which will be in a week from now."

"Of course, this is all guesswork," said Jack Blake. "We might be on the wrong track altogether."

"We might be," assented Tom Merry.

"But I don't think we are."

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who had been seated on the floor, silent and thoughtful, now spoke.

"Do you know, deah boys, I don't believe the Old Man is half as old as he looks. I studied him vewy closely when he was up heah last, an' I'm pwetly certain that his beard an' hair are false."

"My hat!"

.....

**£10. £10. £10.**

**The Result of the Kent Cricket Competition.**

(See Page 27.)

.....

"I believe he's simply posin' as an old man so that the police will regard him as a harmless lunatic," Gussy went on. "He's stayin' heah to keep guard o'v' the mill, an' to give the west of the gang warnin' when anybody approaches. I know you will think I'm lettin' my imagination run wot. But I fancy I'm pwetly neah the truth."

The theories of Arthur Augustus were not usually taken seriously by his chums. But they weighed his latest theory in their minds, and they came to the conclusion that Gussy came very near to the truth, if he had not actually hit upon it.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**

**Plans for Escape!**

"KINDLY open the trapdoor!"

It was fairly late in the afternoon when the Old Man of the Mill—possibly the Young Man of the Mill—made this request.

Tom Merry, who was nearest to the trapdoor, promptly raised it, and a laden tray was passed up to him.

The juniors were hungry, and the sight of ham-and-beef sandwiches, piled on a plate, was most welcome.

"Thank you!" said Tom Merry, when he had taken the tray. "You're looking after us in the grub line, anyway."

The Old Man paused on the iron ladder, with his head and shoulders appearing above the aperture.

"I trust you have all you require?" he said, in the polished manner of a West End waiter.

"Not quite," said Monty Lowther.

"Indeed! What 'else can I give you?"

"Our freedom."

"Ah! Now you are asking the impossible. But I am prepared to make you a big

concession. When you have eaten your meal you may come down and take exercise for half an hour. But you are not to go beyond a radius of fifty yards from the mill. I shall stand outside the door the whole time, and my revolver will be handy. I should be very loth to use it—I have never shot a person in my life yet; but if there is any attempt at escape, I shall fire without hesitation."

The juniors welcomed the opportunity of stretching their cramped limbs. They soon disposed of the ham-and-beef sandwiches, and then they hurried down to take their brief spell of liberty.

The Old Man unlocked and unbolted the door, and the juniors trooped out into the warm sunshine.

They were too wise to attempt to escape. Their captor stood outside the door of the mill, revolver in hand. The juniors could not be certain that the weapon was loaded; it might only have been a piece of bluff on the part of the Old Man. But they were not taking any risks. Better to stop a week in the old mill than to stop a bullet.

The prisoners drank in the fresh air as if it were some healthful anodyne. And they paced to and fro, enjoying the bright sunshine. But they were careful not to go beyond the stipulated radius of fifty yards.

The half-hour passed all too swiftly. Then the Old Man signalled to them to come in, and they returned to their bare apartment at the top of the mill.

"That was a jolly nice breather!" said Monty Lowther. "I suppose we ought to be grateful to the old scoundrel—or the young scoundrel, as the case may be."

"What's the pwogwamme now, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus. "Shall we play cards?"

"You fellows can please yourselves," said Tom Merry. "Personally, I'm going to read. I shall swot up the History of Granchester Castle."

Tom was soon deep in his book, while his chums disported themselves in various ways.

Being rather keen on the history of ancient castles, Tom Merry thoroughly enjoyed himself.

The early chapters of the book dealt with the Roman occupation of Granchester. It would have been dry reading to most fellows. But presently Tom Merry came to something more interesting, and he uttered an exclamation of excitement.

"What's up, Tommy?" asked Monty Lowther.

"I've made a discovery," said Tom Merry, in subdued tones. "The Old Man wouldn't have lent us this book if he'd known all that was in it. I've come across a chapter dealing with this mill."

"My hat!"

"It's a very old mill—built somewhere about the year Dot. And it used to belong to the castle. In fact, it's still known as the Castle Mill. This book mentions a long underground vault, or tunnel, which runs from the mill to the castle."

"Bai Jove!" ejaculated Arthur Augustus, his eyes fairly gleaming with excitement.

"It mentions underground chambers, too," said Tom Merry. "One of them is situated bang underneath the mill."

"That must be the one where the forgers are at work," said Manners.

"Exactly!"

"Of course, you fellows realise the importance of this discovery," said Tom Merry. "There's a way of escape open to us—the underground tunnel. If we can only manage to get down into it, we can work our way along, and come out at the castle. And we're pretty certain to find a way out there."

"Hooray!"

Tom Merry lifted his hand warningly.

"Shush! Not so much row, or the Old Man will hear us, and become suspicious," he said. "We must talk in whispers, for safety's sake."

"Let's try to get away to-night!" muttered Jack Blake. "Midnight would be an ideal time."

Already the juniors were weaving fond dreams of freedom.

Talbot, more experienced and clear-sighted than the others, was a shade less optimistic.

"Our difficulty will be in getting down into the tunnel," he said quietly.

"The coiners won't be there at

(Continued on page 27.)

**THE PROMISE WHICH BOUND THEM!**

Frank Richards & Co. keep the peace, according to their promise to Miss Meadows, but at what a price! Kern Gunten knows of that pledge, and takes a rascally advantage of it. The Swiss has the Chums in the hollow of his hand for once!

**UNIQUE STORY OF THE BACKWOODS SCHOOL!**

Frank Richards & Co. keep the peace, according to their promise to Miss Meadows, but at what a price! Kern Gunten knows of that pledge, and takes a rascally advantage of it. The Swiss has the Chums in the hollow of his hand for once!



# KEEPING THE PEACE!

The Amazing Schooldays of  
the Famous Boys.

Writer

**FRANK RICHARDS.**

## THE FIRST CHAPTER! Dodging Gunten.

**B**LESS my soul!" Mr. Slimmey uttered that ejaculation in tones of utter astonishment.

The assistant-master at Cedar Creek was so astounded, in fact, that his gold-rimmed glasses almost fell off as he stared at Frank Richards & Co.

Mr. Slimmey was taking a gentle stroll after dinner outside the school palisade, when the three schoolboys suddenly burst on his view.

From the timber near the creek Frank Richards came bolting, and after him came Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc.

They dashed across the path towards the high wooden palisade that surrounded the Cedar Creek playground.

A few seconds more and another figure burst from the timber in hot and breathless pursuit.

It was Kern Gunten, the Swiss, once a Cedar Creek fellow, now belonging to Hillcrest, the new school up the creek.

No wonder Mr. Slimmey stared blankly. Three fellows—any one of whom looked as if he could have made rings round the Swiss—were evidently running away in a state of panic, with Kern Gunten raging on their track.

None of them noted Mr. Slimmey standing blinking at some distance in the trail.

"Stop, you funks!" shouted Gunten. The three ran breathlessly on.

The palisade cut off their flight, and they paused there, panting.

To dodge along the palisade to the gates was to lose ground; and Gunten was already swerving to cut them off.

Why the three should be fleeing from the Swiss was a deep mystery, and Mr. Slimmey could hardly believe his eyes, or his spectacles, as he witnessed it.

But it was evident that they were desperately anxious to escape.

"This way!" gasped Bob Lawless. He made a spring, and caught the top of the wooden palisade with his hands, and dragged himself up.

Frank Richards and Beauclerc followed his example.

"Stop!" yelled Gunten, racing towards them. The chums of Cedar Creek clambered desperately.

Gunten was barely a yard away when they dragged their heels out of his reach and landed astride of the palisade.

There they sat in a panting row. Gunten stopped, and shook his fist up at them as they sat with their feet well out of his reach.

"You pesky cowards!" he shouted. "Come down, and I'll wipe up the trail with the three of you!"

"Oh!" gasped Frank Richards. "Ow! Just done it, you chaps!"

"Come down and be licked!" roared Gunten.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Slimmey. "This—this is most extraordinary! should never have believed that those three boys were such wretched poltroons. I certainly had a very different impression of them. I—I am amazed!"

The young master walked towards the spot.

He glanced up at the three schoolboys sitting in a row on the top of the palisade.

"What does this mean, Richards?" he asked.

"We—we're just sitting here, sir."

"Quite airy up here, sir," said Bob Lawless. "Good view, too. You can see quite a lot of the creek and the rapids."

"Is it possible, Lawless, that you three boys are afraid to venture into the trail while Gunten is here?"

"Ahem!"

"I do not approve of fighting," said Mr. Slimmey warmly, "but I must say, Lawless, that such poltroonery as this does not reflect any credit on your school."

Bob coloured red, and his chums looked very uncomfortable.

"Gunten, I presume, has come here to fight with you?" continued Mr. Slimmey.

"Yes."

"Only they're afraid!" sneered Gunten. Mr. Slimmey made a motion with his walking-cane.

"You have no business here, Gunten! Kindly go!"

"I'll go when I please!" retorted Gunten. "You will go at once, Gunten, or you will be sorry for it!" said Mr. Slimmey, taking a firm grip on his cane.

Gunten glanced at the cane, and at Mr. Slimmey's determined face, and decided to go.

He cast a last sneering look at the Cedar Creek fellows on the fence.

"I guess I'll corner you another time, you pesky cowards!" he said.

And with that he turned and disappeared into the timber.

"You may come down now," said Mr. Slimmey quietly, but with an involuntary note of contempt in his voice.

The three schoolboys dropped into the trail.

Mr. Slimmey was turning away when Frank Richards spoke:

"Thank you for sending that fellow away, sir."

"You have a right to my protection—if you need it!" answered Mr. Slimmey dryly. Frank crimsoned.

"You—you don't understand, sir!" he stammered.

"I think I do."

"You don't, sir!" said Vere Beauclerc.

"We're not afraid of Gunten, or a dozen Gunten's!"

"Then appearances are certainly very deceptive," said Mr. Slimmey, in the same

dry tone. "However, I am glad to see you avoiding trouble with the Hillcrest boys. That is Miss Meadows' wish."

"There'll be lots of trouble next Friday, I guess!" growled Bob Lawless.

Mr. Slimmey blinked at him.

"What does that mean, Lawless?"

"I guess you ought to know, sir. We don't want you to think us a gang of pesky cowards!" said Bob, with a very red face.

"Miss Meadows called us over the coals last week for rowing so much with the Hillcrest chaps—especially that pesky coyote Gunten. She made us promise that we wouldn't fight Gunten if we met him, the promise to hold good for a week. I suppose she thought the trouble would blow over by then."

"Oh!" said Mr. Slimmey.

"We meant to avoid Gunten, as Miss Meadows wished, sir," said Frank Richards.

"But the cad knows about our promise, and he's trailing us down. We can't avoid him, and we can't fight him."

"So we have to dodge him, sir," added Vere Beauclerc. "It's that, or letting him lick us without putting our hands up in self-defence. We can't do that."

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Slimmey. "We wouldn't have told you, only you've seen the cad chasing us," said Bob Lawless ruefully. "We can't touch him owing to the promise we made to Miss Meadows. And there's three more days to run—it's only Tuesday now. We've had to nip and tuck half a dozen times already."

Mr. Slimmey smiled.

He seemed to see something comic in the extraordinary predicament of the three chums, though it was serious enough to them.

"A very peculiar position," he remarked. "I am glad to see you have such a strict regard for your pledged word. This experience, my boys, will be a valuable lesson in patience and self-control."

"Oh!" said Frank.

Mr. Slimmey, still smiling, walked away. Frank looked at his chums.

"He's grinning at us," he said. "He thinks this is funny! Bless if I see anything funny in it!"

"Gunten won't see anything funny in it on Friday!" growled Bob Lawless, striking the air with his fists. "I'll make him weep when the week's up! I'll make him wriggle! I'll make him cringe! I'll make—hallo! Hallo! Look out!"

The Swiss had not gone far; he had only waited in cover for Mr. Slimmey to go.

The chums of Cedar Creek broke into full flight down the trail.

Gunten dashed on their track.

In the gateway of Cedar Creek a dozen boys and girls gathered, watching the peculiar scene, as Frank Richards & Co. came tearing up.

A roar of laughter greeted them.

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The Great Peril of the Remittance Man! See Next Week!

The three were better sprinters than the clumsy Swiss, and they won the race. They shouldered through the crowd, and disappeared into the playground.

Gunten stopped. He would have carried the pursuit right into the playground of Cedar Creek, but Tom Lawrence came out on the trail to meet him with an expression on his face which caused Gunten to turn and trot back into the timber.

Frank Richards & Co. had escaped once more.

But they were not rejoicing. The laughter of their schoolfellows rang in their ears; their predicament was a standing joke in the school already.

"I guess I can't stand much more of it!" growled Bob Lawless, as they went in to classes. "Miss Meadows was a jay to make us give her such a promise! I've a good mind to ask her—"

Frank shook his head.

"We can't ask to be let off! It's only a few more days."

"But what a time we're going to have those few more days!" groaned Bob. "I guess it'll turn my hair grey!"

"I say, you chaps, you're getting on splendidly with your running exercises," remarked Chunky Todgers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Br-r-r!"

And Frank Richards & Co. went into the school-room with glum faces—with smiling faces all round them.

They were keeping the peace, according to their promise, but at what a price!

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Chunky Chips In!

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. arrived at school the next day with worried faces. The persecution was getting on their nerves.

Much as they liked and respected their schoolmistress, they were beginning to feel decidedly "ratty" towards Miss Meadows for placing them in this ridiculous and absurd position.

Miss Meadows had certainly not foreseen anything of this kind.

She was aware that Kern Gunten was by no means brave, and little likely to seek a "scrap" with the Co., and, by making the chums promise not to fight with him if they met, she had considered that the peace would be safely kept.

That Gunten, on hearing of their pledge, would take so rascally an advantage of it, had never crossed her mind.

Frank and his chums certainly had not foreseen it, either.

Yet, as Bob remarked, they might have guessed it, knowing Gunten as they did.

He could attack them in safety—unless they broke their promise to the head of Cedar Creek; and if they did that, disgrace and severe punishment would be the result—would please Gunten better still.

He "had" them, as it were, either way; and he was making the very most of it, as they really might have expected such a fellow would.

Hillcrest was some little distance from Cedar Creek; but distance was nothing to Gunten when he had such an object to serve.

He was giving his old enemies the time of their lives; and he was prepared to put in all his spare time for that purpose.

Attending school was an incessant worry to them.

Gunten had taken to waylaying them on the trails; and now, on Wednesday morning, they had ridden four or five miles round to elude him.

They had started early, but they were a few minutes late for school, and they received a reprimand from Miss Meadows.

During morning lessons the chums were in a worried frame of mind.

They were well aware that the Swiss would be lurking outside the school palisade, on the watch for them if they ventured out.

To keep within the limits of the playground was possible; but it meant enduring the merriment and chaff of their schoolfellows.

It was possible, too, that Gunten might venture into the playground, and set them

dodging him again under the very windows of Cedar Creek, amid howls of laughter from all the school.

More than once Miss Meadows had to speak sharply to the Co. for inattention to lessons.

The schoolmistress did not guess the trouble that was worrying them.

When the hour of dismissal came, for once the chums of Cedar Creek were not glad to be released from class.

They looked round them almost apprehensively as they came out of the lumber schoolhouse.

"The creek's frozen!" remarked Vere Beauclerc. "What about skating?"

"What about Gunten?" grunted Bob.

"Hold on, you galoots!" Chunky Todgers joined the trio, grinning. "I say, are you going to stick inside gates because you're afraid—"

"Do you want to be squashed, you fat jay?" growled Bob Lawless. "We haven't promised not to handle you, Chunky!"

Chunky jumped back.

"Keep your wool on, Bob!" he ejaculated.

"I was going to say—"

"Oh, go and chop chips!"

"I was going to say," howled Chunky indignantly, "that I'd come out with you. I haven't promised not to hammer Gunten, and if the foreign trash shows up, I'll keep him off you!"

"Oh, now you're talking!" said Bob. "There's some sense in that! You're not such a fat jay as I thought, Chunky! Come on, then!"

"I say, Bob, I've run out of maple sugar—"

"All the better for you. You eat too much, Chunky."

"I was going to ask you to lend me twenty-five cents," said Chunky Todgers loftily. "But if you don't care to—"

"That's the price of Chunky's protection!" said Frank Richards, laughing. "We have to pay twenty-five cents for an escort."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nothing of the sort!" exclaimed Chunky Todgers wrathfully. "It's got nothing to do with it. I'm going to look after you because you're my pals. You're going to lend me twenty-five cents because—because—"

"Never mind the because!" chuckled Bob Lawless. "Here's the quarter, you fat gopher. Now mind, you've got to give Gunten a terrific lambasting if we come across him."

"You leave him to me!" said Chunky confidently. "I'll make him feel as if he's been under a steam-binder. You watch out!"

The schoolboys strolled on towards the creek, the Co. keeping their eyes well about them.

They fully expected that Kern Gunten would ride over from Hillcrest immediately lessons were over there, or else come along the creek on his skates to carry on his persecution.

They were not mistaken.

As they came out of the timber on the bank of Cedar Creek a figure came in sight on the ice.

"Here he is!" said Bob dismally.

"You watch me!" said Chunky Todgers. The chums of Cedar Creek stood where they were and waited.

Gunten caught sight of them, and bore down on the spot, and kicked off his skates and landed.

"I guess I've cornered you this time!" he remarked.

"Go it, Chunky!"

And Chunky Todgers, full of courage and determination, rolled between the Co. and the advancing Swiss.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### A Narrow Escape!

KERN GUNTEN stopped and stared at the fat schoolboy.

Chunky looked very determined, and his fat fists were up.

Gunten grinned.

He was not much of a fighting man himself, but he was so much bigger than the fat little Chunky that even Gunten had no fear of such a contest.

"Well, what's your game, Todgers?" he asked.

"Put up your paws!" retorted Chunky undauntedly. "I'm jolly well going to wallop you, you foreign trash!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gunten. "Ain't you afraid you'll burst if I punch you?"

Chunky Todgers gave a snort of wrath, and rushed at the Swiss.

Unfortunately, he caught one foot in a trail root, and stumbled just as he reached Gunten.

The Swiss sprang on him before he could recover, hitting out vigorously.

There was a howl of anguish from poor Chunky.

Gunten's right caught him on the chin, and his left on the chest, and Chunky went spinning along the bank, quite winded.

He crashed down among the frozen reeds, and lay there gasping and gurgling.

"Ow! Groogh! Yow! Oh! Help!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled Gunten. "Get up and have some more, Todgers."

"Groogh! Oh! Ow! Oooohh!" spluttered the unhappy Chunky. "Oh, dear! Ow! Wow! Yurrrrrgggh!"

Frank Richards & Co. were backing away. Their champion was evidently not to be relied upon. Poor Chunky was already hors de combat.

"Running away again?" jeered Gunten. "Oh, bolt for it!" muttered Bob Lawless. "There's nothing else to be done. Come on!"

The three schoolboys ran into the timber. Gunten rushed in pursuit, and grasped Frank Richards by the back of the collar and dragged him back.

"Got you, at least!" he gasped. Frank spun round on him, his eyes blazing and his fists clenched.

For the moment his promise had vanished from his mind in the surge of anger within him as the Swiss grasped his collar.

The look on his face, however, was enough for Gunten. The Swiss' nerve failed him, and he jumped back.

For a moment Frank looked as if he would spring on him; but then he remembered, and he ran after his comrades into the wood.

His fight was all Gunten needed to encourage him, and he rushed in pursuit again.

The three schoolboys crashed through the thickets towards the trail that ran through the timber.

Once in the trail, they had no doubt of outdistancing the heavy Swiss without much difficulty.

They came out of the thickets with a breathless rush into the trail, and the next instant there was a crash and a cry:

"Oh!"

"Oh! Jerusalem crickets!" gasped Bob Lawless. "Miss Meadows!"

Frank and Beauclerc had both rushed into the schoolmistress, not seeing her till too late, as they burst into the trail.

Bob Lawless stopped himself just in time to avoid stumbling over her.

Miss Meadows, completely thrown off her balance, had fallen in the trail, and lay gasping and dazed.

"Oh!" panted Frank. "Miss Meadows! Oh!"

"What—what—" stammered the schoolmistress.

Bob Lawless helped her up.

Miss Meadows put her hand against a tree for support, and stood gasping for breath.

"Lawless! Richards! Beauclerc! What—"

"Sorry, ma'am—"

"We didn't see you—"

"Look out!" yelled Bob.

"Oh, Miss Meadows—"

Kern Gunten came bursting from the thickets with a whoop.

Leaving Miss Meadows leaning on the tree, amazed, the three chums bolted along the trail, Gunten in pursuit.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the headmistress of Cedar Creek. "What—what—what does it mean?"

She gazed dazedly after the schoolboys till they were out of sight.

Frank Richards & Co. came out of the timber by the school gates with Kern Gunten close behind.

"Here they come!" roared Eben Hacke.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Put it on!" yelled Dick Dawson. "Hoof it! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, Frank!" gasped Molly Lawrence, with tears of mirth in her eyes.

Frank's face was crimson as Molly's laugh rang in his ears.

He had never felt more humiliated and



ridiculous in his life than he did at that moment.

He stopped, heedless of the Swiss behind him.

"Molly!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, Frank! Ha, ha!" shrieked Molly.

"I can't help it, Molly! You wouldn't like me to break my promise to Miss Meadows, would you?" panted Frank.

"No, no! But— Ha, ha, ha! Look out! Gunten is catching you!" gasped Molly.

Frank Richards jumped away as the heavy hand of the Swiss clutched at his shoulder.

He whirled round with his hands clenched, but he remembered his plighted word, and ran on after his companions.

Bob and Beauclerc had gone into the playground, and Frank joined them there, breathless.

"Safe here!" stammered Bob. "Oh, my word! What a life!"

"Here he comes!" muttered Beauclerc.

Gunten was striding in at the gateway.

A laughing crowd of Cedar Creek fellows followed him in.

They did not look inclined to interfere; the chasing of Richards & Co. appealed to their sense of humour, and they were not going to spoil the joke.

Gunten headed for the three chums.

Beauclerc set his teeth.

"He's trying to make us break our promise to Miss Meadows!" he muttered.

"He'd like that more than anything else, even if he got a thrashing along with it. Look here, you chaps—"

"Oh, come on!" growled Bob.

The three chums dodged across the playground, Gunten still in pursuit, and ran into the corral, where there were a dozen horses and ponies belonging to the Cedar Creek fellows.

Gunten followed them in at the gate of the corral.

"I guess you're cornered now, you funks!" he called out.

The three chums ran among the horses, the Swiss pursuing them.

Vere Beauclerc's big black horse Demon threw up his head as Gunten gave him a rough clump to drive him out of the way.

"You fool! Don't touch my horse!" shouted Beauclerc.

The Swiss laughed, and struck at the black horse again with a switch he had in his hand, mistaking Beauclerc's warning.

The next instant he was springing away with a howl of terror, as the black horse turned on him with gleaming teeth.

The gleaming teeth were only a foot from him as he sprang away, his face like chalk.

"Demon!" shouted Beauclerc. "Demou! Here!"

His call came only in time.

The black horse obeyed his master's voice, and swung round towards Beauclerc, as Gunten, overcome with terror, fell helplessly on his knees to the ground.

The merriment of the laughing crowd at the gate of the corral ceased suddenly, and more than one face turned pale as Gunten's peril was seen.

Beauclerc caught his horse by the dangling trail-ropes, and held him in.

"Get out of there, Gunten!" he called out. "Get up, you coward; you're safe enough now!"

Gunten staggered to his feet.

His face was white, his eyes almost starting from his head.

He gave the black horse one look, and started for the gate of the corral, his knees knocking together.

He was not feeling inclined to pursue Frank Richards & Co. farther just then.

"This way, Gunten!" called out Bob Lawless, with a laugh.

The Swiss did not heed.

He almost staggered out of the corral, amid the jeers of the Cedar Creek fellows, and hurried away to the school gates.

"Good old Demon!" grinned Bob Lawless.

"I guess he's saved our bacon this time."

Beauclerc patted the glossy neck of his horse.

"That brute came near having his shoulder laid open," he said. "I don't think he will come into the corral again, anyhow."

"Ha, ha! Not likely!"

Nothing more was seen of Kern Gunten that afternoon.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Free at Last!

MISS MEADOWS regarded Frank Richards & Co. with a rather curious glance when she came in to take the class that afternoon, and the chums expected some allusion to the collision in the wood.

But the Canadian schoolmistress did not refer to it.

Lessons proceeded as usual, Frank Richards & Co. feeling in a more cheerful mood.

Gunten had work to do that afternoon for his father the postmaster at Thompson, so they were free of him for that day, at least.

The persecution could not last much longer, for the week for which their promise held good expired on Thursday—the following day.

On Friday they would be free to deal with Kern Gunten, and it was pretty certain

Meadows," said Vere Beauclerc. "But we've kept it so far, and we mean to keep it to the end."

"If you have avoided quarrels with Gunten, how is it that he is here apparently quarrelling with you to-day?"

The chums were silent.

The facts were plain enough for anyone to see, but they did not feel inclined to make what amounted to a complaint.

"Does Gunten know of your promise to me?" asked Miss Meadows, after a pause.

"Oh, yes!"

"Does this mean that he is taking a mean advantage of it, and attacking you because your promise makes you defenceless?" asked Miss Meadows, knitting her brows.

"Ahem!"

"I conclude that that is the case, from what I have seen," said the schoolmistress.

"Of course, my boys, you understand that



TAMPERING WITH FIRE!—"You fool!" cried Beauclerc. "Don't touch my horse!" Gunten laughed and struck at the black horse. The next moment he was springing away with a howl of terror, as Demon turned on him with gleaming teeth. (See Chapter 3.)

that the Swiss would not continue his pursuit then.

When Cedar Creek was dismissed, Miss Meadows called to the Co. as the school marched out.

The three juniors came up to the schoolmistress' desk with rather doubtful looks.

"If—if you please, Miss Meadows," said Frank, before the schoolmistress could speak, "we—we're sorry we ran into you in the wood. We didn't see you."

"Why were you in such a hurry, Richards?"

"We—we were running away from Gunten, ma'am."

Miss Meadows raised her eyebrows.

"You were running away from Gunten?" she repeated.

"Yes, please," said Frank meekly.

"And why, Richards?"

"Because—because he was after us, ma'am."

"You gave me your promise—all three of you—not to seek trouble with Keru Gunten!" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"We've kept it, too," said Bob.

"It's not been easy to keep, Miss

I did not consider the possibility of anything of the kind. Gunten's conduct is very mean and unworthy. I do not think I ought to hold you to a promise which places you in such a position."

"Oh, Miss Meadows!" exclaimed the three together.

Three faces brightened up wonderfully. Miss Meadows suppressed a smile.

"I do not mean that I give you permission to quarrel with Kern Gunten," she said. "I hold you to your promise, so far as that goes. But I release you from it to this extent, that if you are attacked you have full permission to defend yourselves. I rely upon you not to quarrel with this unpleasant boy if you can help it, and not to provoke him, but if he should lay hands upon you unprovoked, you are at liberty to protect yourselves. To that extent, I absolve you from your promise."

"Oh, thank you, Miss Meadows!"

Frank Richards & Co. left the lumber school smiling.

"Isn't she a brick?" exclaimed Frank, as they led out their horses. "I think perhaps

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Slimmy has been saying something to her about it. I say, if Gunten looks for us to-morrow—"

"Ha, ha!" roared Bob Lawless. "If he looks for us he'll find us." "No mistake about that!" said Vere Beauclerc. "And as he doesn't know Miss Meadows has let us off our promise, he's bound to look for us to-morrow. He wouldn't on Friday, when the week's up. But to-morrow—"

Bob chuckled. "To-morrow the sneaking coyote will be over here again, on the war-path," he said. "Jerusalem crickets! There will be a bit of a surprise for him!"

The chums of Cedar Creek rode home-ward in great spirits.

They had fully intended that when their week of probation was up they would look for the Swiss and punish him severely for his many offences.

But they were aware that when that time came it would not be easy to find Kern Gunten.

The Swiss was pretty certain to dodge them even more sedulously than they had been dodging him.

But now—

On the morrow, knowing nothing of their interview with Miss Meadows and its result, Gunten would come over to Cedar Creek as usual to continue his persecution—and then—

The three chums chuckled gleefully at the prospect.

The surprise of his life awaited Kern Gunten when he ran them down, and found that they were free to deal with him as he deserved.

The next morning, when Frank Richards & Co. trotted up the trail to school, they were in great spirits.

The anticipated meeting with Gunten that day was going to be a compensation for all they had been through for the previous week.

They were rather disappointed not to find him on the trail, as they trotted up to the gates of Cedar Creek.

Molly Lawrence met them at the gates with a smiling face.

"All safe!" she said. "Gunten's not here."

"I say, that's too bad, Molly!" exclaimed Frank reproachfully. "You know jolly well why we're dodging that cad—why we've been dodging him, I mean."

"Of course I do, Frank," said Molly with a smile. "It's a shame! We saw him this morning as we came by the Hillcrest trail to school, and he told Tom he was coming over after dinner to see you. You'd better get out on a long ride."

Frank shook his head.

"We'll wait and see him," he answered.

"I shouldn't," said Molly seriously.

"This is the last day, you know, and he's sure to come, and—"

"And he'll find us at home," said Bob grimly. "It's all serene, Molly. We've done dodging Gunten, and I guess he'll try to do some dodging when we see him to-day. If you want to see some fun, just be on hand when Gunten moseys along after dinner."

"You see," exclaimed Beauclerc, with a smile, "Miss Meadows has released us from our promise, so we're quite anxious to see Gunten."

"Oh!" exclaimed Molly. "I see! If Gunten knew that—"

"He won't know it till it's too late," chuckled Bob.

And the Co. went in to school in great spirits.

### THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Going for Gunten!

FRANK RICHARDS & CO. came out of the lumber schoolhouse after dinner with smiling faces.

They sauntered away to the gates to get on view, as Bob Lawless expressed it, all ready for Kern Gunten when he moseyed along.

A good many of the Cedar Creek fellows gathered round them outside the gates, greatly interested in the forthcoming meeting.

Most of the fellows knew now how matters stood, and there was much speculation as to how Gunten would act when he made the discovery.

There was a murmur in the crowd of THE POPULAR, —No. 235.

schoolboys as a figure came in sight on the frozen creek.

"Here comes Gunten!" grinned Chunky Todgers.

"Not a word to him, mind!" said Bob Lawless warningly. "Let him rip!"

"You bet!" said Chunky.

"Yes, rather!" said Tom Lawrence, laughing. "Not a word till it's too late for him to mosey off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Cedar Creek fellows watched Gunten with great interest as he took off his skates and came up the bank.

The Swiss came directly towards the group outside the gates.

Frank Richards & Co., affecting not to observe his approach, strolled across the trail to the timber.

They preferred to be out of sight of the school windows when they interviewed Gunten.

The interview was going to be a stormy one.

Gunten grinned as he saw them enter the timber, and followed.

The trio were cut off from the school now, and could not dodge into the corral to escape him.

Gunten did not know yet that it was far from their intention to dodge.

"Here comes Gunten!" called out Eben Hacke, with a laugh. "Light out, you galeots! Gunten's after your scalps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stop, you cowards!" shouted Gunten, rushing into the timber.

Frank Richards & Co. glanced at him and exchanged a grin and ran, with the Swiss on their track, and the Cedar Creek fellows following.

But they did not run far.

They led the Swiss as far as the old clearing, which was some little distance from the school, and where interruption was unlikely.

There they stopped.

Gunten came on, panting.

"So I've run you down at last!" he grinned.

"Looks like it," said Bob Lawless.

"Gunten, old sport, play fair, you know. You know we've promised—"

Gunten sneered.

"I know you say you have," he answered.

"Any excuse is better than none when you're afraid to put up your hands."

"You won't touch us—"

"I guess I will!" said Gunten emphatically.

"Now I've cornered you at last I'm going to lambaste you! I guess you'll be a set of pretty pictures by the time I've finished handling you."

The three chums dodged Gunten as he strode at them, separating. Gunten headed for Frank Richards.

"You first!" he said.

"You won't let me off?" asked Frank.

"Nope! I guess I'm going to alter your features for you," said Gunten. "Stand your ground, you cowardly skunk!"

"Right-ho!" said Frank cheerfully.

He stood his ground very unexpectedly, and put up his hands.

Gunten, who was rushing on with clenched fists, suddenly paused.

"You see, I've got some news for you," said Frank Richards pleasantly.

"Miss Meadows has let us off our promise."

"Wha-a-at?"

"And we're free to handle you, my pippin! So come on!"

"Oh!"

"Leave him to me, Franky!" shouted Bob.

"Rats! You leave him to me!"

"Toss up for him!" suggested Hopkins; and there was a laugh.

Gunten's face was a study.

He certainly was not looking for a fair fight, but there seemed no possibility of avoiding it now.

The Cedar Creek crowded round him.

"Go it, Gunten!" sang out Lawrence.

"Pitch in, Gunten!"

"Get a move on!"

"I guess you don't seem to be in such a hurry now, Gunten!" chortled Chunky Todgers.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards advanced in his turn, and the Swiss backed away.

The English schoolboy reached out and took Gunten's thick, prominent nose between forefinger and thumb.

Tweak!

"Gurrhrrh!" gurgled the Swiss.

Gunten struck out fiercely. Even Gunten could not have his nose pulled without trouble.

Frank warned the blow and sent back his right, and Gunten caught it with his eye, with a loud yell.

"Go it!" roared Bob.

"Pile in, Gunten!"

"I guess he's blown off all his steam!" chuckled Eben Hacke.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards was pommeling now, and Gunten had no choice about the matter.

He screwed up what courage he had, and threw himself into the fight.

For two or three minutes he held his ground, the Cedar Creek fellows watching the fight with breathless interest.

Then the Swiss gave ground, his defence growing feebler as Frank's knuckles landed again and again.

He cast hunted glances to right and left, as if seeking a way of escape, amid loud laughter from the Cedar Creek crowd.

The contrast between Gunten now and the Gunten of five minutes ago was striking, and it made the Cedar Creek fellows roar.

"Go it, Franky!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gunten jumped back desperately, and made a sudden rush to escape. He burst through the crowd savagely.

"Stop him!" yelled Bob Lawless. "Bring him back! He's not done yet!"

"Coler him!"

There was a rush in pursuit of Gunten.

The Swiss put on his best speed and ran for the creek, where he had left his skates.

He reached the bank, breathless, with half Cedar Creek whooping in pursuit.

He had no time to put on his skates. He caught them up and ran out on the ice, sliding away desperately.

"Ha, ha, ha! After him!"

Frank Richards & Co. slid out on the ice in pursuit, with a dozen fellows after them.

Gunten put on desperate speed, and vanished along the frozen creek.

Bob Lawless halted at last, laughing too much to keep up the chase any farther.

"Poor old Gunten!" he gasped. "He came for wool, and he's returning shorn, and no mistake! I fancy this is the last time Gunten will come to Cedar Creek on the war-path!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Frank Richards & Co. returned, laughing, to the school.

Bob's prediction was correct.

Kern Gunten had had quite enough of the war-path.

In class that afternoon at Hillcrest Gunten kept his handkerchief to his nose most of the time, and mumbled with anguish.

Gunten on the war-path was a thing of the past!

THE END.

(Full particulars of next week's story of Frank Richards & Co. will be found on page 2.)

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**DR. CHISHOLM'S PERIL!**

Here is another case where a small mistake causes a lot of trouble and misunderstanding. Mr. Cardwell comes to Rookwood, and he is voted a topping chap, until the mistake which was made some time ago comes to light, and then a great injustice is done to the new master. You will all enjoy this powerful yarn!

**HERO OR FUNK?**



# True Blue!

By Owen Conquest.

A Tip-top Story of the Famous Chums of Rookwood School, introducing, Mr. Cardwell, the new master.

(By the Author of the Tales of Jimmy Silver & Co., now appearing in the "Boys' Friend.")

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.**  
**The New Master.**

**C**LANG, clang! The rising-bell at Rookwood clanged out, and the Fourth-Form dormitory awoke to life—that is, with the exception of Tubby Muffin. The fat Classical was not a believer in early rising, and he only grunted and turned over. Jimmy Silver and Co. were soon up, and they sped down to the bathing-pool with their towels over their arms for a morning dip.

As they walked back to the school they saw a trap enter the gates of Rookwood, and seated in the trap was a bronzed young man of military appearance. The newcomer looked up as the juniors walked in, and nodded with a genial smile.

Jimmy Silver and Co. touched their caps and passed on.

"Wonder who that Johnny is?" remarked Raby.

"Looks like a military chap," said Jimmy Silver.

His chums nodded in agreement.

In the all-important task of breakfast they soon forgot about the stranger.

Then the bell went for lessons.

The juniors crowded into the Fourth Form-room, and, to their surprise, Dr. Chisholm was standing in consultation with a stranger. As Mr. Bootles had been called away to London for a few days, they had expected to see the frowning face of Cartthew, the prefect. But Jimmy Silver and Co. recognised the stranger as being the occupant of the trap they had seen before breakfast.

The juniors took their seats wonderingly.

Dr. Chisholm held up his hand for silence. "Boys," he began, "let me introduce you to Mr. Cardwell, who is taking the place of your Form-master, Mr. Bootles, for a short time. Mr. Cardwell greatly distinguished himself in the late war, and I am sure you will do your utmost to make him comfortable."

There was a buzz of conversation, and all the Fourth Form looked intently at their new master. Mr. Cardwell was a handsome man of about thirty, and the majority of the juniors liked the look of him.

The Head turned to Mr. Cardwell, and after a few words of consultation, left the room.

The Fourth Form waited expectantly.

Mr. Cardwell, with a glance over the class, cleared his throat.

"My boys, I'm sure we shall get on well together. You won't find me a hard task-master. You will find me just as interested

in your sports as in your studies, and, as I said before, I am sure we shall get on well together."

The faces of the Fourth Formers cleared. They had taken a liking to their new master. Even Tubby Muffin voted him a good sort, which was saying a lot.

Lessons that morning went off without a hitch, and Jimmy Silver confided in his chums as they left the Form-room that the new master was a brick. To which Raby, Lovell and Newcome added:

"Hear, hear!"

The Co. entered the end study, and Lovell at once settled down to finish a letter.

"I say, you fellows!"

The fat face of Tubby Muffin loomed in the doorway.

"Buzz off, Tubby!"

"Run away!"

The fat Classical advanced further into the study. Muffin was too thick-skinned to take hints.

"Have you heard the news?" he inquired breathlessly.

"What, have you come into a fortune?" said Lovell sarcastically.

"Really, Lovell, if I did come into a fortune I would take jolly good care to keep the news from you!" grunted Tubby Muffin.

"Well, what's all the excitement about?" asked Raby.

"I—I happened to hear the Head say that Cardwell was an officer in the Flying Corps, and that he's got a heap of decorations!"

Tubby Muffin paused.

"Go on, Tubby!"

"He's been wounded in the head by a bullet from a Hun airman, too!"

The Fistical Four looked interested.

Jimmy Silver had great respect for anyone who had served overseas, and Mr. Cardwell had evidently done so.

"I think it's up to us to celebrate his coming by giving him a spread!" went on Tubby Muffin.

"Jolly good idea!"

"I am glad you think that, Silver, old chap—I tell you what I'll do. You give me the money, and I'll guarantee that I'll put the finest feed on the table that's ever been known at Rookwood."

"Go and eat coke, porpoise!"

"Fat lot of feed we should see if you laid your fat paws on it first!" said Jimmy Silver.

Tubby Muffin snorted.

"I tell you—"

"Don't gas so much," said Raby. "Give your chin a rest, Tubby!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Jimmy Silver looked thoughtful.

"I say, you chaps, it would not be a bad idea to invite Mr. Cardwell to a feed in honour of his coming to Rookwood."

"Hear, hear!"

"It's a good wheeze," said Jimmy Silver; "but how are we going to approach Mr. Cardwell on the subject?"

"Why not write him an invitation in good style, and send it to him by a fag?"

"Good!" said Jimmy Silver. "Let's get to Mornington's study and write it out."

And the Fistical Four, with Tubby Muffin trailing along in the rear, made tracks for Study No. 4.

Mornington was at home when the juniors entered, and Jimmy Silver, in a few words, detailed the position.

"By gad!" murmured the junior captain.

"That's a jolly good idea!"

Kit Erroll backed up his chum with a nod.

"You'd better write the note, Morney," said the leader of the Fistical Four.

"I suppose he wouldn't think it cheek coming from us?" suggested Erroll.

It was not an uncommon thing for a junior to be invited to tea in a master's study, but it was rather uncommon for a master to be invited to tea by juniors.

After all, as Lovell said, he could only refuse.

"How shall we begin it?" asked Mornington, taking up the pen and gnawing away at the handle by way of inspiration.

"Honoured sir—" began Raby.

"That's too formal."

"Respected sir?" suggested Newcome.

"Too businesslike!" said Erroll, with a shake of the head.

"Can't you put in something about meat-pies?" said Tubby Muffin.

"What on earth's that got to do with the invitation?" inquired Jimmy Silver.

"Really, Silver, if old Cardwell thinks he's coming to a twopenny-ha'penny feed like they have in the Third, he'll send a polite refusal."

"There's something in that!" murmured Erroll, smiling.

"I've got it!" exclaimed Mornington. "Leave it to me!"

And he commenced to write with great care.

"The juniors of the Fourth Form request the presence of Mr. Cardwell to tea at six o'clock in the Common-room."

Mornington surveyed his handiwork with a look of pride.

"How's that?"

"Ripping!"

"We can give it to the page-boy to take across," said Jimmy Silver.

"Good egg!"

And the page-boy was duly found and despatched with the invitation to Mr. Cardwell's study, whilst the juniors waited anxiously.

The page-boy knocked at the master's sanctum, and a kindly voice bade him enter.

Mr. Cardwell took the letter, and as he perused the contents, a smile crept over his face.

"The juniors of the Fourth Form request the presence of Mr. Cardwell to tea at six o'clock in the Common-room."

"You want an answer, my boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell my hosts I shall be pleased to accept their invitation."

"Yes, sir."

And the grinning page-boy dexterously caught a sixpence which was tossed in his direction, and departed.

After he had closed the door, Mr. Cardwell took out the note and read it once again.

"I don't know whether it's infra dig for a House-master to accept an invitation to tea from juniors, but I think I'll go," he mused.

And he did.

The page-boy returned to the Classical House to be met by a crowd of juniors with anxious faces.

"Well?" they demanded, in one breath.

"Which as 'ow he said 'e'll be pleased to come!" gasped out the page-boy.

"Hurrah!"

"Now, to prepare the giddy spread!" said Mornington.

And the juniors were very soon busy. They meant to do their master well—very well, indeed.

The junior Common-room, a fairly large apartment on the ground floor, was soon the scene of busy preparations. Arthur Edward Lovell toured the studios for crockery and chairs, and Ruby successfully managed to wheedle some clean white table-cloths from the House-dame.

Meanwhile, Tubby Muffin, Jimmy Silver, and Mornington were busy at the tucksnoop. Tubby Muffin's mouth watered incessantly as he watched the quantities the two juniors were laying in. With their arms fully laden, they made their way back to the Common-room, Tubby Muffin puffing and panting with his exertions.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Trouble for Carthew.

**B**Y the time six o'clock rang out from the clock-tower of Rookwood, all was in readiness in the Common-room. One or two of the juniors had decorated the walls with some flags, and the long table, spread with white table-cloths, groaned under the choice selection of eatables that had been procured from the tucksnoop.

Mornington at the last moment had cut down to Coombe on his bike, and had purchased a case of pipes to be presented to the new master. It was really a good idea, so the juniors agreed, and the junior captain lost no time in carrying it out.

He arrived back at the Common-room as the hour struck, just in time to greet Mr. Cardwell on his entry.

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The gathering of the Fourth let loose a hearty cheer, as their guest, with smiling face, held up his hand.

"Boys," began Mr. Cardwell, "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for this cordial reception."

"Hurrah!"

And the juniors trooped to their places. Mr. Cardwell occupied the seat of honour at the top of the table, and very soon made himself at home.

A cheery conversation was kept up throughout the meal, and the eatables gradually began to diminish. Tubby Muffin hardly spoke—he was far too busy consuming tarts, but when a word did escape him, it was only a request for another dish of cream-puffs. Mornington and Silver vied with each other in keeping the master's plate full. But all good things come to an end, as Tubby remarked, as he looked hungrily around for another piece of cake.

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Mr. Cardwell leaned back in his chair with a sigh of contentment. For a man of about thirty he had done extremely well. Perhaps he remembered his own boyhood days and the feeds connected with them.

Theu Mornington, with the case of pipes in his hand, rose to the occasion, as it were.

"Go it, Morney!"

"Sir," commenced the junior captain, "we feel highly honoured with your presence here this evening. All of us have heard rumours of your experiences in the Flying Corps, and we feel very proud to have you as our Form-master."

"Hear, hear!"

"We should be very pleased," went on Mornington, "if you would accept this little gift, as a token of respect from the Fourth."

And he handed the master the case of pipes.

Mr. Cardwell's face lit up with pleasurable surprise.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "This is very good of you, my boys."

"Speech!" roared the Fourth, in one breath.

The new master rose to his feet.

"I shall never forget this occasion, my boys, and I thank you, not as master to pupil, but as man to man!"

"Hurrah!"

"I want all of you to look upon me as your friend, and if you have any troubles come to me by all means. I shall now proceed to make use of one of these splendid pipes!"

Mr. Cardwell sat down and began to fill one of the presentation pipes, and in a very few minutes clouds of smoke filled the Common-room. The juniors managed to keep smiling faces, although the smoke made them cough, but they surmised the master was only smoking in appreciation of their gift. That was the case. Mr. Cardwell knew it was hardly in keeping with the rules to smoke among the juniors, but this was a special occasion.

Soon the Common-room was hazy with smoke, and Mr. Cardwell, glancing at his watch, rose to go. After a few more expressions of gratitude to his hosts, he left them and made his exit, followed by a burst of cheering and the strains of "He's a Jolly Good Fellow!"

"He's a ripping sort!" confided Mornington to Kit Erroll.

"Hear, hear!"

Then the task of clearing up began, and the juniors set to with a will.

Very soon the room was emptied, with the exception of Mornington and Jimmy Silver and Co, and they were about to leave when the Common-room door opened, and the unpleasant face of Carthew, the prefect, looked in. Carthew was sniffing suspiciously. The whiff of tobacco had reached him in the passage as he was passing, and a gleam of malignant triumph came over his face as he saw who the juniors were. He did not know that Mr. Cardwell had had tea with the juniors, and was responsible for the smoky atmosphere.

Carthew's eyes gleamed with malicious triumph.

"So I've caught you!" he said, advancing into the room.

"Caught us?" said Jimmy Silver meekly, with a warning glance at his chums. "What do you mean, Carthew?"

It struck the juniors as being very funny. Carthew knew nothing about the visit of Mr. Cardwell, and the prefect was jumping to conclusions. Certainly the air was thick with smoke, and it looked very much as if the Co. had been smoking.

"I've caught you!" repeated the prefect. "Caught in the very act, you disgraceful young rascals. You've been smoking—I can smell it! The Head shall know of this!"

"Look here, Carthew—"

"Follow me to the Head!"

"But I tell you—"

"Follow me!" thundered the prefect.

The juniors looked at one another.

There was not the slightest danger in following Carthew to the Head. The reason of the smoke could be easily explained. Jimmy Silver winked at his chums. He was going to teach Carthew a lesson.

"I should let the matter drop, Carthew!" The prefect sneered.

"I expect you have been at this rotten game for some months. This time I have caught you, and it is my duty as prefect

to report this flagrant case of breaking the rules to Dr. Chisholm."

"Don't be an ass!"

"Follow me!"

And the juniors followed the prefect out of the Common-room along to the Head's study.

Carthew tapped at the door.

"Come in!" came the clear tones of Dr. Chisholm.

Carthew and the juniors entered.

The Head looked up in surprise as he saw his visitors.

"Bless my soul, what does this mean, Carthew?"

"I have brought these juniors," began the prefect, "on a charge of smoking."

"What?"

"I caught these juniors smoking, sir."

"Smoking?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Dear me, this is very distressing. Silver, I am surprised at you!"

"Excuse me, sir," said Jimmy Silver, "but we were not smoking!"

Dr. Chisholm looked puzzled.

"But Carthew states that he found you smoking."

"Certainly, sir!" chimed in Carthew.

"That is not the case, sir," replied Mornington.

"How very extraordinary," murmured the Head. "Did you actually see them with cigarettes in their hands, Carthew?"

"No, sir!" said Carthew reluctantly.

"But the room was full of smoke!"

"Indeed!"

"That's right, sir," remarked Jimmy Silver. "But we were not responsible for the smoke. We invited Mr. Cardwell to tea, sir, and after the feed he smoked his pipe."

Carthew's face was a study. He realised that he had put his foot into it.

Dr. Chisholm frowned.

"Mr. Cardwell must be referred to," he said sharply, and he despatched the page-boy for confirmation of Jimmy Silver's story.

"If what Silver states is correct, Carthew, I'm afraid you have been guilty of prejudice and hastiness," said the Head, frowning. "You should find out the facts before you bring anyone on such a serious charge to me."

"Y-yes, sir!" stammered Carthew.

Then Mr. Cardwell appeared.

Dr. Chisholm explained the situation, and as he proceeded a smile came over the face of the new master.

"Their statement is quite correct, sir.

They presented me with a case of pipes, and if the room was smoky I am certainly to blame. I am afraid it was very thoughtless of me to smoke in the junior Common-room."

"Thank you, Mr. Cardwell!" said the Head.

The new master quitted the study.

Dr. Chisholm turned to Jimmy Silver and Co.

"You are completely exonerated, my boys!"

"Thank you, sir!"

"You may go!"

Jimmy Silver left the Head's study, chuckling, and Carthew made as if to follow them, but Dr. Chisholm beckoned him to remain.

"You have done these boys a great wrong, Carthew, with your hasty suspicions, and it points to a very strong prejudice on your part. You must be more careful in the future. Let this be a warning to you, Carthew!"

Carthew listened with burning cheeks. He was feeling his position keenly.

"You may go, Carthew!"

The prefect went. With a face burning with fury, he strode over to his study, breathing threats of vengeance upon the heads of the heroes of the Fourth.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Adolphus Gets His Back Up!

**Y**OUR call, Smythe!"

The giddy goats of Rookwood were seated round the table in

Adolphus Smythe's study indulging in a quiet game of bridge.

"Your call!" repeated Gower.

"I'll go no-trumps, by gad!" drawled

Adolphus.

Gower chuckled, and waited for Peele to call. But Peele's call never came.

There was a tap at the door, and before the astonished nuts could hide the



incriminating cards, the face of Mr. Cardwell, the new master, looked into the study.

"Excuse me—" began the new master. Then he caught sight of the cards and the money on the table.

A frown came over his face, which changed to a look of disgust, and the nuts shivered in their seats.

"Bless my soul! Boys, this is a peculiar scene!" exclaimed Mr. Cardwell.

Adolphus Smythe and Co. exchanged glances of dismay, and fidgeted uneasily.

"I-I-it's only a little game!" stammered Peele weakly.

"So I perceive!" replied the master of the Fourth drily.

"Just a little flutter!" said Gower, with an attempt at bravado.

"I shall not report this to Dr. Chisholm," said Mr. Cardwell. "I shall deal with you in my own way."

The giddy goats looked relieved. They knew too well the view the Head would take of the affair, and visions of expulsion had floated before their eyes.

"Why aren't you at cricket practice?" asked Mr. Cardwell.

"We forgot," muttered the nuts in chorus.

"Don't lie, my boys! A day like this should be spent on the playing-fields, not gambling away in study rooms!" said the new master sternly.

"Yes, sir," assented Gower feebly.

"Come with me!" commanded Mr. Cardwell.

The giddy goats rose to their feet, and followed the master downstairs to his study.

Mr. Cardwell gave them each two severe cuts with the cane, and the nuts doubled themselves up, clasping their hands.

The master surveyed them contemptuously.

"You are to go down to the playing-fields, and report to Bulkeley," he said. "I don't want to hear any more reports of slacking, and I shall make it my business to see that you attend games every day!"

Adolphus Smythe and Co. looked sick. If there was one thing they hated it was cricket, or any other sport, for that matter; but the gleam in the master's eye bade them obey his commands.

"You may go!"

The giddy goats left the study with furious faces, and trooped over to the playing-fields.

"The beast!" exclaimed Adolphus Smythe.

"The rotter!" roared Gower.

Jimmy Silver and Co. encountered them as they walked over to the nets.

"Hallo, Smythe! Trying to tie yourself in a knot?" inquired the leader of the Fistical Four sweetly.

Adolphus Smythe bestowed a savage glare upon the humorous Silver, which was entirely lost.

"Cheeky ass!" growled Gower.

"What did you say, Gower?" asked Lovell.

"Oh, rats!"

The Fistical Four arrived at the nets, and the nuts went over to Bulkeley, who was batting.

"Hallo! What do you chaps want?" asked the captain of the school genially, as Adolphus approached him.

"We've come to play cricket!"

"Oh, good! Pile in!" exclaimed Bulkeley, who was surprised to learn of this sudden desire for cricket. The nuts did not explain that they had been sent down to the nets by the new master. Later Bulkeley found out the true facts himself, and ceased to wonder at the sudden desire for cricket. Mr. Cardwell had sent a note over to the captain of the school by the page-boy, explaining things.

That afternoon was a very busy afternoon for the nuts. Bulkeley seemed to take a delight in swiping the ball in their direction, and when tea-time came round Adolphus Smythe and Co. were truly thankful for this respite, and they left the cricket-field with sour faces and weary limbs.

"I call it the limit!" said Peele.

Gower looked very thoughtful, and when at last he came out of his reverie, it was with a very emphatic remark.

"I've got it!"

"Eh?"

"Got what?"

"I tell you I've got it," said Gower breathlessly.

"What are you bubbling about?" asked Smythe.

"I've got it!" repeated Gower.

"Sunstroke, I should say!" murmured Topham.

"Ass!"

"If you'll listen a minute I'll explain," said Gower excitedly.

"Go ahead!"

And Gower went ahead.

"Ever since this master came to Rookwood I have been wondering where I have seen his name before," explained Gower.

"Well?"

"I remember now. He was a giddy conscientious objector. I remember his name in the paper—A. V. Cardwell—and the blighter was sent to Dartmoor."

"Great Scott!"

"By gad!"

The giddy goats grinned at one another. If such was the case they were beginning to see a way of making Mr. Cardwell sit up.

"Can you prove it, Gower, old sport?" asked Smythe.

"Yes; if I can get hold of an old file of the 'Times' at the bookshop down in Coombe," replied Gower, with a grin.

"Let's cut down there on our bikes," suggested Topham. "We'll make the cad sit up if it's true."

"Yes, rather, the beast!" exclaimed Peele, caressing his hands.

The nuts left the study, and made their way to the bike-shed, and were very soon speeding out of the gates in the direction of Coombe.

Arriving at the old bookshop they were busy for the next half-hour looking up the files, and it proved to be a very tedious job, but at length an exclamation escaped Peele, and the nuts crowded round him.

"Read it out, Peele, old chap!" said Smythe.

And Peele read it out aloud. It ran:

"A. V. Cardwell, the conscientious objector, was sent to Dartmoor yesterday."

"Good!" ejaculated Gower, and a gleam of malicious triumph came into his eyes.

"Now we'll make the rotter sorry he ever came to Rookwood, by gad!" hooted Adolphus Smythe.

The nuts mounted their bikes, and raced back to Rookwood triumphantly.

They passed Mornington, the junior captain, as they entered their study, and he gave them a queer look.

"What's the little game?" he demanded. The nuts chuckled.

"We've found out that Cardwell, your blessed war-hero, was a conscientious objector!" grinned Smythe.

"What?"

"I thought that would make you sit up," said the leader of the nuts. "But we've got it in black and white."

"Rubbish! Why, I know for a fact that he fought in France!" replied Mornington indignantly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Read this, then!" said Peele, and he handed the junior captain the paper.

A look of incredulous amazement stole over Mornington's handsome face as he read the cutting.

"There must be some mistake!" he cried.

"I don't think so!" chuckled Smythe, and he entered the study with his pals, leaving the junior captain standing bewildered in the passage.

The nuts were very busy for the next hour drawing up posters, and whilst the Fourth were at tea they distributed them all over the building.

Adolphus Smythe rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

"This is where we smile!"

To which the nutty friends added:

"Hear, hear!"

**THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Proved a Hero!**

**M**Y bat!"

"Well, I'm blessed!"

These remarks came from the crowds of juniors who were standing round the notice-board. Great excitement prevailed. Adolphus Smythe's posters were having the desired effect.

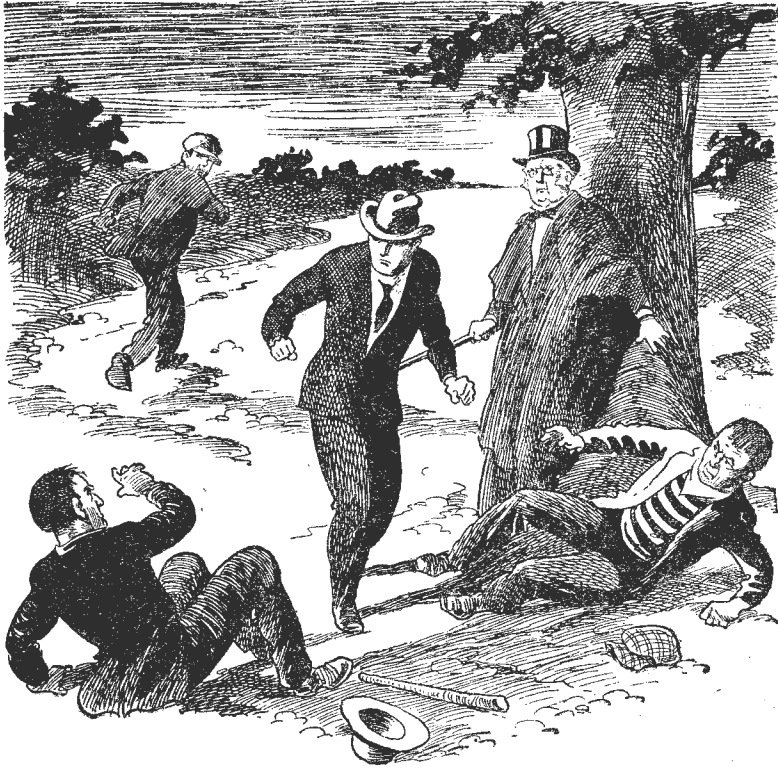
"What's all this about?" asked Jimmy Silver, as he came along with his chums.

Then he caught sight of the notice, and frowned.

"Read it out, Jimmy?" said Lovell.

"Are the Fourth aware that they have a conscientious objector for their Form-master?"

"Beastly cad, whoever wrote that!" exclaimed the leader of the Fistical Four.



**THE NEW MASTER TO THE RESCUE!**—Dr. Chisholm retreated against the trunk of the tree, with the rascals surrounding him. "Help!" There was the tinkle of a bicycle-bell, and a newcomer appeared on the scene. It was Mr. Cardwell. He took in the situation at a glance and sprang boldly to the rescue.

**Will Morny Shoulder the Difficulties of the Fourth Form Captaincy?**

Val Mornington, the junior captain, was coming along the passage, and Jimmy Silver and Co. stopped him.

"Seen the rotten notice, Morny?" asked Jimmy Silver.

"No."

"Well, come here, then. Some rotter is making a dirty attempt to smirch the good name of old Cardwell."

Mornington guessed what information the notice held, and, with a stride towards the board, he tore it down.

"It's that cad Smythe!" he said grimly.

"Smythe!"

"We'll scalp him!" roared Jimmy Silver indignantly.

Mornington drew the Fistical Four on one side.

"It's true!" he said quietly.

"What?" ejaculated the Co. in unison.

"It's true!" repeated Mornington. "I've seen the paper!"

Jimmy Silver and Co. looked puzzled.

"What paper?"

"I've just seen a paper Smythe has got hold of, in which it states that A. V. Cardwell was sent to prison during the war on the charge of being a conscientious objector."

"There must be some mistake," said Jimmy Silver.

"That's just what I thought," remarked Mornington.

"Let's go and see Smythe," suggested Lovell.

And the juniors went down the passage to Smythe's study.

The nuts were at home, and quite a crowd of juniors were outside in the passage. The news had soon spread that Adolphus Smythe was responsible for that notice, and they wanted an explanation. Loud and angry murmurs were running the round when the Fistical Four, followed by Mornington, entered the study.

The nuts looked up uneasily as the Co. marched in.

Jimmy Silver and Co. did not wait for any explanation. With one accord they fell upon the nuts, and ere long sounds of anguish proceeded from the study.

"Ow-yow! Stop it, Silver, you rotter!"

"Yaroh!" roared Peele, as a heavy fist smote him in the region of the nose.

"G-grooogh!" howled Smythe, as he descended to the floor with a bump.

"You rotten cads!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, with a gleam in his eyes.

"Kick 'em out!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Out you go, Smythe!"

The great Adolphus was flung out into the passage, and he fell on his hands and knees. From that position he was helped by a score of willing boots, and he departed in great haste, and did not stop until he reached the top of the stairs.

Peele, Gower, and Topham followed him, and the Giddy Goats crawled away, feeling as if they had been through a mangle.

Jimmy Silver wiped his brow.

"That will teach the cads a lesson!" he said grimly.

"Hear, hear!"

"Cave!"

The juniors scattered right and left, and the majestic figure of Dr. Chisholm came along the passage. The Head of Rookwood passed on unsuspectingly and headed straight for the gates. Taking the road to Coombe, he stepped out briskly for his evening exercise. It was often his custom to take a walk to Coombe in the evening.

It was a glorious evening. The sun was just sinking in the west, and Dr. Chisholm, who had an eye for art, gazed admiringly at the vivid sunset, quite unconscious of the fact that he was being followed by three evil-looking rascals of the tramp variety.

In the loneliest part of the lane he was made aware of their existence by a sharp command to stop.

Dr. Chisholm looked round him wonderingly, and observed the three rascals for the first time.

"Stop!"

The command rang out again.

"Bless my soul! What does this mean?" gasped the Head, looking from one to the other of the three tramps gathered round him.

They looked an evil trio—all three were armed with hawthorn cudgels, and evidently meant business.

The leader of the gang chuckled.

"It means, mister, that we want your money—"

"My good man, you'll get nothing from me!" retorted Dr. Chisholm stoutly. "Let me pass!"

"Not so fast!" chimed in the man who had spoken first. "If you hand over the durock's quietly we'll let you pass right enough. If you don't—" He brandished his cudgel threateningly.

The trio closed in.

Dr. Chisholm grasped his walking-stick grimly. He realised that he was in a tight corner. No one was in sight to come to his assistance; nevertheless, he had no intention of handing over his money to the rascals!

"This is scandalous, outrageous! I never heard of such a thing! If you don't let me pass, I shall shout for assistance!"

The three rascals advanced upon the unfortunate headmaster, and he faced them bravely.

The leader of the gang aimed a vicious blow at his head, but Dr. Chisholm stepped back and avoided it. There could only be one ultimate result, he knew, and with all the power of his lungs he sent out a call for help.

"Help!"

There was the tinkle of a bicycle-bell, and a newcomer appeared upon the scene. He took in the situation with a glance, and sprang boldly to the rescue. Right and left he hit out, and two of the rascals rolled in the dust. The third, not liking the new aspect of the case, took to his heels and bolted.

The newcomer went over to Dr. Chisholm. It was Mr. Cardwell, the new master.

The Head shook his hand warmly.

"Thank you, Cardwell! You've saved me from a nasty position, and I shall not forget it. I'm sure the rascals intended violence. Look out!"

The warning came too late. One of the ruffians had crawled up behind the new master and had dealt him a stunning blow over the head with a stick. He sank to the ground with a groan, and his assailant took to his heels and ran, followed by his companion.

Dr. Chisholm leant over the prostrate form of his rescuer, and discovered a gaping wound in the head.

"Good heavens!" he cried anxiously.

Mr. Cardwell lay as if dead. How to get him back to the school was a puzzle, and Dr. Chisholm wrung his hands in his utter helplessness.

The head-lights of a car shone down the road, and, with a sigh of relief, the Head ran to intercept it. Waving his arms in the full glare of the beam, his signal was seen, for the car pulled up, and a military gentleman stepped out.

Dr. Chisholm explained the situation in a few words, and between them they lifted the unconscious form of Mr. Cardwell into the car, which moved off in the direction of Rookwood at top speed.

Once at the school, it was the work of a few moments getting the master into bed, and the doctor was sent for.

He came, and Dr. Chisholm anxiously awaited the verdict.

The doctor smiled encouragingly.

"He'll pull through all right. It's an old wound been opened; but, with careful nursing he will be his old self in a few days."

"Thank Heaven!" murmured the Head.

• • • • •

Mr. Cardwell was tough, and in a few days was almost himself again. All the school knew of his gallant deed, and Smythe and Co. had the sense to lie low. During the master's convalescence Lovell had wired his uncle, who was a lawyer, to look up the record of the conscientious objector with the name of A. V. Cardwell, and a few days later he received a letter from his uncle, which stated that there had been a mistake in the printing of the initials, and that they should have been A. W. Cardwell. When the nuts heard this, great was their dismay, but they did not venture to dispute the fact. It turned out that Mr. Cardwell had been awarded the D.S.O. for conspicuous gallantry, and when the master fully recovered from his injury the reputation that awaited him was overwhelming.

A few days later he left the school, as Mr. Bootles returned unexpectedly from London, and the Rookwood Fourth turned out in full strength to see him off.

## Readers' Notices.

Syd Wright, 13, Nelson Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers in Canada, Australia, and India.

Norman Gordon, 53, Walpole Street, South Shields, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere; interested in boxing, amateur detectives, magazines, etc.; ages 14—16.

G. G. Sayers, 3, Dufferin Avenue, S. C. Road, Dublin, Ireland, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere, especially in London and America; ages 12—15.

W. Anders, c.o. Post Office, Waver-tree Road, Edge Hill, Liverpool, wishes to correspond with readers; ages 15—16.

Albert E. Fitch, 145, Finnis Street, Bethnal Green, E.2, wishes to correspond with readers, preferably in Wigan, Preston, or anywhere in Lancs; ages 15—16.

Miss Margaret Flood, Alameda House, Cr. Kent & Margaret Streets, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers in Spain or New York; ages 15—17; all letters answered.

Ivor Campion, 11, Sandiways Road, Wallasey, Cheshire—will draw illustrations for amateur magazines in exchange for story-writers for his magazine—"The Planet." Also, he would like to hear from readers interested in drawing; ages 15—16.

Miss Madeleine Macken, 21, Fitzgibbon Street, N.C.E. Dublin, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere; ages 15—16.

A. Doddington, 55, Beresford Road, Lowestoft, wishes to correspond with readers; ages 12—14.

Miss Dorothy Feather, c.o. Mrs. Jones, Post Office, Llanfaelog, Anglesey, North Wales, wishes to correspond with readers in Canada and Australia; ages 16—20.

Miss D. E. Salmon, 206, Mile End Road, Stepney, E. 1, wishes to hear from girl readers; ages 20—21.

Aubrey Bennette, P.O. Box 236, Port Elizabeth, South Africa, wishes to get in touch with a correspondence club.

Will William Chandler, of Ascot, write to C. Elliott, 32, Mereston Road, Catford, S.E. 6?

Leong Ah Kay, 16, Belfield Street, Ipoh, Perak, Federated Malay States, wishes to hear from readers in the United States, Australia, and the Continent of Europe.

J. S. Taylor, 47, Hungerford Road, Crewe, Cheshire, wishes to correspond with readers interested in stamp collecting. Crewe district preferred.

J. Simons, 13, Hanover Street, Belfast, as secretary of stamp and correspondence clubs, wishes to hear from readers anywhere.

We would refer our readers to the announcement appearing elsewhere in this issue with regard to "THE PRACTICAL WOODWORKER," which is the most comprehensive work ever issued on this subject dealing with Woodworking from A to Z, with thousands of illustrations, and "how to do it" drawings and diagrams.

Readers should take advantage of the publishers' offer regarding a free booklet giving full particulars which will be of great interest.

# "CHUMS IN CAPTIVITY!"

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18.)

night-time," said Manners. "They wouldn't be likely to sleep underground."

"But the Old Man will be there, or thereabouts," said Talbot. "He never leaves the mill."

"And I fancy the other members of the gang do sleep down in the vaults," said Tom Merry. "There would be a current of air running through; and if they can work there, what's to prevent them sleeping there? We're up against a stiff proposition. I can see that now as clearly as you, Talbot. But, dash it all, nothing venture, nothing win."

"Better to try to escape, and fail, than not to try at all," said Monty Lowther.

The others echoed that sentiment. The chance of escape seemed slender enough; but it was worth taking.

"We'll have a shot at it at midnight, anyway," said Tom Merry. "And now we'd better get some sleep while we can."

The prisoners rolled themselves up in their blankets. They were too excited to sleep at first; but after a time they dropped off, one by one.

When dusk fell, the Old Man of the Mill paid a visit to the upper apartment. He pushed up the trapdoor, and, holding a lantern above his head, he took a survey of the slumbering juniors.

"They seem to have turned in early," he mused. "Tired out, I expect, with doing nothing. Idleness makes one just as tired

as work—sometimes more so. Ah, well! I'll leave them to their innocent slumbers. The first day of their captivity has gone, and there are six more to follow. They'll appreciate their freedom when it does come."

The Old Man descended the iron ladder, closing the trapdoor after him. No suspicion crossed his mind that the prisoners had planned to escape.

But Tom Merry and Co. had no intention of remaining in the old mill another six days if they could help it. Their captivity was brightened by books and food; all the same, they were yearning to get back to St. Jim's.

At the old school alarm and anxiety prevailed.

Search parties had been out all day, scouring the countryside. The local police had also been active. But no news had come to hand concerning the missing juniors.

Tom Merry and Co. could guess what a deal of agitation their disappearance must have caused; and it only increased their determination to make good their escape, and to get back to the school with all speed.

Whether or not their daring attempt would prove successful remained to be seen.

THE END.

(How will the St. Jim's chums escape? See next week's story: "A Fight for Freedom!")

£10! £10! £10!

Result of Kent Picture-Puzzle Competition!

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the picture. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

N. WILLIS,

Wheelford,

Leckhampton,

Cheltenham Spa.

The second prize of £2 10s. has been awarded to the following competitor whose solution contained one error:

T. Sanderson, 63, Charles Lane, Milnrow, Rochdale.

The ten prizes of 5s. each have been awarded to the following ten competitors whose solutions contained two errors each:

W. Boyd Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Adrossan; Mrs. Kenrick, 62, Ivor Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham; William Mitchell, 5, North Shore Street, Camptletown, N.B.; Eleanor Stockdale, 211, Devonshire Buildings, Barrow-in-Furness; Ernest Vincent, 56, Nichols Street, Leicester; Bernard Wallis, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol; Leslie Wallis, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol; Ralph Smith, 45, Brereton Road, Rugeley, Stafford; Winnie Caxe, 18, Oilerton Road, Retford, Notts; E. Nelson, 29, Ley Street, Ilford.

SOLUTION.

Kent is among the old cricket counties. The first fully recorded match was the Kent versus England game nearly two centuries ago. The magnificent play of the team gained the championship four times during the nine years before the big war. Kent's present eleven contains numerous noted cricketers, such as Woolley, Hardinge, Freeman, etc.

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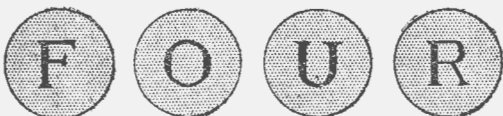
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Pop. S., 1923.

### "What Shall We Do With Our Boys?"

(Continued from page 7.)

parents and teachers of all Student Salesmen, keeping them in touch with the activities of the league. Moreover, personal contact with the boys is maintained throughout by Vocational Representatives.

Parents and teachers are urged to keep the Vocational Division advised as to the progress of their boys at home and in school. This will materially assist Lever Brothers in training their Student Salesmen.

Great care has been taken in selecting as members of Vocational Staff men who have been associated with juvenile organisations, and who are therefore familiar with boys and their interests. The same discrimination has been exercised

in the choice of Vocational Representatives and District Agents, so that there is no possibility of the boys coming in contact with any element likely to have a bad moral influence upon them.

It seems that here at last is a solution to the question, "What shall we do with our boys?" more especially as this plan embraces both the boys who are about to leave school and our juvenile unemployed who, in consequence of enforced idleness, suffer much in character, and deteriorate as working units.

Thus the Lever Brothers' Vocational Guidance Plan will make it possible for thousands of boys—the citizens of the future—to develop, through this training in the Lever League, a sound business ability born of self-confidence, initiative, perseverance, and courtesy.

As this plan is an entirely new departure, we feel sure that as it grows, which it is bound to do in these days of uncertainty of what to do with our boys, it will

be a national asset, the prospects which are beyond our vision at this writing.

Any further information that may be desired regarding the Lever League of Student Salesmen, can be obtained from the Manager, Vocational Division, Lever Brothers, Limited, Lever House, Blackfriars, London, E.C. 4.

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