

YOUR LAST CHANCE — £300 TO BE WON!

Week Ending
August 11th.
1923.

New
Series.

No.
238

Twenty-eight
Pages.

The POPULAR

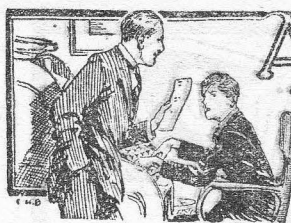
The Story Book for Boys

EVERY
TUESDAY.

2^D



**AN AMAZING TALE OF MYSTERY AND ADVENTURE AT ST. JIM'S
IN THIS ISSUE!**



A WORD WITH YOUR EDITOR

YOUR EDITOR IS ALWAYS PLEASED TO HEAR FROM HIS READERS. Address: EDITOR, THE "POPULAR," THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

"FOR HIS BROTHER'S SAKE!" By Frank Richards.

Dicky Nugent cannot really be blamed for the affair which is related to you in next week's fine story of Greyfriars; he is young and a little weak. If anyone should be "called over the coals" for the affair, it should be Cecil Ponsoby, the "nut" of Highellie, an out-and-out rotter, who first led the young fag from the straight path. Frank Nugent, of the Remove, discovers the reckless doings of his minor, and, with true brotherly spirit, steps between Dicky and his "sporting" pals. There are ructions in the family, of course, but Franky is firm. He must save his brother at all costs. Painful scenes follow, and a flogging for Nugent major. But the punishment is nothing to him if he can save the fag from disaster.

"IN THE GRIP OF THE LAW!"

Down in Cedar Creek way excitement and thrill runs thick and fast. The dramatic sequel to the fight with the notorious Flour-Bag Gang astounds everyone, but none are so startled as Frank Richards & Co. They are horrified by the consequences of the backwoods drama. Mr. Beauclerc, the remittance-man, is accused of attempted

murder of the sheriff. Vere's father! They cannot believe it, least of all Vere. But the evidence seems conclusive.

"THE CAPTAIN'S DECISION!" By Owen Conquest.

Realisation of the terrible position Val Mornington has, by the skin of his teeth, escaped from brings about repentance and shame. Only by the plucky action of his chum does the junior skipper of the Fourth of Rookwood escape from a reckoning. That he has made an utter fool of himself Morry knows only too well. That may save him from further escapades—at least, it is hoped so. Now repentance has come hot upon realisation, his position as skipper of the Fourth may be safer than it has been of late. Hard work will save him, and that is what he had decided to do.

"KING CARNIVAL!" By Martin Clifford.

St. Jim's is represented next week by a story of fun and laughter. Carnivals seem the vogue, and the fashion has reached St. Jim's. That famous seat of learning is turned into a place of gay scenes, gorgeous colours, and humorous happenings. The

story is not without a strong plot. Incidents are numerous, and the plot is thick. You will all enjoy it.

GRAND CARNIVAL NUMBER!

Not only at St. Jim's has the carnival fever reached, but at the other two famous schools, Rookwood and Greyfriars. I do not mean to accuse one of copying the other. No, it is purely coincidence, and, like the great Editor he is, Billy Bunter has taken advantage, as it were, of the fact. A Grand Carnival Number of his bright little paper, "Billy Bunter's Weekly," is to make its appearance next Tuesday. You will come away from a perusal of this supplement wiping the tears of laughter from your eyes. Next week's supplement hits the mark, there's no doubt about that!

"THE LEAGUE OF SEVEN!"

The war eagle has swooped down upon the countryside, and has turned its peaceful reign into one of complete chaos. The sound of the guns takes the place of the twitter of birds, and the men who ploughed and reaped have turned to the sword. In the west the seething masses gather round the banner of the man they hope to place upon the throne of England, the Duke of Monmouth. Whilst in the east, bearing flaming banners, the drilled legions of King James march forward like an oncoming tide. You must not miss next week's instalment of our popular serial.

YOUR LAST CHANCE.

I must draw attention again to the immensely attractive cricket competition, and also emphasise that this week is your last chance of entering. So put on your thinking-caps, and set to work forecasting the positions of the counties. The £100 prize is too good to lose. It is very easy, and the awards are great.

YOUR EDITOR.

The Last Week of This Great Contest!

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.

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.

I forecast that the Counties will finish the season in this order:

No. 1	<i>Gloucestershire</i>
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.

A RATTLING SCHOOL TALE!

A shadow passed down the long corridor, and crossed the moonbeams which filtered through the windows. It stopped at the door, and then vanished . . . the midnight walker was on the prowl . . . the mystery at St. Jim's was deepening!

"WHO IS THE THIEF?"

and it was just possible that Baggy Trimble had something important to say on the subject

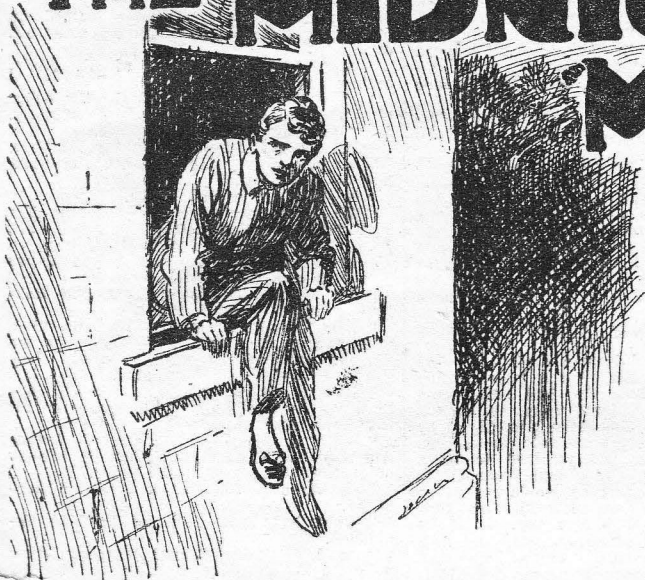
THE MIDNIGHT MYSTERY!

A Thrilling Story! The adventures of Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's.

by

Martin Clifford.

(Author of the Tales of St. Jim's appearing in the "Gem.")



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

In the Toils!

"COMIN' to the ewicket, deah boy?" Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, garbed in immaculate flannels, looked into No. 6 study in the Fourth Form passage.

The only response to Gussy's question was the busy scratching of a pen. Robert Arthur Digby was seated at the study table, scribbling away as if for a wager. His coat was off, and there was a siphon of lemonade, and a glass, at his elbow. The window was wide open, to admit what little breeze there was. It was one of those stifling summer afternoons when indoor work of any sort seemed a drudgery.

"I am waitin', Dig, for a weply to my question!" said Arthur Augustus, surveying his study-mate sternly through his monocle. "Oh, fade away!" growled Digby. And he waved his hand towards the door without looking up.

"Weally, Dig, I wesent bein' spoken to in that mannah. Moreovah, I wefuse to fade away!" said Arthur Augustus indignantly. "I asked you if you were comin' to the ewicket—"

"No time for cricket," said Digby curtly, and his pen continued to fly over the paper. "If you have got an impot to write, I'm sowwy," said the Swell of St. Jim's.

"It isn't an impot," grunted Digby. "Not an impot?" Then it must be a stowfy for Tom Mewwy's Weekly. Am I wight, deah boy?"

"Curiosity, thy name is Gussy!" said Digby, looking up at last. "I'm swotting for the Governors' Exam, if you want to know. I'm going to have a big shot at bagging the honours. I finished second last year—Dick Brooke beat me by two marks. And this year I'm going to try and turn the tables."

Arthur Augustus nodded. "A worthy wesome, deah boy," he said. "But fancy swotting on an aftahnoon like this! Give it a miss, an' come an' have a knock at the nets."

"Don't tempt me, Gussy. I'd love to come to the cricket, but I've no time to spare. The Exam comes off in a few days, and every minute's precious. Cut off now, there's a good fellow!"

But Arthur Augustus lingered. By the exercise of tact and judgment he hoped to persuade Digby to lay aside his books and papers and go out into the bright sunshine.

"You'll have plenty of time for swotting in the cool of the evenin'," he said. "Come along, deah boy! Blake an' Hewwies are

waitin' at the nets, an' so are Tom Mewwy an' his pals. I pwomised to come an' drag you out."

But Digby refused to be dragged. And he refused to brook any further interruption. He jumped to his feet, and strode towards his elegant schoolfellow.

"I keep on telling you to get out," he said, "but you stand there like a graven image. Out you go!"

So saying, Digby caught Arthur Augustus by the collar, and swung him round, and propelled him into the passage.

"Welease me, you wuff wottah—"

Crash!

Arthur Augustus was released all right—with such suddenness that he pitched on all fours upon the linoleum. And the study door slammed behind him.

"Ow! Bai Jove!" gasped the Swell of St. Jim's, scrambling to his feet. "I considah Digby is a beastly barbawian, begad! My bags are soiled at the knees, an' I am in quite a fluttah! I've a good mind to step into the studay, an' administah a feahful thwashin', in vengege for my outwaged dignity!"

On second thoughts, however, Arthur Augustus decided not to interrupt Robert Arthur Digby any further. Dusting his trousers with his hands, he strolled away to the cricket ground, where his chums of the Fourth and Tom Merry & Co. were at practice.

Having ejected his visitor with violence, Digby returned to his task. He was translating a French essay into English. It was a long essay, and Digby wanted to get the job done by teatime. After tea he was going to put in a few hours at English history. He would have to swot long and earnestly if he hoped to pull off the Governors' Prize, for there were many rivals in the field.

It seemed to be Digby's unlucky afternoon, for he had barely had time to settle down again when there was a tap on the door of the study.

Digby gave a snort of annoyance, and instead of a cheery "Come in!" he rapped out an impatient "Buzz off!"

In spite of Dig's command, the door opened, and Baggy Trimble rolled into the study.

"I say, Dig, old fellow, I just dropped in—"

"Well, you can drop out again—and sharp!" growled Digby.

"Oh, really! You might lend me your ears!"

"I'll lend you a couple of thick ones, if you don't skeddadle!"

"But I wanted to speak to you about the Governors' Exam," said Baggy.

Digby paused in the act of picking up a cricket stump. The Governors' Exam was a topic in which he was deeply interested, and it was just possible that Baggy Trimble had something important to say on the subject.

"What about it?" he asked.

"Ahem! The exam comes off on Wednesday—"

"I know that, fathead!"

"And it's a compulsory affair, worse luck! Every fellow in the Fourth and the Shell has got to compete. And old Lathom says that if any fellow in his Form fails very badly, there's going to be trouble."

"But you're not telling me anything fresh," snapped Digby. "I knew all this ages ago."

"I'm just coming to the point, old chap," said Trimble, speaking as if he and Digby were bosom friends. "The fact is, I want you to do me a favour. I want you to arrange to sit next to me at the exam, and give me a few tips from time to time. Don't glare at me like that, Dig—it's only a small favour that I'm asking! I know you're a jolly good scholar, and I'm afraid I shall make an awful hash of the exam unless there's somebody on the spot to help me. I won't want to win the exam; at the same time, I want to finish well up in the list. If I'm among the 'also rans' I shall get into old Lathom's black books. You quite understand, don't you, old fellow?"

Digby was on his feet. His eyes were blazing.

"You—you fat toad!" he exclaimed angrily. "You're too lazy to swot for the exam, and you want me to help you!"

"That's it!" said Trimble eagerly. "But I wish you wouldn't look so upset about it. Anybody would think I was asking you to lend me a fiver!"

"I'd much rather lend you a fiver than enter into an arrangement that's downright dishonest!"

"Oh, all right!" said Baggy. "I'll have the fiver!"

Digby fairly gasped. There seemed to be no limit to the amazing "nerve" of Baggy Trimble.

"You—you—" spluttered Digby. "I won't waste any more words on you!"

And he snatched up a cricket stump and rushed at Baggy Trimble.

With a gasp of alarm, Baggy turned to

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see. But he tripped up on the carpet, and tumbled forward—in a very convenient position for receiving corporal punishment.

Digby "piled in" with the cricket stump. The village blacksmith swinging his heavy hammer could not have displayed more energy and vigour.

"Whack, whack, whack!"

"Yarooooh!"

The dust rose in clouds from the seat of Baggy Trimble's trousers. And the fat junior's yells of anguish fairly awakened the echoes.

Digby got in half-a-dozen lusty swipes before Babby Trimble was able to scramble through the doorway. And even then Baggy's ordeal was not over, for Digby chased him the length of the passage, hitting out as he went.

Baggy roared as he ran.

"Help! Fire! Murder! Keep him off! He's gone mad! It's the heat, I expect!"

But there was no one at hand to heed Baggy's wild cries! Everybody was out of doors on that sultry afternoon.

The castigation was over at last, and Digby, panting from his exertions, beat a retreat to his own quarters.

Baggy Trimble, still under the impression that he was being pursued, fled into the box-room, and barricaded the door. Then he sank down to a trunk belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, and groaned aloud in dire anguish.

And the burden of his plaint was:

"Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Missing!

DIGBY of the Fourth worked long and late that evening.

He had obtained permission from his Form-master to stay up beyond the usual bed-time, and by the light of an electric reading-lamp he swooned his way through solid chapters of English history.

Boom!

It was the first stroke of eleven, sounding from the old clock-tower.

Digby raised his head with a start. He counted the strokes, and was surprised to find it was so late. He had been so absorbed in his studies that he had failed to notice the flight of time.

Digby rose to his feet with a yawn, and put away his books, and papers.

"Think I'll be toddling up to bed," he murmured. "I've done enough work for to-day. I feel absolutely fagged out, and my head's going round and round!"

He switched off the light, and groped his way along the passage and up the broad staircase leading to the dormitories.

Digby's head throbbled painfully as he toiled up the stairs. He began to realise that he had been overdoing it. As a rule, Digby was an open-air fellow, and several hours' sweating in a stuffy study had reduced him to a state of mental exhaustion. But he would have to keep it up if he hoped to win the Governors' Prize, for Dick Brooke, who had beaten him a year before, was a born scholar. Brooke was the genius; Digby was the plodder. It would be a close battle between the two.

"That you, Dig?"

Jack Blake asked the question as Digby came stumbling into the Fourth-Form dormitory.

"Yes," answered Digby wearily.

"You don't mean to say you've been swooning all this time?"

"I have."

"My hat! You'd better go easy, Dig, unless you're sickening for an attack of brain-fever!"

There was a chuckle from Baggy Trimble's bed.

"How can a fellow get brain-fever when he's got no brains?" asked Baggy.

The conundrum remained unanswered. Jack Blake leaned out of bed, and picked up his shoe, and hurled it with unerring aim at the huge mound of bedclothes under which Baggy Trimble lay.

"Yarooooh!"

A yell of anguish rang through the night. So piercing was Baggy's shriek that quite a number of fellows awoke.

"What's the wumpus, deah boys?" asked Arthur Augustus drowsily.

"Trimble was trying to be funny, so I shied a shoe at him," said Blake. "I say!

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It's past eleven, and old Dig's only just come up to bed. He'll be knocking himself up if he goes on like this."

"Yaas, wathah! You'll have to ease up a bit, Dig."

Arthur Augustus, never a revengeful fellow, had already forgiven Digby for ejecting him from the study.

Digby undressed and got into bed, and the buzz of conversation continued.

Sounds of steady snoring came from the direction of Baggy Trimble's bed.

"The fat porpoise seems to have dropped off very suddenly," said Herries. "He was wide awake a minute ago, when Blake's shoe hit him."

As a matter of fact, Trimble was wide-awake now, but it suited him to pretend otherwise.

A brilliant brain-wave had occurred to Baggy. Digby had refused to help him in the Governors' Exam, so Baggy had been thinking out ways and means of dodging that dreadful ordeal. For to dodge it he must. If he sat for the exam he would make a shocking hash of it, and finish at the bottom of the list. Mr. Latham would be very angry, and it would probably mean a severe licking.

How could Baggy dodge the coming ordeal?

He had already hit upon a plan. Before going to bed he had read a book dealing with sleep-walking. He had discovered that people who suffered from an excited condition of the brain—often brought on by over-study—were very prone to sleep-walking.

Baggy, therefore, had resolved to do a little play-acting. He would pretend to walk in his sleep, and he would make the school authorities so alarmed that they would send him to the sanny, where he could be kept under supervision. By this means he would dodge the exam.

It was quite a good scheme. But would it work? The best-laid schemes of mice and men—and porpoises—are apt to go wrong. And it was possible that Baggy Trimble wasn't such a clever play-actor as he imagined.

Baggy continued to snore—not too loudly, lest another shoe should be hurled at him. And when the voices of Jack Blake & Co. grew drowsy Baggy realised that it was time to act.

The fat junior stepped out of bed.

A faint shaft of moonlight fell upon Baggy's figure. He stood erect in his pyjamas, debating whether or not to put on his clothes. Did sleep-walkers usually do that? he asked himself. No, he didn't think they did.

Walking stiffly, and with ponderous steps, Baggy Trimble moved to the door.

"Trimble!"

Several voices shouted the name in chorus. Baggy took no heed. He walked straight ahead, with wildly staring eyes.

"Come back, you duffah!" called Arthur Augustus.

There was no reply. The podgy form of Baggy Trimble disappeared from view.

"Where's he gone, I wonder?" said Digby.

"To raid the kitchen, you bet," said Jack Blake.

"But he was sound asleep, and snoring, a few minutes ago!" protested Herries.

"I expect he woke up suddenly, and felt peckish."

"We'd better go an' bwing him back, deah boys!" said Arthur Augustus.

The juniors slipped out of bed. They put on their dressing-gowns and slippers, and hurried from the dormitory.

Baggy Trimble had had a good start, and he was not to be seen.

The Fourth-formers trooped down the stairs, Jack Blake leading the way with his electric torch.

On reaching the foot of the stairs, Blake halted. Like Moses' of old, he looked this way and that way, and there was no man.

"Dashed if I know which way the fat boulder went!" said Blake. "But I think we shall be on the right track if we go along to the kitchen."

"Yaas, wathah! Lead on, deah boy!"

The procession made its way to the school kitchen. The door was locked, and had not been tampered with.

"Wrong scent!" said Herries. "Where on earth has the fat boulder got to?"

"We'll soon find out," said Blake. "Come on!"

The juniors retraced their steps, Jack Blake flashing his torch the length of the corridor.

"There he is!" exclaimed Digby suddenly. A fat figure came into view from the direction of the Fourth Form passage.

There was a swift patter of feet, and Baggy Trimble was surrounded.

"Trimble!"

"Where have you been, you ass?"

No reply. Baggy Trimble walked on mechanically, knocking Arthur Augustus out of his path.

"Ow!" gasped the Swell of St. Jim's, reeling against the wall.

Jack Blake grabbed Trimble by the collar of his pyjamas and shook him violently. And Baggy gave tongue at last.

"Yow-ow-ow! Stop shaking me like that, Blake, you beast! Can't you see I'm walking in my sleep?"

"W-w-what?" gasped Blake.

"It's dangerous to shake a fellow like that when he's sleepwalking," Trimble went on. "You should lead him gently back to his bed. If you use violence, you might give him a sudden shock—"

"But you're not sleepwalking, you frah-jous chump!" howled Blake.

"Yes, I am! I mean, I was, up to a minute ago, when you went and woke me up. If you find me walking in my sleep again, I hope you'll be more gentle. It's over-study, you know, that's what it is—brain excitement. I've been swooning for the Governors' Exam—"

"What a whoppah!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "You haven't done a stwoke of pwpewapation, you jazy slackah!"

Jack Blake gave Baggy a further violent shake.

"What have you been up to?" he demanded.

"Yow! How do I know? When a fellow walks in his sleep, he can't account for his movements. Fellows do weird things in their sleep. I once knew a chap who balanced himself on the top of the school flagstaff—"

Jack Blake cut short Baggy's reminiscences.

"This way!" he said grimly. And Baggy Trimble was frog-marched back to bed. He was told that if he got up to any more tricks that night there would be trouble.

The "sleepwalking" incident did not end there. The morning brought a startling sequel.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy announced, in great distress, that his wallet, containing a ten-pound note, was missing.

It was not the loss of the money that distressed D'Arcy. It was the thought that there was a thief in the place.

"This is jolly serious, Gussy!" said Blake gravely. "Where was your wallet?"

"In the pocket of my cwicket blazah, which was hangin' up behind the door of the study. When I changed coats last night, I forgot to transfer the wallet from my blazah to my Eton jacket."

"The wallet must have been taken during the night," said Herries.

"Pweicsey!"

The juniors looked grave and thoughtful. Instantly they recalled Baggy Trimble's sleepwalking stunt. Baggy had been seen coming from the direction of the Fourth Form passage, in the middle of the night—a circumstance which gave rise to dark suspicion.

Trimble was not a thief in the worst sense of the word. He raided supplies of food occasionally, either from the kitchen or from other fellows' studies. But he left money alone.

Gussy's wallet was gone, and Gussy was certain he had left it in the pocket of his blazer. Only two fellows had had access to it during the night—Digby, who had been working late, and Trimble, who had been seen coming from the Fourth Form passage.

Nobody dreamed of suspecting Digby. He was honest as the day. Even had he been in desperate financial straits—and he was not—he would never have robbed a pal. Everything pointed to the fact that the theft had been committed by Trimble.

The fat junior was cornered in the quadrangle, and subjected to searching questions. He was also made to turn out his pockets.

Baggy stoutly denied having taken the wallet, and there was no sign of it on his

person. Moreover, his denial seemed to ring true. He fairly bubbled over with righteous indignation; and he was not play-acting now.

The juniors were baffled. They were up against a first-class mystery, and there seemed to be no solution.

Tom Merry & Co. were informed of the loss of the wallet, and they were no less troubled than the Fourth-Formers. They promised to keep their eyes and ears open, and to get on the track of the missing wallet, if possible. And there the matter was left, for the time being, without any of the authorities having been notified of the theft.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Startling Developments!**

TUMBLE out, Monty!" Tom Merry shook Monty Lowther into a state of wakefulness.

It was eleven o'clock, and St. Jim's lay still and silent under the moonbeams.

"Tain't rising-bell yet!" grumbled Lowther.

"I know it isn't. But we arranged to turn out at eleven, and keep watch. Get a move on, Monty!"

Lowther rose reluctantly. And Manners, when he was roused, turned out even more reluctantly. But they felt better when they had shaken off their drowsiness.

"Think we shall see anything, Tommy?" asked Lowther.

"There's no telling," said Tom Merry. "Praps the thief will be content with taking Gussy's wallet, and won't bother to do any more burglary stunts. On the other hand, he might get up to the same game to-night. We'll keep watch on the landing; then we shall be able to see if anybody leaves the Fourth Form dorm., or this one."

In slipped feet, the Terrible Three stole noiselessly out on to the landing.

There was no window on the landing, so the moonlight was not admitted, and the place was in darkness.

For twenty minutes the watchers remained there; and they were just beginning to grow fidgety, when they heard the creak of a door. Faintly, through the gloom, they discerned a figure coming out of the Fourth Form dormitory.

The Terrible Three drew back, and stood flat against the wall, scarcely daring to breathe.

The figure walked past them with a heavy, ponderous tread. He was within arm's length of them, but they did not touch him. They waited to see what he was going to do.

It was Baggy Trimble whom they had seen. And they strained their eyes through the gloom, and saw Baggy start to descend the stairs.

"After him!" whispered Tom Merry, almost inaudibly.

Walking on tiptoe, the three juniors set off in the wake of Baggy Trimble.

Not once did the fat junior turn his head. Holding on to the banister-rail, he went straight down the stairs.

As they carried out their noiseless pursuit, the Terrible Three felt convinced that Trimble, despite his denials, had stolen the wallet. And they could not doubt that he was now going on another errand of a similar nature.

With grim faces, the three juniors followed Baggy Trimble to the Fourth Form passage. They were close up behind him now, but still he appeared neither to see nor hear them.

It was at the door of Study No. 6 that Trimble halted. And the worst fears of the juniors were confirmed.

"Collar him!"

Tom Merry's voice rang out suddenly and sharply.

The juniors closed with Baggy Trimble in the gloom, and he struggled and protested.

"Hands off! Help! Burglars! Thieves!"

"Thief yourself!" said Tom Merry sharply.

"You were going into that study!"

"What if I was?" said Trimble. "A fellow can't help where he goes when he's walking in his sleep!"

"Why, you fat fool!" shouted Manners. "If you were walking in your sleep, how could you speak to us like this?"

"I'm walking and talking in my sleep at the same time!" said Trimble.

Monty Lowther burst out laughing. But his companions didn't laugh. They felt that it was too serious a matter to admit of levity.

"It's quite obvious, Trimble," said Tom Merry sternly, "that it was you who stole Gussy's wallet last night. Your sleepwalking yarn cuts no ice with us, and it will cut no ice with the Head. You'll be sacked from the school, you mad idiot!"

"Oh, really, Merry—"

"You can abandon all hope of making a further haul to-night," said Tom. "Come along! We'll take you back to your dorm."

"Don't handle me roughly, then! It's dangerous to be violent to sleepwalkers! I once knew a fellow who knew a fellow who was friends with a fellow who walked in his sleep. And somebody thought he was shamming, and punched him on the nose, and he never got over it! Yow-ow-ow! You're frog-marching me, you beasts!"

That was precisely what the Terrible Three were doing. But they had not proceeded very far with their victim when Manners gave a sudden start.

"Look!" he muttered.

A pyjama-clad figure was coming along the passage. It was impossible, at a distance, to identify the figure. But when it drew nearer, the juniors saw that it was Robert Arthur Digby.

Digby dropped down into the quad, and made his way across it. His figure stood out in bold relief in the moonlight.

The Terrible Three followed hard on the heels of the sleepwalker. He crossed the quad, and halted at the stump of a hollow tree, over against the school wall.

Into the bole of the tree Digby dropped the camera. Then he proceeded to cover it up with leaves and twigs.

"I expect we shall find Gussy's wallet in there," said Tom Merry.

And so it proved. The sleepwalker started to make his way back to the building, and Tom Merry, removing the layer of leaves and twigs, discovered not only the camera, but the wallet belonging to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. The ten-pound note was intact.

Having recovered the spoils, the juniors hurried off after Digby, in order to see that he came to no harm. They need not have worried about him, for he clambered in through the box-room window, and made his way with unerring tread back to his dormitory. He got into bed, laid his head on the pillow, and went on sleeping peacefully.

Thus was the mystery solved. The wallet was restored to Arthur Augustus in the morning, and the ban of suspicion was removed from Baggy Trimble,



THE MIDNIGHT TRACKERS! Digby dropped from the window into the Close, and made his way across it. The Terrible Three followed hard on his heels. The junior crossed the quad, and halted at the stump of a hollow tree, over against the school wall. Into the hole of the tree Digby dropped the camera. (See Chapter 3.)

With a mechanical step, Digby came on. He looked neither to the right nor to the left. His eyes were staring straight ahead, and he walked past the group of juniors as if unaware of their presence.

"He's—he's sleepwalking!" muttered Tom Merry.

And Manners and Lowther nodded, while Baggy Trimble looked quite scared.

Digby halted at the door of Study No. 6. He groped for the door-handle, and turned it, and stepped into the apartment.

"Going to stop him, Tommy?" murmured Lowther.

"No. Let's wait and see what he does."

The juniors could hear Digby moving about inside the study. They heard the lid of a desk being lifted, and presently the sleepwalker came out, carrying a camera. The camera belonged to Blake.

Digby repassed the juniors—again without recognising their presence. They followed him down the passage, and into the box-room. They saw him clamber through the window, and they followed suit—with the exception of Trimble. Baggy's nerves were thoroughly shaken on seeing a real sleepwalker, and he scuttled away to his dormitory.

who had certainly asked for trouble by pretending to walk in his sleep.

The most amazed person, when he learned what had happened, was Digby.

"First time I've ever walked in my sleep, so far as I know," he said. "I can't think why I should do such a thing."

"You've been swotting too hard," said Jack Blake. "You'd better ease up at once, or you'll be getting an attack of brain-faver. Take my advice, and get Lathom's permission not to sit for the Governor's Exam."

Digby, however, was determined that all his labours should not be in vain. He not only sat for the exam, but he came through with flying colours, and won handsomely, thereby turning the tables on Dick Brooke.

Baggy Trimble also sat for the exam, though he tried hard to wriggle out of it.

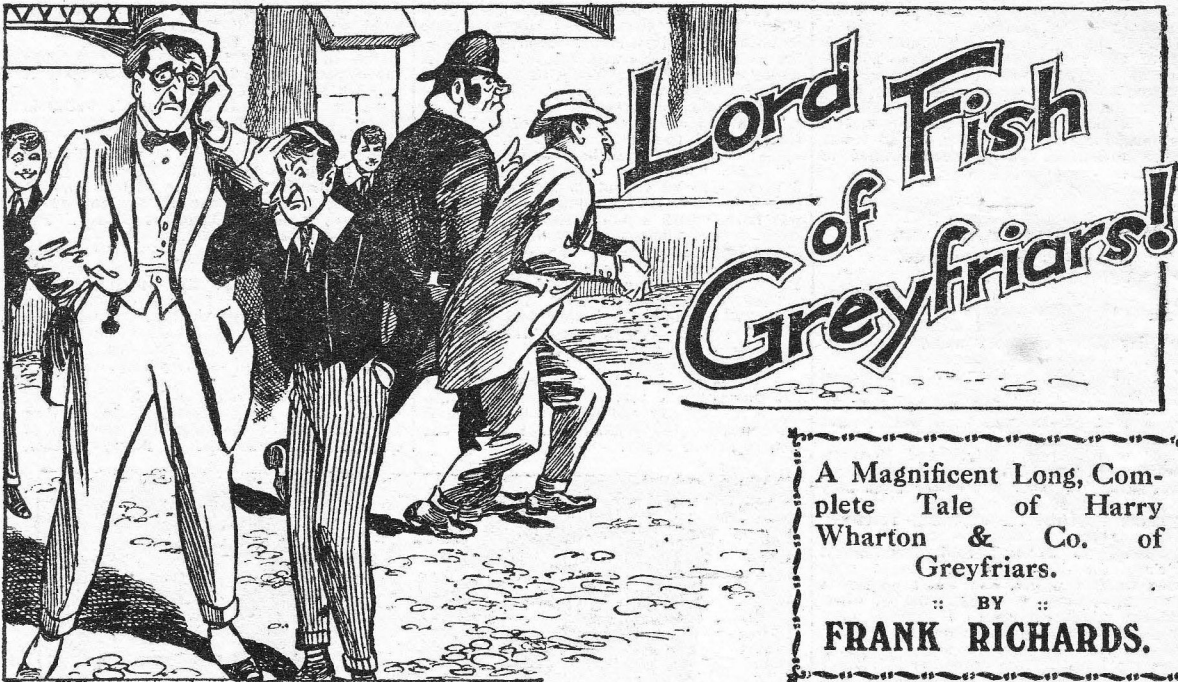
The highest possible number of marks was 150. Digby finished first with 144; Trimble finished last with 32. The fat junior was called over the coals by his Form master, who taxed him with being slack and slothful, and did not spare the rod.

THE END.
(There will be another topping story of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's in next week's issue.)

A SWINDLER SWINDLED!

His own name was not good enough for Fisher T. Fish so, with the help of a certain party, he added a handle, and felt that Lord Fish was far more imposing . . . but—!

THE BOY FROM THE STATES AGAIN!



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

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
A Licking for Lord Fish!**

FISHER T. FISH, the American junior in the Remove Form at Greyfriars, was, to use one of his own expressions, "going it some."

It was a letter from his father which started the whole affair. By some means Hiram K. Fish, of New York, had heard that he was a direct descendant of Baron Fyshe de Fyshe. A gentleman in the Heralds' Office, who gave the name of Sharp, was looking into the claim—in fact it was he who first suggested that Hiram K. should really be the Earl de Fyshe.

That made out that Fisher T. Fish of the Remove was Viscount Fish, since he was his father's eldest son. Fisher T. Fish lost no time in impressing upon the incredulous Removites that he was a real lord—and whilst not believing him, they cheerfully dubbed him Lord Fish—a title which stuck to him.

"Lord" Fish managed to make himself objectionable to Johnny Bull, with whom he shared a study in the Remove passage. His lordship promptly went out on his neck, and Johnny had kept him out of his study ever since.

The climax came when Fish discovered an inscription cut in a stone in the old priory near the school. Skinner, the cad of the Remove, became greatly interested at that, and declared that there must be some connection between the ancient Fyshes and Greyfriars. A search in the library brought to light a piece of parchment, clearly showing that there had been Fyshe de Fyshe at Greyfriars. With that document in his hand, and scarcely able to believe his good fortune, Fisher T. Fish rode out to the village to see his father.

When he had gone, Skinner was heard to murmur that parchments were so easy to write upon—and so easy to make look ancient. From that the Removites deduced that Skinner knew how that parchment document had got into the school library!

The Removites were still chuckling over the incident when they went in for roll-call.

Mr. Quetch began his task quickly—he wanted to get on with the now famous "History of Greyfriars."

"Fish!"

Mr. Quetch rapped out the name snappishly. The Remove master was taking call-over, and Fisher T. Fish did not respond to his name.

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"Fish!"

But no voice replied "Adsum," and the Form-master marked down Fish as absent.

The Removites grinned as they streamed out of Big Hall after calling-over. Fisher T. Fish had not come in yet. After the discovery of that documentary proof of the greatness of the old-time Fyshes, the American junior had more important matters to think about than calling-over. The juniors could picture him in excited consultation with Hiram K. Fish over that valuable document, and they chuckled at the thought. They wondered, too, what Mr. Sharp would think of it. That Mr. Sharp was a mere swindler, and was taking in the egregious Mr. Fish, nobody doubted. Two or three fellows had cycled out to the old priory to see the inscription. And it was quite clear to a keen observer that the inscription was of quite recent date, and there was little doubt that Mr. Sharp himself had cut the words on the stone, all ready to be discovered in the presence of the credulous American gentleman. Hiram K. Fish was so dazzled by the possibility of proving his claim to a noble title, that he seemed to have left all his keenness behind him in New York.

It was a considerable time after locking-up when Fish returned to the school. He dismounted from his bicycle outside the gates, and rang the bell, and Gosling came out grunting to let him in.

"Which you're to report yourself to Mr. Quetch," growled Gosling. "And wot I says is this 'ere—"

Fish waved a lofty hand.

"None of your impertinence, my man!" he said.

Gosling stared.

"Wot?" he ejaculated.

"No impertinence. Just you remember your place!" said Fish severely. "I don't allow any impertinent remarks to be made to me, and don't you forget it!"

"Well, my heye!" murmured Gosling.

"And touch your hat when you speak to me, too," said Fish. "Don't you know your manners, my man? Servants here are treated with far too much leniency. I'd keep 'em in their place, I guess! Not a word! Shut up!"

And Fish wheeled his bicycle in, leaving the school-porter positively dumbfounded. Fisher T. Fish's new sentiments were certainly a little out of place in a youth who came from that great country where Jack is as good as his master, and where every

citizen is as good as every other citizen or a little better. But Fish's sentiments had changed marvellously since his discovery that he was of noble blood. Viscount Fish, son and heir of Lord de Fyshe, was quite a different person from Fisher T. Fish, son of Hiram K. Fish of Wall Street, New York. Fish was developing a snobbishness and insolence that entertained the Remove fellows immensely, and exasperated some of them.

Lord Fish put up his bicycle, and strolled into the School House. He was even in some doubt as to whether he should take the trouble to report himself to Mr. Quetch at all. It was really absurd that a member of the old nobility should bother his head about a mere, commonplace Form-master. But Fish decided that he had better. His noble blood would not save him from a caning if he failed to obey orders; though his noble blood almost boiled at the thought of punishment from a commoner. According to Fish's new views, there was something decidedly wrong in a school where a Lord de Fyshe could be named by any commonplace Smith or Jones. If F. T. Fish had been born in the purple, he could not have been more tenacious of the rights of privileges of the aristocracy.

He sauntered to Mr. Quetch's study, tapped carelessly on the door, and opened it. Mr. Quetch's typewriter was clicking; the Form-master was engaged upon his famous literary work, which occupied most of his spare time, and he looked round with a frown, not liking the interruption. And his frown deepened at the sight of Fish, and his careless bearing. There was a sort of suppressed impertinence in Fisher T. Fish's manner, as of a person of great consequence who was forced by circumstances to report himself to an inferior.

"Ah! It is you, Fish!" said Mr. Quetch. "Yep!" Fisher T. Fish had not yet succeeded in changing "Yep" into "Yaas"; old habits were not so easily broken.

Mr. Quetch's eyes glittered.

"Yes what?" he said.

"Yes, sir," amended Fish, not quite liking the look in his Form-master's eyes.

"You werb not present at calling-over, Fish."

"Nope!"

"Where were you?"

"I guess I've been to Courtfield to see my popper—I mean, my pater, sir."

"Did you have permission to remain out after locking-up?"

"Nope!"

Next Week's Ripping Greyfriars Story—"For His Brother's Sake!"

"Then I shall cane you, Fish. Give me the cane from my table."

Mr. Quelch was seated at his typing-desk, and did not feel inclined to rise from it for the unimportant purpose of caning a junior. "Ahem!" said Fish, hesitating. "The fact is, sir, I had rather important business with my popper, sir, so I hope you will excuse me."

"If that is the fact, that alters the case," said Mr. Quelch. "But you must explain why you were prevented from returning in time for calling-over."

"Important business, sir."

"That is not sufficient, Fish."

"Well, sir, I found an important document in the school library, and I took it over for my popper to see," said Fish.

"What! Do you mean to tell me, Fish, that you have taken away a document from the library without permission?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch angrily.

"It was really a family document, sir—dealing with the connection between Greyfriars and Lord de Fyshe, an ancestor of mine."

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"It has come out, sir, that I am descended from the Fyshe de Fyshe, a great family that lived hereabouts," explained Fish. "We've got an agent from the Herald's Office collecting evidence for us. I found a document in the library that let in some light on the subject, so I thought my popper ought to see it. It was part of a list of donations made to this school hundreds of years ago by the sixth Baron de Fyshe."

"How dare you tell me such nonsense, Fish! There was no such document in the school library at all!"

"I guess I found it there, sir."

"You have made some absurd mistake. I have read every paper in the library, and know the contents of them all perfectly well. I have never heard of a family named De Fyshe, and certainly no donations were ever made to Greyfriars by anyone of that name."

Fisher T. Fish was a little staggered. As Mr. Quelch's great literary work was a history of Greyfriars, and as he had the whole subject at his finger-tips, certainly he should have known about that document.

It was very peculiar indeed that he should have overlooked that parchment, written in plain English, when he had taken the trouble to read through so many old manuscripts in black-letter and monkish Latin.

"But I've seen it in black and white, sir," stammered Fish.

"Nonsense! You have made some ridiculous mistake! But, in any case, you have no right to take a document from the school library. It was an act of the most astounding impertinence. Have you brought it back with you?"

"Nope! It's really a family document, sir, and I've left it with my popper. He wants to show it to our inquiry-agent."

"Absurd! It must be immediately restored. I will telephone to your father and explain to him that it must be sent back here immediately. You have acted in a most insolent manner, Fish. I shall cane you severely! Give me my cane!"

"But, sir—"

"My cane, Fish!"

"But I guess—"

"Will you hand me my cane, Fish, or will you not?" said Mr. Quelch, his voice sounding like the rumble of distant thunder. "Nope!" said Fish desperately. "You've no right to cane me, sir."

"What!"

"I'm a nobleman, sir, and noblemen oughtn't to be caned," said Fish. "Noblemen are always treated with distinction in properly-managed schools. I don't believe in all this modern democratic rot. A nobleman's a noble, and—"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "I really believe that you are taking leave of your senses, Fish. However, I shall cane you. It may have the effect of bringing you back to your wits."

And Mr. Quelch jumped up, seized his cane, and caned Fisher T. Fish on the spot, with such energy that the howls of Lord Fish ran along the passage. Then he bundled him out of the study, and Fisher T. Fish went groaning down the passage, squeezing his hands and rubbing his shoulders, and feeling that life was not worth

living for a nobleman who was thus placed at the mercy of inconsiderate members of the lower classes.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Spoof!

HIRAM K. FISH walked in at the gates of Greyfriars the next day. Morning lessons were just over, and the Close was crowded with fellows, who greeted the Duke of New York, as they called him, with smiles.

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth lined up, and took off their caps and bowed to the ground; and Tubb of the Third performed an imitation of the Chinese kow-tow with great success. Skinner bent a humble knee as Mr. Fish passed into the House, with a puzzled expression upon his face.

It was only right, of course, that a gentleman whose claims to noble distinction were recognised should be treated with great respect; but Hiram K. Fish could not help thinking that the Greyfriars fellows were overdoing it.

Mr. Fish was calling on the Remove master, who had telephoned to him concerning the document his son had taken from the school library.

Fisher T. Fish joined his father, and piloted him to Mr. Quelch's study.

"I guess you're not going to part with that document, popper?" asked Fish anxiously. "It's too valuable a piece of evidence to lose, you know. And Sharp hasn't seen it yet."

Hiram K. Fish nodded.

"I guess I shall have to leave it here, Fisher," he said. "But I'm going to arrange for Mr. Sharp to come here and see it. After all, it will be safe here, I guess. Of course, I shall impress upon your master the importance of taking every care of it."

He knocked at Mr. Quelch's door and entered, followed in by Fisher T. Fish. The junior was very keen to see the effect produced upon Mr. Quelch by the sight of the famous document. He hoped to see the Remove master completely crushed by that telling proof that the Fishes were, in point of fact, an old and honoured family, and entitled to put on as much side as they deemed fit.

Mr. Quelch bowed formally to the American gentleman.

"You have brought back the paper which your son took from the school library, Mr. Fish?" he asked.

"Yep," said Mr. Fish. "Hyer it is. But I guess that document is an important one, sir; and I hope every care will be taken of it. It may be needed in the case I am making out with the assistance of a Herald's Office expert, proving my descent from the Fyshe de Fyshe family, and my claim to their title."

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"I know nothing about that," he said. "If reference is required to any of the documents here, the Head will always give permission. But your son did very wrong in taking the document away. It must be restored to its place."

"Yep! I guess that's all O K," agreed Mr. Fish, as he laid the valuable document on the table. "Hyer it is, safe and sound."

Mr. Quelch picked up the parchment and looked at it. A perplexed expression came over his face, and then the severe features broke into a smile.

"This is the document Fish took from the library?" he asked.

"Yep."

"Then there is no objection whatever to your retaining it," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "As it happens, this does not belong to the school collection."

"Nope?" Mr. Fish was perplexed. "But my son found it with the others."

"Then it was placed there by some practical joker, I presume. It has no value whatever, excepting its price as a piece of parchment, which is not great."

"Waal! But ain't this one of the old historical documents of Greyfriars?" exclaimed Mr. Fish, in astonishment.

"Nothing of the kind. I have never seen it before: If you had a closer acquaintance with such things, Mr. Fish, you would probably have observed that the writing upon it is quite modern."

"What!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"In fact, it has probably not been written more than a few days," said Mr. Quelch, trying not to smile. "It is some joke of the boys, I suppose. I am very well acquainted with the history of Greyfriars, and I have certainly never heard of any donations to the school by a family of the name of De Fyshe. I strongly doubt whether such a family has ever existed in this country."

"Waal, I swear!" ejaculated Mr. Fish, in dismay.

"Oh, come off!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish indignantly. "We've got proof of the existence of the De Fyshe in an inscription at the old priory."

"Indeed! Of that I know nothing. But I can assure you, Mr. Fish, that this document is of no value whatever. As it does not belong to Greyfriars, you are at liberty to take it away if you choose to do so."

"B-b-but how came it there, then?" stammered Fisher T. Fish. "I found it in the drawer with the other documents and manuscripts, sir."

"I suppose it was placed there for a joke," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "Indeed, I seem to detect a resemblance between this writing and that of a member of my Form."

"Oh crumbs! That villain Skinner!" groaned Fish. "That was why the mugwump gave me the tip to search in the school records. He was pulling my leg!"

"Taken in!" growled Mr. Fish wrathfully. "You silly young jay, Fisher, you ought to have had more hoss-sense! I hope, sir, that you will cane the young scoundrel who worked off this disrespectful practical joke!"

"It is not my custom to interfere with such things," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "Fish appears to have made himself ridiculous, and his Form-fellows have played a prank upon him in consequence. I shall take no notice of it."

"I guess—"

"You may take this document with you, sir, if you choose."

"I reckon I'll leave it hyer," said Mr. Fish discontentedly. "If it ain't genuine it's no use to me. Good-morning, sir!"

"Good-morning!"

Mr. Fish left the study, followed by the dismayed Fisher T. The elder Fish's face was dark. The discovery that the document was "spooft" was a heavy blow to his golden dreams.

"I guess this is rotten, Fisher!" he growled. "And I've already told Sharp to come here to see the document. Still, we can do without it. There's plenty of other evidence, according to Sharp; and that pedigree from the Herald's Office ought to settle the matter. How do your friends here take it, now you've told them about your descent from the Fyshe de Fyshe? Thundertruck—what?"

"Nope," said Fish moodily. "They don't take any stock in it."

"They seem to be treating me powerful respectful, though," remarked Mr. Fish, as he came out of the School House, and Skinner and Bolsover major took of their caps and bowed till their noses nearly touched the ground.

Fisher T. Fish did not venture to tell his parent that the young rascals of the Remove were simply "pulling his leg."

Mr. Fish departed, his son seeing him off at the gates; and then Fisher T. Fish came back to speak to Skinner, breathing fury.

"How's the case getting on?" asked Skinner affably. "I suppose that documentary evidence will simply knock the House of Lords into a cocked hat—what?"

"You rotter!"

"Eh? Hasn't your popper handed out a tip for me for putting you up to finding that document?" asked Skinner in astonishment. "You jay!" howled Fish. "You spoofted me! Quelch's seen the document, and he says that it ain't genuine!"

"Oh, shush!" said Skinner. "What does Quelch know about it? More likely he's jealous of the Fyshe de Fyshe. Nobody's likely to discover that he's descended from the Quelch de Quelches!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you make out your case, Fishy, I'm going to have a try to prove my descent from the Skin de Skinners!" said the humorist of the Remove calmly.

"You—you mugwump! I guess I've a

jolly good mind to wipe up the ground with you!" yelled Fish.

"Well, come on and do it," said Skinner. "Yah! I despise you too much to lick you!" snorted Fish. "I decline to soil my hands on you! Yah!"

And Fisher T. Fish stalked away in great wrath. Later in the day the valuable document was rescued from Mr. Quelch's waste-paper basket and pinned up on the wall in the junior Common-room.

There it caused howls of laughter, till Fisher T. Fish found it and tore it down, and consigned it to the flames. And for the rest of that day, about every quarter of an hour, somebody was sure to ask the American junior if he had discovered any more De Fyshe documents—until Fisher T. Fish was almost in a homicidal frame of mind.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Signature Required!

"Ha, ha, ha!" Fisher T. Fish snorted as he passed Study No. 1 on the following day. There was a sound of laughter in the study, and Fish had no doubt that he was the subject of it. Like the gentleman in the comedy, who was certain that people were talking about him because they "laughed consuemedly," Fisher T. Fish never heard a ripple of laughter in those days without guessing that his title and noble blood were being discussed.

"Rotters!" murmured Fish; and in his indignation he bestowed a kick upon the door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came Bob Cherry's voice from within. "Clear off! Can't come in now!"

"I guess I don't want to come in, you jays! I guess a fellow of my family is rather particular whom he mixes with!" snorted Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I guess you'll snigger on the other side of your silly mouths when my title is recognised by the House of Peers!" growled Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Fish grunted and passed on. The Famous Five were busy in the study, and several fellows who had passed the door had heard suppressed chuckles, and wondered what was on.

Fish went down discontentedly to the junior Common-room. There he found some consolation in perusing the society column of a newspaper, which contained such valuable information as that Lord Bareacres had returned from the Continent, and that Lady Fozzle had taken a house in Grosvenor Square for the season; and the Marquis of Doozle had gone to Scotland, and the Duke of Boozle had come away from Scotland; and Lord Snoozle was shortly expected to rejoin Lady Snoozle at Snoozle Park; and Sir Hoozle Goozle had lately become engaged to the Honourable Miss Goozle. News of that kind was a great solace to Fisher T. Fish, as to every true democrat.

He was so intent upon the movements and the doings of those celebrated people that he hardly noticed a buzz in the passage outside the Common-room. But he started, and laid down the paper as he heard his own name mentioned.

"Is Master Fish here?" Fisher T. Fish rose to his feet. It was a deep voice that inquired for him, and he wondered whom it could belong to. "He's here, sir," answered the voice of Bob Cherry. "I think he's in the Common-room." Bob looked into the room. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Fishy, here's somebody to see you!"

A fat, imposing-looking personage walked into the room. He had a round, red face, adorned with white whiskers, and he wore gold-rimmed glasses of a large size. He carried a shining silk hat in his hand, and his head was completely bald. There was a ribbon in his buttonhole, with a medal attached, and two or three more medals fastened upon his frock-coat.

Evidently he was a personage of considerable consequence, and Fish's heart beat as he came to meet him. It occurred to him at once that this was some bigwig, who had heard of the claims of Fyshe de Fyshe.

The fat gentleman blinked at him over his big glasses.

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"Master Fish?" he asked.

"I guess so."

"Or, more correctly speakin', Viscount Fish, son and heir of Earl de Fyshe?" asked the stranger.

Fisher T. Fish drew a deep breath, and glanced round triumphantly at the juniors in the Common-room. Nearly all the Remove and a great many of the Fourth were there, and they were looking on in wonder. The imposing-looking stranger had made a great impression upon the juniors.

"That's me," said Fish, eagerly and ungrammatically. "Glad to see you, sir."

"There is no doubt about your identity, I suppose?" said the fat gentleman, blinking at him. "If you are Fisher Tarleton Fish, the son of Lord Fyshe, I have a most important communication to make to you."

"Any of these galoots will tell you that I'm Fish," said the American junior eagerly.

"What's the news?" "That's Fish right enough, sir," said Bolsover major.

"Very good! My name is De Courcy—General de Courcy, of the Herald's Office," said the fat gentleman. "I have a most important communication to make. The claim of Lord de Fyshe has come before us, and has been examined, and is fully admitted."

"Waal, I swear!"

"Admitted!" yelled Bolsover major. "Do you mean to tell us that that skinny bouncer is really a lord?"

"Undoubtedly. He is Viscount Fyshe, as certainly as I am General de Courcy."

"I guess it's time for you mugwumps to climb down now," said Fisher T. Fish, with a sneer. "What do you say now—hey?"

"I don't believe it, for one," said Bolsover.

"If you can't be civil to General de Courcy, Bolsover, you'd better shut up!" snapped Fisher T. Fish. "I'm much obliged to you for coming down to tell me this, sir!"

"Not at all," said the general, waving a hand that glistened with rings, which must have been worth a fortune, if they were worth anything at all. "It is simply my duty as head of the h-m—Herald's Office, in the Sealing-Wax and Lead-Pencil Department of his Majesty's Government. I have a little business to do with you, my lord."

The juniors caught their breath. When they heard that imposing gentleman, glistening with medals, address Fisher T. Fish as "my lord," it made them gasp. Even Bolsover major began to doubt. Harry Wharton & Co. looked excessively serious. They seemed to be more impressed than anyone else by the gentleman from the Sealing-Wax and Lead-Pencil Department of his Majesty's Government.

"The claim is now in order to go before a special committee of the House of Peers," went on the general. "But your signature is required to the statement of claim. I have brought the document with me. If you will sign it I will immediately take it to your honoured father for his signature also, and in a few days the matter will be completed."

"I guess I'm ready to sign."

The fat gentleman took out a fat pocket-book and opened it, breathlessly watched by the juniors. He selected a large document, which was folded so that the contents could not be seen. On the top of the document was written in large letters: "THIS IS TO CERTIFY." Then there was a blank line.

"You write your name here," said the general, laying the document on the table. "You see, this document is to certify that you claim the title of De Fyshe, in conjunction with your father, Lord de Fyshe, previously known as Obadiah Z. Fish, of New Holland."

"Hiram K. Fish, of New York, sir."

"Ahem! Yaas. My mistake. Sign here." Fisher T. Fish dipped a pen in the ink, and signed in the blank line with a flourish. There was no mistaking the sprawling signature of Fisher Tarleton Fish, and never had the American junior written it with so much pleasure. If he had been signing a cheque to himself for a thousand dollars he could not have done it with more zest.

"I guess that's O K," he remarked.

"Quite so—quite so!" said the general. "Quite satisfactory. I am much obliged to you, my lord. My business is concluded

now. May I wish your honoured lordship a very good-evening!"

And the fat gentleman retired from the Common-room, leaving Fisher T. Fish surrounded by a buzzing crowd of juniors.

Fish surveyed them with lofty and contemptuous glances.

"I guess you'll own up now that it's all O. K.," he remarked disdainfully. "They don't send down the head of the Herald's Office to see a chap who can't prove his claim, I guess."

"Well, this beats the band!" ejaculated Temple of the Fourth.

"What do you say now, Skinner, you jay?"

But Skinner had nothing to say. He was dumfounded.

"What do you say, Wharton? Ain't it all clear enough now?" demanded Fisher T. Fish.

"Clear as—as mud!" said Wharton solemnly. "All hail, my lord!"

"I guess you can be as funny as you like, but that don't alter the fact that I'm Viscount de Fyshe, recognised as such by the House of Lords!" sniffed Fisher T. Fish. "By gum—ahem!—begad! Won't we make the Four Hundred sit up in Noo York!"

"The—the what?"

"The Four Hundred?" said Fish. "P'raps you don't know what the Four Hundred are? They're Society in Noo York, my boy. The high-rollers, the top-sawyers in Amurricia! And I guess the Fyshe de Fyshes will take the shine out of them some. The Vanderbilts and the Vandersquashes and the Gollops and the Hoppers will have to hide their diminished heads after this, just a few! There are old families in Noo York that can trace their descent back for eighty or ninety years, I guess; but what's that to the ancestral line of the Fyshe de Fyshes?"

And Fisher T. Fish swaggered out of the Common-room, seeming to walk on air, in his delight at the prospect of taking the shine out of those old families in New York whose descent could be traced back for eighty or ninety years. And he immediately obtained a pass out of gates, and sped off to Courtfield on his bicycle, to acquaint his popper with the great and glorious news.

Perhaps he would have been a little less delighted if he could have seen General de Courcy, of the Sealing-Wax and Lead-Pencil Department, at that moment. For the general had not quitted Greyfriars at all. He was in Study No. 1 just then, and the Famous Five were helping him off with his coat, his glasses, his whiskers, and the bald crown of his head. And when they had finished General de Courcy, of the Herald's Office, was revealed as Wibley of the Remove, amid yells of laughter.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Fully Certified!

WHILE Fisher T. Fish was absent a crowd gathered in the junior Common-room.

Something of unusual and unprecedented interest seemed to be passing there.

The room was crammed with juniors and fags, and Coker & Co. of the Fifth came in, and a good man other seniors.

The crowd thronged round a paper that was pinned up on the wall, and every fellow, as he read it, burst into a howl of laughter.

The crowd was at its thickest before that mysterious document, when Fisher T. Fish came in.

Fish came in rather late, and he was looking disappointed and perplexed. He had conveyed the glorious news to his popper. But, somehow or other, General de Courcy had failed to visit Mr. Fish at the Courtfield Arms. Fish had waited there as late as he could, but he had had to leave at last, and he came back to Greyfriars in a puzzled frame of mind. The general had plainly declared that his popper's signature to the paper was required before it could be presented to the House of Lords; and yet he had not gone to Mr. Fish for his signature.

Fish stared at the throng in the Common-room, and heard the howls of laughter with great surprise.

Something was evidently going on, but

surely all this merriment could not be on account of his pretensions to nobility! Those pretensions had been proved to be well-founded by the visit of the fat gentleman from the Sealing-Wax and Lead-Pencil Department. There was nothing more to laugh at. Yet Fish felt an uneasy inward quail as he looked into the crowded room. There was a yell as he was seen in the doorway.

"Here he is!"
 "Here's Fishy!"
 "Let Fishy read it!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "What's the joke, you jays?" growled Fisher T. Fish.
 "You are!" grinned Bob Cherry.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Come and read it, Fishy! It's about you!"

"What's about me?"
 "The notice!"
 "Oh, I guess you're too stoopid to live!" growled Fisher T. Fish, "and I don't want any more of your rotten wheezes! If this school were well managed, low bounders would be compelled to show respect to members of the nobility."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker. "This is to certify— Ha, ha, ha!"

And there was another yell.
 Two or three juniors caught hold of Fisher T. Fish, and forced him through the crowd towards the paper pinned on the wall. Fisher T. Fish looked at it, and gave a jump as he recognised his own signature.
 "By gum!"
 "Read it, Fishy!" howled the juniors.
 "This is to certify— Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish read the paper, and his jaw dropped.
"THIS IS TO CERTIFY that I, Fisher Tarleton Fish, of Noo York, in the Yewntid States, am a silly ass and a howling bounder! Also, that I am a stupid owl, and don't know a Remove fellow with whiskers on from a general! As witness my signature above!"

Fisher T. Fish gazed at the document with starting eyes.
 He could not deny his own signature. The fact that he was a silly ass and a howling bounder was fully certified under his own hand!

He gazed round at the yelling juniors.
 "Who—who's been forging my name?" he asked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Shush!" said Bob Cherry. "A Fyshe de Fyshe shouldn't deny his own signature! You signed that paper yourself!"
 "I didn't," yelled Fish.

"You did—you did! We all saw you!" shouted Nugent.

"We're all witnesses!" chuckled Wharton. Fish looked at the paper again. He recognised it as the truth dawning upon him. This was the paper he had signed at the request of General de Courcy, of the Heralds' Office and the Sealing-Wax and Lead-Pencil Department of his Majesty's Government. Then who, and what, was General de Courcy? Fisher T. Fish prided himself upon his keenness, upon his wonderful cuteness. But there was no doubt that he had been "spoofed." General de Courcy was a member of the Remove Form at Greyfriars. His failure to call upon Hiram K. Fish was fully explained now.

Fish's face became crimson with wrath. Certainly he could not deny his own signature; and there it was, in black and white, attesting the fact that he was a silly ass and a howling bounder.

"You—you jays! You rotters!" howled Fish. "This was a plant!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Where's the mugwump who pretended to be General de Courcy?" shrieked Fish. "I guess I'll make ribbons and shavings of him!"

"Look out, Wibley!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish made a wild rush at the grinning Wibley. But a dozen hands caught him and jerked him back.

"Lemme go!" yelled Fish. "I'll scalp him! I'll slaughter him! I'll—"

"Order!" said Wibley. "You mustn't lay hands on the head of the Heralds' Office and chief of the Sealing-Wax Department."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Fish ran towards the paper on the wall, and made a clutch at it. But again he was dragged back

"No fear!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "That's going to stay there! This is to certify—"

"That Fishy is a silly ass!"
 "And a stupid owl!"
 "And a howling bounder!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I guess—I—you rotters—you jays—you slab-sided galoots—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I guess—I calculate—I—I—I—" Fisher T. Fish stammered with wrath, amid the yells of laughter from the crowd of juniors.

"You—you mugwumps—"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "This is to certify—" howled Bob Cherry.

"That Fishy is a silly ass and a howling bounder!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"As witness the above signature!" yelled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 Fisher T. Fish rushed from the room. Even the self-satisfied American was not quite impervious to ridicule. Yells of laughter followed him. Fish, crimson with wrath, took refuge in the Close, where he clenched his fists furiously. He could still hear the laughter of the juniors.

"The blessed mugwumps!" muttered Fish. "Never mind; let 'em wait till we've proved our claim, that's all—they'll sing a different tune then—when the House of Peers recognise popper as Lord de Fyshe. Let 'em wait!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Last of Lord Fish!

"TOZER, by Jove!"
 It was Saturday afternoon, and the Famous Five of the Remove were sauntering down Friardale Lane, with their straw-hats on the backs of their heads, when they suddenly came in sight of Police-constable Tozer. That fat and portly representative of law and order was seated on the stile, with his helmet pushed back from his perspiring brow, reading a newspaper. He was so interested in

his paper that he did not observe the juniors in the lane. He was muttering to himself as he read, and Harry Wharton & Co. caught his words as he mumbled:

"Eight about five feet five, pale complexion, light-coloured eyes. I wish I could lay my 'ands on 'im. Seen on Wednesday gettin' out of a train at Courtfield. Shouldn't wonder if he was in the neighbour'ood now. Wot a slice of luck for me if I could come across 'im!"

The juniors grinned. Mr. Tozer was evidently reading the description of some unfortunate individual who was "wanted" by the police, and who had been seen in the vicinity of Tozer's beat. Naturally enough, Mr. Tozer was keen on the chance of laying hands on a wanted criminal. Nothing ever happened in the quiet neighbourhood of Friardale, and Mr. Tozer's chance of distinguishing himself were limited to the occasional collaring of a village urchin for robbing an orchard.

"Good old Tozer!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Always looking out for a chance of doing his dooty. But reading newspapers on his beat isn't the dooty of a dootifol bobby! It's up to us to show Tozer that it won't do!"

Mr. Tozer had not seen them, and the juniors backed away quietly on the grass beside the road. Mr. Tozer went on studying the description and the photograph in the paper, unconscious that he was observed.

Bob Cherry put his finger to his lips and slipped through a gap in the hedge, and came quietly behind Mr. Tozer from the wood.

The fat constable was still intent upon the paper, and did not hear Bob's soft footsteps behind him. The chums of the Remove watched Bob from the lane, suppressing their laughter. Bob approached the fat officer so closely that he could have touched him. The inclination to tilt Mr. Tozer off the stile was almost irresistible, but Bob Cherry manfully resisted it. It would not do to lay violent hands upon the



HIS LORDSHIP OBJECTS! "You've no right to cane me, sir," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'm a nobleman, and noblemen are always treated with distinction in properly-managed schools." "Fish!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Will you hand me my cane, at once?" (See Chapter 1.)

majesty of the law. Bob halted behind the Fiardale policeman, put his hands to his mouth, and gave a sudden roar.

"Hallo!"

The sudden roar just behind him made Mr. Tozer give a violent jump.

"My heye!" he gasped.

The startled constable slipped from the stile, stumbled on the ground, and dropped on his hands and knees. He turned his head dazedly, and found Bob Cherry looking at him over the stile with a cheerful grin.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Tozer!" said Bob, raising his cap politely.

"Ow!"

"Do you always get off a stile like that?" asked Bob, with interest.

"You young raskill!" howled Mr. Tozer, assuming a perpendicular attitude and panting. "You—you disrespectful young villain—"

Bob Cherry looked mildly surprised.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter, Mr. Tozer? I just called out in a friendly way, you know, because I was so pleased to see you."

Mr. Tozer dusted the knees of his trousers, and set his helmet straight.

"I'd 'ave 'em all drowned—drowned at birth!" he murmured, addressing space.

"Ripping, Tozer!" said Harry Wharton, as the four juniors came up smiling. "I watched you! Jolly active for a man of your age, Tozer."

"New thing in gymnastics?" asked Nugent.

"Let's see you do it again, Tozer!" urged Johnny Bull. "It really was a treat! Performing elephants are not in it!"

"The treafulous was terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Tozer!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Mr. Tozer snorted. He would have given half his pension to be able to "run in" those cheery youths, and give them a few days on bread and water. Nugent picked up the newspaper that had fluttered from the hand of the constable.

"Reading newspaper serials, at your age, Tozer?" he said reproachfully. "What an example to set to us young persons! I'm surprised at you!"

"Give me my paper, you young raskill!" roared Mr. Tozer. "Which I'll report you to your 'eadmaster!"

"Report me for picking up your paper for you," said Nugent, in surprise. "I call that ungrateful, Tozer!"

"Give it to me, you young rip!"

Nugent held out the paper, and Mr. Tozer grabbed at it. The cheerful junior jerked it back, and Mr. Tozer's fat hand swept the empty air. Mr. Tozer became perfectly purple with wrath. He made a rush at Nugent, who dodged promptly, still holding out the paper.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Johnny Bull suddenly, as his eyes fell on the paper as Nugent held it out. "My hat! I know that chivvy!"

"Great Scott, so do I!" exclaimed Nugent, glancing at the photograph in the paper. "Great Jonathan Wild! It's Sharp!"

"Mr. Inquiry Agent, by Jove!"

Mr. Tozer grabbed the paper, but he was no longer wrathful.

"Wot's that?" he exclaimed eagerly. "You young gents 'ave seen the man as is photographed 'ere? You mean it?"

"What-ho!"

"Then it's your dooty to tell me where he may be found," said Mr. Tozer. "And—and I'll take it as a favour. I don't mind a—little joke, young gentlemen. You tell me where to lay 'ands on that scoundrel, and I'll be much obliged to you."

"Let's see it," said Wharton.

The Famous Five studied the photographed face in the paper. There was no doubt about it. They had seen that face, with its cunning features and shifty eyes, before. It was the face of Mr. Sharp. On two or three occasions of late they had seen the self-styled representative of the Heralds' Office in company with Mr. Fish, of New York. And the pictured face in the paper was exactly the face of Mr. Sharp, of the Heralds' Office. The juniors had not the slightest doubt from the first that the man was an impostor and a swindler. This was a startling confirmation of their opinion of him.

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"You've seed him?" asked Mr. Tozer anxiously. "About 'ere?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my esteemed Tozer."

Mr. Tozer rubbed his fat hands with satisfaction. He had quite forgotten his tumble off the stile now, and he no longer felt any desire to give the chums of the Remove a few days on bread and water. In fact, he could have hugged them. For if he could have 'brought off the arrest of the rascal whose photograph was in the paper, it would have meant considerable distinction for Mr. Tozer, quite putting into the shade his previous exploits in seizing orchard-pilferers and unmuzzled dogs.

"Read the description," he said. "Does that fit?"

"Height about five feet, pale complexion, light eyes!" read out Harry Wharton. "It fits him to a hair."

"Who is it, Tozer?" asked Nugent.

"Which he's got a good many names," said Mr. Tozer. "He's Jem Smith, and Billy Cradock, and the Weasel, and Slippery Jim, and a good many other names. He's wanted for picking pockets, and forging a cheque, and swindling hotel-keepers, and for getting money out of a silly old gentleman under pretence of having influence in the Heralds' Office, and finding 'im a pedigree."

"My hat!"

"That settles it," said Wharton. "He's at the same game again, with Fish's pater, and his name this time is Sharp."

"There's been information received that he was seen in Courtfield," said Mr. Tozer. "That was some days ago."

"He was in Courtfield right enough," said Wharton, "and I fancy we can tell you just where to look for the rotter now."

Mr. Tozer rubbed his hands again.

"Now you're talking, Master Wharton," he said, with great satisfaction.

"If it's the same man, he's passing himself on the father of the American chap at Greyfriars, as an inquiry-agent belonging to the Heralds' Office," said Wharton.

"Jest wot he would do!" chuckled Mr. Tozer. "The same old game!"

"He's going to prove that Fishy's pater is a Lord de Fyshe—"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

The juniors joined in the merriment of Mr. Tozer. This sudden light upon the true character of Mr. Inquiry Agent struck them as funny.

"And he's down here to-day," said Harry. "Fish has gone out with his pater and Mr. Sharp. I think they've gone looking for inscriptions or something, to prove the existence of the Fysh de Fysches in these parts. I suppose it's a dodge for screwing some more dollars out of Mr. Fish. They're coming back to the school for tea with Fish—"

"Sure?" asked Mr. Tozer.

"Dead cert!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Fish is in my study, and I've kicked him out; but he asked me this afternoon to let him have the study without a row, as he would have his father and Mr. Sharp to tea with him."

"Then all I've got to do is to walk in and nab 'im!" said Mr. Tozer, with a fat chuckle. "Werry good! You don't 'appen to know when they'll be coming in?"

"About tea-time, I suppose," said Wharton. "But if Sharp sees a policeman about you can bet he will sprint for all he's worth. You'll have to keep out of sight."

"He's a cute scoundrel!" admitted Mr. Tozer. "I don't want to run no risks with 'im. If I could get him inside the school gates—"

"Good egg! Suppose you take cover in Gosling's lodge, and wait for him to come in. Once he's inside, we'll see that he doesn't get out again."

"Thank you kindly, young gents! Of course, it's your dooty to 'elp in the execution of the law!"

"Quite so; and we'll be jolly glad to collar that rotter who's swindling Fishy's pater."

And Mr. Tozer walked to Greyfriars with the juniors in a state of chuckling satisfaction.

When they reached the school Mr. Tozer went into Gosling's lodge at once. Gosling was a friend of the village policeman, and he entered into the thing with great heartiness. Gosling had not forgotten Fisher T. Fish's insolence, and he looked forward with great pleasure to seeing Mr. Inquiry Agent arrested, and all Fish's castles in the air dashed to the ground in consequence.

While Mr. Tozer was fanning himself and partaking of liquid refreshment in Gosling's lodge, Harry Wharton & Co. waited at the gates for the arrival of Fisher T. Fish and his popper and Mr. Inquiry Agent. They imparted the great secret to a number of other fellows, and it spread like wildfire. In a short time half Greyfriars knew that Mr. Inquiry Agent had turned out to be a well-known swindler, and that Mr. Tozer was waiting in the porter's lodge to collar him when he put in an appearance. Quite an army gathered within easy view of the lodge to witness the scene. Fisher T. Fish had made himself so thoroughly unpopular by his insolence and absurdity that all the fellows looked forward with relish to the scene. After Mr. Sharp had been marched away like Eugene Aram, with gyves upon his wrists, Fisher T. Fish could hardly continue to boast of the noble blood of the Fyshe de Fysches.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Here they come! This is where the circus begins!"

The tall, lanky form of Hiram K. Fish came in sight, with Fisher T. on one side, and the slim, dapper figure of Mr. Inquiry Agent on the other. Mr. Fish's countenance wore an expression of satisfaction. Doubtless, the inquiry-agent had succeeded in making another discovery which was gratifying to the American gentleman. It was not difficult for Mr. Sharp to make discoveries of Fyshe de Fyshe antiquities, if he prepared them in advance.

The Famous Five raised their caps to Mr. Fish. Fisher T. Fish looked at them with a supercilious expression.

"I guess it's all pretty clear now, you jays!" he remarked, as his father and Mr. Sharp passed in at the gates.

"I guess you're right, Fishy!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Mr. Sharp's got the case down fine. He's got the whole pedigree from the first Baron de Fyshe down to Ebenezer Fish who emigrated to the Yewneted States, written out from the records of the Heralds' Office," said Fisher T. Fish impressively.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you can cackle!" said Fish disdainfully. "You wait till— Hallo! Great Jehosaphat! What's the row now?"

"Looks like trouble for the Heralds' Office!" grinned Wharton.

It did!

For the portly form of Police-constable Tozer had emerged from Gosling's lodge, and was bearing down upon the American gentleman and Mr. Sharp. And the fat hand of Mr. Tozer descended upon Mr. Sharp's shoulder, and the deep bass voice of Mr. Tozer announced:

(Continued on page 22.)

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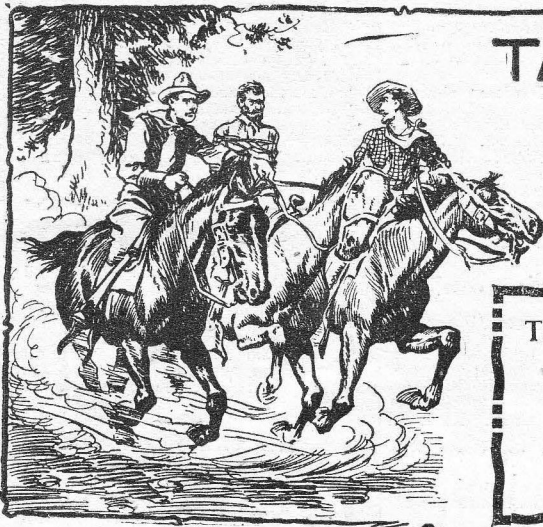
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ROUNDING UP THE RUSTLERS!

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A TALE OF BREATHLESS ADVENTURE!



THE SHERIFF'S TRAP!

The Adventures of Frank Richards & Co.,
The Chums of Cedar Creek.

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Bob Lawless is Wanted.**

THUD, thud!
Frank Richards & Co. were in class at Cedar Creek School when the thud of horse's hoofs was heard in the playground without.

They heard the horseman halt with a clatter and a jingle at the porch of the lumber schoolhouse.

Miss Meadows glanced round—as did her class also—as the school-room door opened and the ebony face of Black Sally appeared.

“Well, Sally?”
Miss Meadows spoke rather sharply. The headmistress of Cedar Creek did not like interruptions during lessons.

“Mass’ Henderson he want speak to missy,” announced Sally.

“Very well. Tell him I will come.” Black Sally withdrew.

Miss Meadows turned to her class. “Kindly continue your work while I am absent for a few minutes,” she said.

And she quitted the school-room; to return in less than five minutes, looking very serious.

“Lawless!” she exclaimed.
“Yes, ma’am?” exclaimed Bob, starting up.

“The sheriff wishes to speak to you. Please step out here.”
“Yes, Miss Meadows.”

Bob Lawless hurried out of the school-room, greatly wondering what the Sheriff of Thompson could want with him.

Frank Richards and Vere Beauclerc exchanged a glance.

They, too, were wondering what their chum was wanted for.

“What on airth has Bob been up to?” murmured Eben Hacke.

“Nothing!” said Frank Richards warmly. “Do you think the sheriff’s after him, you duffer?”

“Well, it looks like it!” grinned Chunky Todgers. “I say, Richards, your cousin hasn’t been horse-stealing, has he?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”
Mr. Slimmey looked round from his class. “Silence, please!” he said mildly.

The class ceased to chuckle, and Frank Richards gave the fat and egregious Chunky a withering glare.

From the open doorway into the hall came a murmur of voices.

What the Sheriff of Thompson could want with Rancher Lawless’ son in lesson hours at Cedar Creek was a mystery.

Miss Meadows came back into the school-room.

“Richards! Beauclerc!”
“Yes, ma’am?”
“You will go out with Lawless!”
“Oh!”
“Yes, Miss Meadows!”

Greatly wondering, the chums of Cedar Creek left the school-room.

Miss Meadows resumed the lesson, apparently not expecting the three chums to rejoin the class.

Bob Lawless was waiting for the two in the hall with a grin of delight on his rugged, cheery face. Sheriff Henderson was outside now with his horse.

“What’s the game, Bob?” exclaimed Frank Richards.

“Come on!” answered Bob. “No time for chinwag now; the sheriff’s waiting for us.”

“Where are we to come?”
“To the corral, of course!”

“The corral? What for?” demanded Beauclerc.

“For our horses.”
“Are we going out, then?” asked Frank Richards in astonishment.

“My dear galoot,” said Bob Lawless, “do you think we’re fetching the horses to ride round the school-room?”

“No, ass! But—”
“Well, then, it stands to reason we’re going out.”

“With the sheriff?” asked Beauclerc.

“Yep.”
“But why—”

“Cherub, old scout, don’t chew the rag! Come and get out the gee-gees.”

Bob Lawless led the way across the playground to the corral, followed by his surprised chums.

Mr. Henderson had mounted and ridden down to the gates, where he was waiting, evidently for the three schoolboys to join him.

Frank Richards & Co. led out their horses from the corral, and mounted and rode down to the gates.

The burly sheriff saluted them cheerily as they came up.

“I suppose Lawless has told you—” he began.

“He hasn’t told us anything, sir,” answered Frank.

“You young jay, Lawless!” growled the sheriff. “How do you know the boys want to come with you, if you haven’t told them?”

“I guess that’s a cinch, Mr. Henderson!” answered Bob with a chuckle. “They’d rather mosey over the prairie than sit in class this morning.”

“Yes, rather!” said Frank and Beauclerc together.

“There is a possibility of danger,” said the sheriff.

“That doesn’t matter, sir,” said Beauclerc quietly.

“Well,” said the sheriff, “you’d better know what’s wanted before you start. You know Kern Gunten, I believe—he used to be at this school. The son of the postmaster at Thompson.”

“Oh, we know him well, sir!” said Frank in wonder.
“You know he drives the post-wagon on

Wednesday afternoons from Thompson to Silver Creek?”

“Yes.”
“He was stopped on the trail by road-agents one day,” said Mr. Henderson, “and there is a chance that the wagon may be stopped again to-day. For reasons best known to himself, Gunten does not care to drive it to-day.”

“Oh!” exclaimed Frank.

“And, of course, I thought of you chaps,” said Bob with a grin. “I knew you’d like to come, so I asked Miss Meadows to let you.”

“Good man!” said Frank Richards gratefully. “You’re a brick, Bob! Of course we’d like to come!”

“You must remember,” said the sheriff, “that the post-wagon may be stopped by the Flour-Bag Gang—the rascals who have lately taken to robbing on the trails in the Thompson Valley.”

“We ought to take our rifles, then.”

“Nothing of the sort. Lawless is wanted simply to drive the wagon; and if he is stopped he is forbidden to attempt any resistance. The same applies to you.”

“Oh!” said Frank.

“You are not wanted to enter into fight with armed robbers,” said the sheriff, smiling. “I should hardly have cared to ask Miss Meadows to let Lawless out of school for such a reason; and she would certainly have refused. But someone must drive the wagon.”

“I—I see!” murmured Frank.

As a matter of fact, he did not quite see. Why the sheriff could not send one of his own men, or hire a man in Thompson, to drive the wagon, was rather a puzzle.

Kern Gunten was a schoolboy, certainly, but he had the regular job of driving the post-wagon because he was the postmaster’s son.

Why it was necessary to have a schoolboy for the job was a deep mystery to Frank Richards & Co.

But they were glad enough of it. A trip on the post-wagon to Silver Creek was a welcome change from the class-room.

The sheriff wheeled his horse into the trail.

“There is no harm in you two boys going with Lawless,” he said. “But it is understood that you do not attempt to resist the road-agents if they should show up.”

“Very well, sir!”

“But is there any special reason for expecting the road-agents to show up this afternoon—if I may ask?” said Vere Beauclerc.

“Well,” said the sheriff, “there’s a big consignment of gold-dust going in the

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post-wagon to-day, and it seems to be pretty well known.

"And the Flour-Bag rosters may have heard of it!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

"I guess so."

The sheriff rode on up the trail towards Thompson with that, and the three schoolboys followed at a trot, and in a state of utter wonder.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Gold Aboard.

"WHAT do you make of that, Franky?" murmured Bob Lawless, as the chums of Cedar Creek trotted along in a row, a little distance behind the sheriff.

Frank shook his head in utter perplexity. "I can't make it out at all," he said. "If Mr. Henderson wasn't such a serious man, I should think he was pulling our leg."

"I feel the same," remarked Vere Beauclerc. "There's been a lot of talk lately about the Flour-Bag Gang, and it's well known the sheriff is keen after them. But if he thinks it's likely they may stop the post-wagon on the plains, I should think he would send his men to protect it."

"I guess so," assented Bob. "And if he's not going to do that, it seems to me crass idiocy to let it get out that there's a big consignment of gold on the wagon," said Frank. "If all Thompson knows that the road-agents know it, for a certainty, and they're sure to stop the wagon, if it's not guarded."

"Dead sure!" said Bob. "Well, it beats me," said Frank. "It looks as if we're practically certain to be stopped on the trail, and the sheriff must see that, as matters stand."

"Unless he's blind," agreed Bob; "and he's not blind."

"A couple of men with rifles in the wagon would keep the rosters at a distance, and he goes out of his way to put the wagon in charge of unarmed schoolboys," said Frank. "It's a riddle to me."

"And to me," said Bob. "Never mind, we've got a day off from school, and that's all to the good. Miss Meadows is an angel, but I like the plains better than the school-room."

"What-ho!" said Frank and Beauclerc together.

The sheriff rode ahead, and did not speak to his youthful companions during the ride to Thompson.

So far as the schoolboys could see the consignment of gold in the post-wagon was very likely to fall into the hands of the Flour-Bag Gang, and they were not surprised that Gunten, the Swiss, refused to drive the wagon, in the circumstances.

But why the sheriff should wish to replace the usual driver with another schoolboy, instead of an armed man, was a perplexing puzzle.

Mr. Henderson's manner did not encourage inquiry, however, and the chums of Cedar Creek did not think of making any.

They reached Gunten's store in Thompson, which was also the post-office, where the wagon was to start early in the afternoon.

The wagon was standing in Main Street, outside the store, but the horses were not yet hitched.

The sheriff dismounted, and the schoolboys followed his example.

"You'll get some dinner in the store," said Mr. Henderson. "Mr. Gunten will tell you when to start. I'd take you to my house for dinner, my boys, but I'm called away on business. Good-bye!"

He turned away before the schoolboys could answer, and after speaking a few words to Mr. Gunten in the doorway, he led his horse up the street and disappeared.

Mr. Gompers Gunten greeted the chums of Cedar Creek civilly enough, though the time was not far back when they had been on exceedingly bad terms.

The storekeeper seemed to have forgotten that now, however, and Frank Richards & Co. were quite willing to forget it, too.

Two or three idlers were lounging about outside the store, staring at the wagon, as the schoolboys went on.

The story of the gold consignment accounted for their curiosity.

It was nearly dinner-time now, and Frank Richards & Co. leaving their horses hitched outside, went into the dining-room attached

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to the store, where a good many of the citizens of Thompson came for the midday meal.

They sat down to a good dinner, and Kern Gunten came in while they were thus engaged, and gave them a rather surly nod.

The storekeeper's son came up to them with a not very agreeable expression on his face.

"Hallo!" said Bob Lawless cheerily. "How are you getting on at Hillcrest, Gunten? Like it better than Cedar Creek?"

"I guess so," answered Gunten. "I guess it's a better-class place, Bob Lawless."

"Your presence there makes it so, dear kid," answered Bob Lawless solemnly. "I hear you're not driving the post-wagon this afternoon."

"And I hear you're going to do it," answered Gunten.

"Correct."

"More fool you!" said Kern Gunten.

"Thanks!"

"I'd rather drive the wagon than go to school, anyway," continued the Swiss. "But I told them flat I wasn't taking it on this afternoon, and my father upheld me, too. Why, the way it's leaked out about the gold consignment, the wagon is dead sure to be stopped by the Flour-Bag Gang. At least, I think so."

"Well, the road-agents won't eat us," said Bob, laughing. "We've got orders not to resist, and the most rampagious rustler this side of the Rockies won't burn powder for nothing."

"It's risky, all the same. Rifles go off sometimes," said Gunten. "I don't care to risk it. Why should I?"

"No reason why you should, if you don't choose," said Bob. "I do choose, and that makes the difference."

"Well, I think you're a jay."

"Same to you, old scout. But the sheriff can't think the wagon is going to be stopped, or he'd send a guard."

"He's a jay, too."

"I don't think so, though I don't quite catch on to this," said Bob Lawless. "Anyway, we're going. You're going to school instead, I suppose?"

"Yes; and glad to," answered Gunten. And the Swiss schoolboy went to his own dinner, evidently with the fixed belief that he was acting with considerable wisdom, and that Bob Lawless was a fool for taking his place.

Frank Richards & Co. finished their dinner in cheery spirits, notwithstanding the chance of meeting with the road-agents later in the day.

There was an element of danger, of course, but the robbers were not likely to shoot unless they were resisted, and the Cedar Creek chums had orders not to resist.

As Bob Lawless remarked, the Flour-Bag Gang, if they turned up, would be after the gold, not after nooses for their necks.

Indeed, if the danger had been of an alarming extent, it was pretty certain that the sheriff would not have gone to Cedar Creek School for a driver.

The chums left the store, as the jingle of harness and the tramping of horses warned them that the team was being put in.

Three good horses were traced to the heavy wagon, which was pretty well filled with goods of one sort and another, and the post-sacks from the office.

Bob Lawless climbed into the driver's seat, and took the reins and the whip, his chums following him into the wagon.

By this time a considerable crowd had collected in the street to watch the departure of the vehicle.

There was a buzz as Mr. Gunten came out of the store with an assistant, carrying between them a heavy sack.

Some of the looks cast on that sack, which was tightly roped up and sealed, were greedy.

"That's the gold, I suppose," Frank Richards murmured to Beauclerc.

The Cherub nodded.

The sack was placed in the wagon, and carefully stacked away under several other packages.

Then Mr. Gunten came along to the step to speak to the schoolboy driver.

"You know what you've got to do, Lawless," he said. "You call at Cedar Camp for the letters, at the Continental, and then drive right on to Silver Creek, and hand the wagon over to the postmaster there. The Silver Creek driver takes it on in the

morning. They'll lend you horses to ride home on. I'll take care of your mounts here."

"Right-ho, Mr. Gunten!" answered Bob cheerily.

"If there should be any trouble on the trail you're not to kick up a shindy. That's the sheriff's order, strict. Not to resist under any circumstances whatever."

"We understand, Mr. Gunten."

"Off you go, then."

Old Man Gunten stepped back, and Bob gathered up the reins, cracked the whip, and the post-wagon rumbled away down Main Street.

The crowd broke up. And as the wagon rumbled out of the town on to the open trail a horseman rode out of Thompson at a different point, riding at full gallop over the prairie.

Had Frank Richards & Co. observed the movements of that galloping rider they might have guessed that news was going to the Flour-Bag Gang that the post-wagon had started with the gold aboard.

But they did not see him, and they started off merrily on the rough trail, Bob Lawless handling his team of three like one to the manner born.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. The Road-Agents.

"CEDAR CAMP!"

"Safe so far!" said Frank Richards, smiling.

The post-wagon drove down the rugged street of the camp, and stopped before the log-built inn which was dignified with the title of Hotel Continental.

The landlord came out, with a pipe in his mouth and his sleeves rolled up, to greet the post-wagon.

"Hallo! You driving, young Lawless?" he asked.

"Looks like it, Pete!" answered Bob.

"What's become of Gunten—ill?"

"Cold feet!" explained Bob, laughing.

And Pete grinned.

"Hyer's your letters!" he said, tossing a sack into the wagon. "That's the whole truck! Pleasant journey!"

And the wagon rolled on, the landlord of the Continental filling his pipe and blinking after it meditatively.

Cedar Camp was left behind, and beyond it the plains stretched before the team, marked by a trail cut in the soil by many wheels and countless hoofs.

There was still snow in many of the ruts, but the day was fine and clear, and the drive across the plains was enjoyable.

"Beats the class-room hollow!" remarked Frank Richards.

"I guess so!" said Bob, cracking his whip.

"Ripping!" said Beauclerc heartily. "I—I wonder if the Flour-Bag Gang are out on the trail?"

"We shall soon see now."

Vere Beauclerc nodded, and fell into silence.

He was thinking of his father, of the fact that Mr. Beauclerc had been a "pard" of Poker Pete, the sport of Thompson, who was more than suspected of being the leader of the Flour-Bag Gang.

It was the boy's influence that had made Mr. Beauclerc break with the rascally gang, and at this moment Beauclerc could not feel too thankful for it.

If the post-wagon was stopped by masked robbers on the trail, he was sure now that his father was clear of the business. He knew that the remittance-man would keep his word, and that he was done with Poker Pete and his gang.

Cedar Camp lay miles behind, and the post-wagon rumbled on over a trail that lay amid scattered patches of timber on the plain.

As the team trotted cheerily on the three schoolboys watched each patch of timber as they passed.

Every clump of trees, they knew, might hide the road-agents, if they were on the trail that clear afternoon.

And they could not help thinking that a "hold-up" was probable.

The secret of the gold consignment had leaked out. It was no secret in the town of Thompson, and therefore it was pretty certain that the Flour-Bag Gang knew of it.

They were not likely to let such a chance

(Continued on page 16.)

You'll Meet the Merry Chums of the Lumber School Again Next Week!

SPECIAL "FUTURE" NUMBER!



Assisted by Sammy Bunter of Greyfriars, Baggy Trimble and Fatty Wyan of St. Jim's, and Tubby Muffin of Rockwood.

Supplement No. 136.

Week Ending August 11th, 1923.

WHEN I GROW UP!

By **TUBBY MUFFIN.**



MY uncle has just sent me a pen-knife. I don't know whether he expects me, to carve out my career with it. If he does, I shall have to disappoint him, for I'm blessed if I know what sort of a career to carve out.

The problem of the future worries me frightfully. It haunts me by day, and keeps me awake at nights.

Other fellows seem to have their futures all mapped out for them. Some are going to be doctors; some clerricks; and others are going to be called to the Bar. Being a strict teatotaller, however, the latter profession duzzent appeal to me.

I have run through the list of professions and occupations, and, honestly, there isn't one that appeals to me. I wouldn't mind being a soldier, if they'd guarantee that no war would brake out.

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I would cheerfully become a sailer, if they assured me I should never be shipwrecked. I would join the Air Force right away, only airoplanes have a nasty habit of coming down faster than they go up!

I don't want to be a tinker or a tailor, a baker or a butcher, a cobbler or a chemist. There's a certain amount of hard work attached to these occupations; and hard work and me don't agree!

Being a doctor wouldn't be too bad, only I couldn't bear the thought of being called up in the middle of the night to attend a man who had cut his finger, or an old lady with a cold in the head.

Some fellows seem to think that the life of a schoolmaster is all hunney. But I wouldn't have it for a pension! Fancy having hedgehoggs put in your desk, and booby-traps planned for your bennyfit. Fancy being stuck in a stuffy Form-room all day, imparting nollidge to wooden-headed pupils. That sort of life wouldn't suit me at all.

Sometimes I have thoughts of becoming an actor, an artist, or a poet. But actors, artists, and poets are nearly always "broke." I want a job that will bring plenty of munney in its trane.

Jimmy Silver suggested that I should become a policeman, a fireman, or an engine-driver. But if I did so I should carry my life in my hands—and I'm so clumsy at carrying things that I should be sure to drop it!

It's jolly hard to think of a job with no danger attached to it. A steeple-jack, even though he may not be drowsy, often "drops off." A painter often gets what they call painter's collick. A bergler stands a good chance of having his branes blown out. A chimney-sweep contracts the flue. And a crossing-sweeper is "run down" on account of his profession, besides being "run down" by a motor-bus into the bargain!

The only thing I should really like to be is a millionaire. But I don't know how to go about it. You've got to have a certain amount of capital to begin with, and I'm on the rocks at the moment.

Oh, it's a fair poser, and no mistake—this question of the future. I don't feel a bit capable of carving out a career.

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN!

By **Billy Bunter.**

MY DEAR READERS,—I often wonder what Greyfriars will be like fifty years hence. It is always fascinating to take a peep into the future; and if this number duzzent warm the wrinkles of your hart—I mean, the cockles—it won't be the fault of the plump and panestaking editor of "Billy Bunter's Weekly." Me and my four fat subbs have slogged and slaved to make this issue a big sucksess.

It is a little sad to reflect that one of these days we shall all be doddering old men—barring axcidents, of course. I can picture my illustrious self at the age of sixty-five, being wealed through the grounds of Bunter Court in a bath-chair. I shall often revisit the seens of my youth—unless Greyfriars happens to be scrapped by then, and everybody's living in the air!

Tom Brown has written a very interesting story on this toppick. He has dragged me into it, and libelled me, as usual, but I'll forgive him. I'm not the sort of fellow to owe anybody a grudge—in fact, I can honestly say that I don't owe nobody nothing—or rather, anybody anything.

Perraps I shall never live to see sixty-five, or fifty-five, or even twenty-five. A doctor who overhauled me during the Summer Vack said that my hart was sound enuff, but that I was slowly starving. "Unless you take more nurishment, in the form of veel-and-ham pies, you will waist away to a skellington." That's what the doctor said, and he ought to know! "Veel-and-ham pies kontain vitter-means," he told me, "and vitter-means are essential to life." How can I hope to go on living to a ripe old age, when I don't get enuff grubb to satisfy a sparrow?

It is all very trajjick and distressing. I feel quite sorry for myself.

Yours sinseerly,
YOUR EDITOR.
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Laugh and Grow Fat by Reading the "Weekly" Weekly!



**Newspaper
Extracts in
1940**

Imagined By
FATTY WYNN.

"PARLIAMENT.—The new peer, Lord Eastwood (formerly the Hon. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy) made his maiden speech in the House of Lords to-day.

"I considah," said Lord Eastwood, "that this country will go wapidly to the bow-wows unless a fellah of tact an' judgment takes it in hand. I p'pose to swap the House of Commons, so that this noble an' illustrious House will have a free hand in the governin' of the nation. I want you all to wally wound, an' appoint me Pwime Ministah, Chancellah of the Exchequah, an' Head Cook an' Bottle Washah. Then, an' only then, will the country wegain its pwestige." (Loud cheers.)

"FLYING.—Jack Blake, the famous pilot, has just completed a flight round the world, in the short space of a fortnight. Two of his former schoolfellows,

Mr. Herries and Mr. Digby, accompanied Blake on his tour, which was in every way a great success and a triumph of aviation."

"CRICKET.—Playing for Sussex yesterday, Colonel T. Merry accomplished the wonderful feat of obtaining a century in each innings. It was due to Colonel Merry's wonderful batting that Sussex contrived to defeat the formidable Yorkshire side. Sussex are now well in the running for championship honours."

"STUPENDOUS ATTRACTION!—Bagley Trimble, the fattest man in the world, will definitely appear at the London Hippodrome this evening. The wings have to be removed in order to enable Mr. Trimble to get on the stage. The thinnest man in the world—Herbert Skimpole—will also appear; and the

couple will stand side by side on the stage, affording a striking contrast. This great attraction should on no account be missed."

"A GIGANTIC BUSINESS DEAL. Mr. Aubrey Racke, the trillionaire, and the richest man the world has ever known, has purchased the town of Brighton for his summer residence. The exact sum he gave for it is not known, but it was certainly a stupendous figure. Interviewed by our correspondent, Mr. Racke declared that it was his intention to buy up London and its suburbs in the near future."

"A POPULAR APPOINTMENT.—Mr. George Francis Kerr, who for several years has been known to fame as the greatest of our private detectives, has been given supreme command of Scotland Yard. With such a capable genius at its head, our detective system will become the wonder and admiration of the world. Everybody—except the criminals—will rejoice at Mr. Kerr's appointment."

"A NEW EDITOR.—Mr. Montague Lowther, the celebrated humorist, has been appointed Editor of "Laughter," the finest humorous journal in the world. We feel sure that Mr. Lowther will maintain the high standard of wit and sparkle which has made this paper famous; and his merry jests are bound to tickle the world's palate."

THE JOYS OF OLD AGE!

BY SAMMY BUNTER.

GROW old along with me," says the poet Cromwell. Dicky Nugent declares it was Browning, but I'm sure it was Cromwell.

Some fellows have got a dread of old age. They would like to resemble Little Tom Thumm, the boy who never grew up. (Dicky Nugent chips in again, and says it was Peter Pan who never grew up. What appalling ignerrence!)

Why should we look upon old age as something to be dredded? When I'm an octogenarian, or a nonogenarian, or a vegetarian, I shall be as happy as a sandboy. I can picture myself pottering about in the rose-garden at Bunter Court, wearing nice, comfortable carpet slippers, and taking things easy.

Let me give you some of the advantages of old age. Old men don't have to learn Lattin and Greek. Old men don't have to go to school at all. Old men don't have to go out and earn their living-by the perspirashun of their brows, for the simple reason that they are in receipt of the Old Age Pension—which is a splendid wheeze.

Of course, you can't do very much on five bob a week. But by the time I reach the age of 70, the Old Age Pension will have been increased to about fifty pounds a week, and everything in the garden will be lovely.

When you are old and gray-haired,
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you are treeted with marked curtesy and respect—at least, you ought to be. When younger people meet you in the street they will salute you by tuching their four-locks. And when you step into a railway-karridge, people will fall over each other to give you a seat.

Of course, it will be rather a drorbach having no teeth. But I don't think that will worry me very much. I shall have

a harty-fishul set, or else chew with my gums. When I'm a vegetarian (I think that means a man of ninety) I shall still be able to tackle roast beef and stake-poodings with the same zeal that I display now.

Another grate joy about being old is that you don't have to do any walking, or strenuous eggssersise. You simply employ a man to push you about from plaice to plaice in a bath-chair.

And yet people shudder at the thought of growing old! My hat! I only wish it was my 70th berthday tomorrow!

Many are the joys which go hand-in-hand with old age. And I don't wish to be like Little Tom Thumm, and never grow up. I'd become a vegetarian right away, if I had the chance!

LOOK CHUMS!
£10! £10! £10!

Result of Essex Picture-Puzzle Competition.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the pictures. The first prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

ALICE PACE,
73, Grove Street,
Leek, Staffs.

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

H. G. Jeffrey, 14, Park Street, Southend-on-Sea.
Alex. Shaw, 61, Póntypridd Road, Porth, Glam.

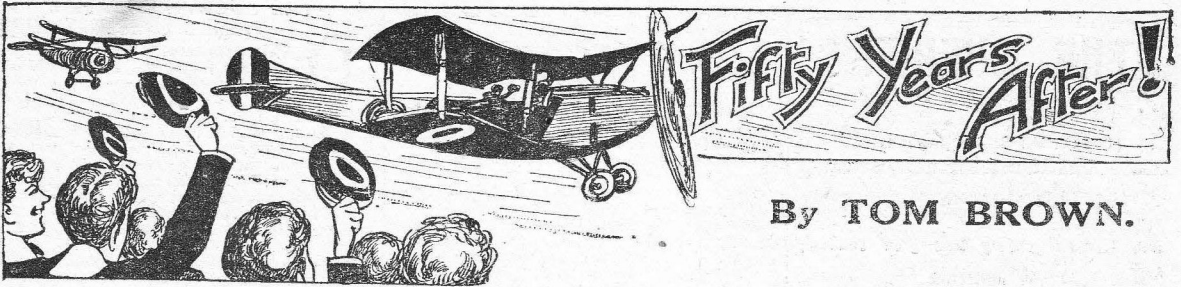
Twenty-nine competitors, with two errors

each, divide the ten prizes of 5s. each. The names and addresses of these prizewinners can be obtained on application at this office

SOLUTION.

The Essex club is at present having a stiff job to keep its head above water, owing to the sale of the Leyton ground, and the loss of numerous members. Essex was promoted to first-class rank nearly 30 years ago. Its defeats outnumber its triumphs, but the club has a fine history. Russell, the South African test match hero, is the leading batsman.

[Supplement II,



By TOM BROWN.

ON my sixty-fifth birthday I sprang nimbly out of bed, sang in my bath, and went downstairs three at a time. I had taken my little daily dose of Blooshens, and I felt as frisky as a two-year-old.

"Though old age was on me stealing, I had got that Blooshen feeling!"

"What are you going to do to-day, grandpa?" inquired my little granddaughter, a bright, rosy-cheeked girl of ten.

"I think I'll pop down to Greyfriars, Myra," I replied. "Fifty years have elapsed since I was a gay-spirited youngster in the Greyfriars Remove. It will be very interesting to see the old place again. I wonder if many changes have taken place?"

"I dare say you will find it much the same as ever, grandpa. These big schools never seem to alter much, do they? May I come with you?"

"By all means, my dear. I will tell Binks to get the two-seater aeroplane ready after breakfast."

Binks was my man-of-all-work, and it was one of his duties to see that my aeroplane was always in flying order.

During breakfast I happened to glance at the morning paper, and to my delight I saw that a reunion of Greyfriars Old Boys was to take place at the school that very day. Beaming with pleasure, I turned to Myra.

"I shall see all my old schoolfellows to-day, dear," I said. "It will be a real treat to gaze on the old familiar faces. There is to be an Old Boys' reunion."

"Oh, how splendid, grandpa!"

Directly the meal was over, we jumped into the jolly old aeroplane, and went speeding away through the ether. Being rather a dab at flying, and having a chart on board, I soon located Greyfriars, and singled out the cricket field as being an ideal landing-ground.

I shut off the engine, and we glided swiftly to earth.

A crowd of juniors watched us land. They informed me that I was the first Old Boy to arrive.

I escorted Myra round the school, which did not appear to have changed a great deal. Of course, there were many improvements and additions. The school had its own wireless station, for example.

Lying back in an armchair, sunning himself in the doorway of the porter's lodge, was a wizened old man, whose face seemed familiar to me. I spoke to him, but he made no reply. He seemed to be stone deaf.

I beckoned to one of the juniors.

"Who is this old chap?" I inquired.

"Why, that's Gosling, the porter, sir. He's a hundred and fifteen years old.

It's the thyroid gland treatment that's kept him going so long. The doctor declares he's good for another fifty years yet."

"Great Scott!" I gasped. "Fancy old Gossy being here all these years! Why, he was the lodge-keeper here when I was a boy!"

"He's beginning to get past it now, sir," said the junior.

"So I should think! You can't expect a man of a hundred and fifteen to frisk about like a fag in the First! Even the thyroid gland treatment can't keep a man active for ever. But stay! Who is this coming towards the gates?"

A very plump old gentleman was being wheeled towards us in a bath-

profusely, and turned to his bath-chair attendants.

"Push me across to the tuckshop at once!" he commanded.

"Very good, sir!"

I stood gazing after the bath-chair as it was wheeled away.

"The same old Bunter!" I murmured. "He's always was like that, Myra. Like Mr. Micawber, he lives in a perpetual state of expectancy. He must have trotted out that postal-order story of his about a million times, in the course of his career."

Myra laughed.

"Here come some more Old Boys, grandpa!" she said. "Do you know any of them?"

A number of bearded old men, most of whom leaned heavily upon crutches, came shuffling in at the school gateway.

I singled out Bob Cherry at once. Bob had no crutches. He held himself erect, and his bearing was dignified and military, as befitted a retired major-general.

Harry Wharton was there, too—a grey-haired old warrior, who gazed at the ivy-clad tower of Greyfriars with affectionate interest.

A little, old Chinese, with a wizened, yellow face, was among the party.

"Me Wun Lung," he said, in a cracked and feeble voice. "Surely you haven't forgotten li'l Wun Lung, Browney? You used to pullee my pig-tail when we were in the Remove together."

I laughed heartily at the recollection; and then my gaze fell upon the figure of a very hefty old man, who looked as though he had plenty of "punch" in him yet. His face was badly scarred, and he had a cauliflower ear. I knew him at once for Bolsover major, the ex-heavy-weight boxing champion of the world.

A handsome touring-car then drew up at the school gates, and out of it stepped Mr. Peter Todd, now Prime Minister of England. His appearance created quite a flutter, and we crowded round him and wrung his hand warmly.

"I always said you'd make a name for yourself if you went into Parliament, Toddy!" said Harry Wharton.

It was a treat to see all the dear old chappies, and to toddle round the school with them, chatting about the days of long ago, when we were boys together in the Greyfriars Remove. It was, in fact, the most enjoyable day I have ever spent. Myra enjoyed it, too; and we were a very happy pair as we sped homewards in our swift-moving aeroplane.



A fat old man eating jam tarts was wheeled into the Close.

chair. So plump and weighty was he that it took three persons to push him along. A pair of large spectacles was perched on his nose; and in spite of the fact that he was practically toothless, he was eating jam-tarts out of a paper bag.

The plump old gentleman fairly beamed when he caught sight of me.

"I say, "Browney!" he croaked. "Fancy meeting you, after all these years!"

I nearly fell down. For the speaker was no other than William George Bunter!

We shook hands, and then Bunter whispered hoarsely in my ear:

"Sorry to trouble you, old chap, but the fact is, I'm rather hard up. Ever since we last met—fifty years ago—I've been expecting a postal-order—from one of my titled relations, you know. The beastly thing must have got lost in the post. I've bullied and badgered the Postmaster-General about it, but without result. If you would be good enough to advance me five bob—"

I smiled, and, producing a couple of half-crowns, I dropped them into Billy Bunter's palm. He thanked me most

THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL

will be out shortly.

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[Supplement III.

Rookwood's Amazing Carnival—a Special Story by a Rookwood Chum Next Week!

"THE SHERIFF'S TRAP!"

(Continued from page 12.)

slip, unless the post-wagon was accompanied by armed men as an escort—and it was not.

Bob Lawless' cheery face grew suddenly grave.

"Look out!" he muttered.

"Bob! What—?"

"Mind your eye!" said Bob. He jerked his whip towards a clump of timber a score of yards ahead of the rumbling wagon.

"Somebody's there—and I guess—"

He broke off as a horseman suddenly pushed out of the timber into the trail.

The schoolboys' hearts bounded.

The horseman halted in the centre of the trail, and held up his hand—with a revolver in it.

The man's face was covered by a flour-bag, inverted over his head, and tied loosely about his neck.

Slits were cut in it for eyes and mouth, but not a glimpse of the rider's features could be seen.

It was as complete a disguise as could have been desired.

The raised hand and the revolver were enough for Bob Lawless and his comrades.

But for the sheriff's instructions Bob would have whipped on his team and made a desperate effort to rush down the robber and get clear.

But his instructions had been precise, and he had promised to obey.

He slackened rein.

"Halt!"

The sharp call came from the slit in the flour-bag that disguised the road-agent.

Bob drew in his team.

As the wagon stopped, with the leader only a few yards from the halted horseman, two other riders appeared from the clump of timber.

They rode up to the wagon.

Frank Richards & Co. watched them in silence.

The post-wagon was at the mercy of the Flour-Bag Gang, and resistance was now impossible, if the schoolboys had thought of it.

The man in the trail made a gesture with his revolver.

"Put up your hands!"

"Up with them!" murmured Bob.

Three pairs of hands went up obediently. Then the horseman rode nearer.

"You're not the usual driver!" he snapped.

"Nope!" agreed Bob.

"What are you doing here, then?"

"Gunten got cold feet, and wouldn't come."

There was a faint chuckle under the flour-bag.

"So you took his place?"

"Correct! Gunten reckoned this might happen!" explained Bob.

"And you weren't afraid?"

"Not a bit!" said Bob Lawless cheerily.

"I guess you're after the dust, not after a loop in a lasso for your neck!"

The three road-agents looked at one another and chuckled hoarsely. Bob's coolness seemed to entertain them.

"I guess you're right," said the leader.

"Keep your hands up, and mind your own business, and you won't be hurt."

"I guess I'm going to be as quiet as a tame lamb," answered Bob Lawless. "It looks to me as if they've made you a present of the dust, and I'm blessed if I understand it. But it's no business of mine!"

"Go through the wagon!" rapped out the leader.

His followers were in the wagon in a few seconds.

They dragged the packages and the post-sacks roughly about, evidently looking for the "dust" which they knew to be in the wagon.

"Hyer it is!"

"Good! Drop it in the trail!"

The sealed sack which Old Man Gunten

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had placed in the wagon with so much care crashed down into the trail.

The two robbers jumped down after it.

"Cut it open!" ordered the leader. "It's a bit too hefty for one hoss!"

A knife slashed the sack open.

Frank Richards & Co., with their hands up, watched the proceedings in silence.

From the slashed sack a number of smaller bags rolled, each of them securely tied and sealed.

There were exclamations of delight from the three road-agents at the sight.

For the buckskin bags were of the kind usually containing gold-dust, and each of them was crammed full, and evidently heavy.

"By gum! What luck!" muttered the leader. "What thundering luck! I guess they'll be sorry they opened their mouths so wide about this consignment."

The three road-agents eagerly collected up the bags, dividing them into three lots—of four bags each.

These they crammed into their saddle-bags.

Through the slits in the masks their eyes could be seen, gleaming with greed and satisfaction.

"By thunder! What a haul!" muttered the leader.

"I guess there's more to be had in the post-sacks!" muttered one of the others.

"But this is a regular bonanza! Thunder! What's that?"

There was a sudden streak of light against the clouds at a distance over the wide plain.

The three schoolboys in the wagon and the road-agents in the trail stared at it, startled, for a second or two.

The flash faded.

"A rocket!" muttered Bob Lawless, in wonder.

"It's a signal!" shouted the leader of the Flour-Bag Gang. "Thunder! Get on your hosses!"

"But the post-sacks—"

"Fool! I tell you it's a signal! Isn't ten thousand dollars in dust enough for you, without a rope as well? Ride, I tell you—ride!"

The leader was already in the saddle, putting spurs to his horse.

His followers mounted in hot haste, and rode after him.

"Was that a signal?" ejaculated Frank Richards blankly.

Bob Lawless nodded.

"It couldn't be anything else," he said.

"But—but what—"

"I give it up," said Bob. "I can't guess—My word! Look!" He pointed with his whip.

From a patch of trees on the plain four horsemen had emerged.

A few moments later five or six riders appeared over the crest of a roll in the prairie.

And, to the amazement of the schoolboys, riders started into view in six or seven different directions.

"What does it mean?" exclaimed Beauclerc.

"There's Sheriff Henderson!"

"And Billy Cook!" yelled Bob Lawless.

"My hat!"

There was a thunder of hoofs on the prairie.

Frank Richards & Co. stood up in the wagon, standing on the packages to get a better view.

The plain that had seemed utterly deserted seemed now alive with furious riders.

The three masked men were riding hard—riding for their lives.

But ahead of them, other horsemen had appeared, and they drew rein in desperation.

The chums saw them separate, each taking a different direction, riding frantically, with lashing whip and stabbing spur.

Bob Lawless gave a shout.

"Oh, thunder! I can see it now! It's a trap!"

"A trap!" repeated Frank Richards blankly.

"A trap—and the Flour-Bag Gang have fallen into it!" yelled Bob. "Hurrah!"

And Frank and Beauclerc, understanding at last how matters stood, joined in his shout.

"Hurrah!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Hunted Down!

"HALLO, yonkers!"

Billy Cook, the foreman of the

Lawless ranch, came riding up to the post-wagon, with a grin on his bronzed face.

He swept off his Stetson hat in salute to the schoolboys.

"Safe and sound?" he grinned.

"You bet!" answered Bob, laughing.

The plains were clear now to the sight.

The horsemen had vanished on the rolling prairie, pursuers and pursued riding with frantic speed.

Billy Cook chuckled.

"S'prised you some, hay?" he asked.

"Rather a surprise," said Frank Richards.

"What the thump are you doing here, Billy?"

Another chuckle from the big cattleman.

"I guess we're all in the game, to round up the Flour-Bag Gang," he explained.

"You saw the rocket?"

"It was a signal?" asked Frank.

"Yep."

"And the sheriff—"

"I guess the sheriff was out with his men," chuckled the ranchman. "And Mr. Lawless is out, too, with nearly all the cowboys from the ranch, as well as some galoots from Cedar Camp, and the cattleman from Silver Creek way. I reckon, sonnies, that the sheriff laid his little game out well. There's thirty men looking for those fresh galoots, and if they get clear you can call me a John Chinaman!"

"Oh!" said Frank. "So the secret about the gold consignment was allowed to leak out on purpose?"

"Yep!" grinned Billy Cook.

"And that's why the wagon wasn't guarded?"

"Yep. Nearly spiled the game, when that young idiot Gunten refused to drive," said Billy Cook. "The kid couldn't be trusted with the secret, of course, and he was skeered. He reckoned the road-agents would hear of the dust, and would be after it, and he wasn't risking his precious skin, not if he knew it. And if a man had been put in to drive, the sheriff reckoned that the Flour-Bag Gang might be uneasy, and hold off; they mightn't have stopped the post-wagon with a sheriff's man in charge. And they was wanted to stop it—see?"

"I see," said Frank.

"And there was a galoot sticking on top of the biggest tree hereabouts with a telescope," said Billy Cook, chuckling explosively. "Why, siree, that galoot was able to see nearly all the trail between Cedar Camp and Silver Creek with his pesky spy-glass, and as soon as the wagon was stopped he sent off the signal. He'd been watching you since you were half a mile out of Cedar Camp, and you never knowed it."

"And the road-agents didn't!" grinned Bob Lawless.

"Nary a know!" chuckled the ranchman.

"And I guess if those galoots ride like thunder it won't help them any, for there's men dotted over the prairie in all directions, ready to cut them off. This hyer trail is watched so that a fly couldn't crawl away without being spotted. Ha, ha, ha!"

Crack, crack!

Billy Cook's laugh suddenly broke off at the sound of shots in the distance.

Crack!

"Shootin'," remarked the ranchman coolly.

"Yep, I reckoned there would be shootin' before they was rounded up."

Frank Richards and his chums stared away across the plains, their faces suddenly grave and set.

"Hyer come some of the boys," said Billy Cook.

Two horsemen came in sight, leading a third horse between them, on the back of which a man sat, bound to his saddle with a lasso.

It was one of the road-agents, and the flour-bag had been dragged from his face, disclosing a rough, savage, bearded countenance.

"I guess that's number one," remarked Billy Cook. "The others won't be fur off, I reckon."

The sullen prisoner was brought up to the post-wagon, taken from his horse, and pitched into the wagon, bound hand and foot.

The schoolboys continued to watch the plain.

It was bare to the sight, but from the distance there came again and again the cracking of rifles.

From behind a ridge a bunch of horsemen appeared at last, several of them supporting a body in their arms as they rode.

Frank Richards & Co. looked at one another, their faces pale now.

The horsemen came up to the wagon, and, with intense relief, the chums saw that the man they carried still lived.

A flour-bag hung loosely round his neck, showing that he was one of the gang of road-agents.

His harsh, bearded face was ghastly pale, and he groaned as he was moved, one of his arms hanging uselessly by his side.

He was placed in the wagon beside the other prisoner, and Billy Cook knelt beside him there, rendering him some rough aid.

"That's two!" said Bob Lawless, in a low voice.

Neither of the two was the man who had evidently been the leader of the outlaws.

That rascal, whom the schoolboys more than suspected was Poker Pete, of Thompson, was still at large, and it began to look as though he had got clear.

Horsemen arrived on the trail from various directions, breathless, with steaming steeds. But they came empty-handed.

They called out inquiries to Billy Cook as they came up, and the ranchman shook his head.

"Only two, so far," he said. "Where's the sheriff?"

"Arter the other galoot, I reckon."

More than an hour passed, and there was no sign of the sheriff, or of the leader of the Flour-Bag Gang.

"I reckon he's got clear, Billy," Bob Lawless remarked at last.

"I guess it looks like it," admitted the ranchman. "But the sheriff's still in the saddle. I guess he won't let up easy."

"They divided the bags of gold—dust among them," said Frank. "If he gets clear he'll take a third part of the gold consignment with him."

"By gum, yes!" said Bob Lawless. "You never thought of that, Billy."

The ranchman laughed.

"He's welcome to a third of the dust, or all of it fur that matter," he said.

"What?"

"Sonnies, this hyer little game was laid careful, but the sheriff knowed it was possible something might go awry," explained the ranchman. "There wasn't gold-dust in the buckskin-bags, only powdered quartz, and I reckon the hull billin' wasn't worth ten cents!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

"Then," said Beauclere, "if the man gets clear with his plunder, he will find—"

"When he opens them bags he'll find powdered quartz in them, and he's welcome to it!" answered Billy Cook.

"It was only a dummy consignment, then?"

"Yep."

"Oh, my hat!" said Frank Richards, laughing. "This was a bad break for the Flour-Bag Gang! They've been done all along the line!"

"I calculate that's so!" said Billy Cook. "But, by thunder, where is the sheriff? I guess I'm going on, and you yonkers had better drive on to Silver Creek. You won't see any more road-agents this journey, and you can bet on that."

And Bob Lawless drove on with his chums, the post-wagon being accompanied by several of the horsemen in charge of the prisoners.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Struck Down.

FRANK RICHARDS & Co. left the post-wagon at Silver Creek.

There it was handed over to the postmaster, and the prisoners were taken out and lodged in the lumber gaol.

The three schoolboys borrowed horses, and rode on rapidly towards Thompson, anxious to hear how the chase of the Flour-Bag Gang had ended.

Bob uttered an exclamation as a horseman appeared on the trail from among the patches of timber.

"Poppa!"

It was Mr. Lawless, and he greeted the schoolboys with a smile.

"Going to Thompson, poppa?" asked Bob.



HELD UP BY THE FLOUR-BAG GANG! The rustlers dragged out the post sacks from the wagon and dropped them into the trail. "Hyer is the gold, boys!" said one of them in a muffled voice. "Cut it open. I'll keep these boys held up!" said the man with the revolver. (See Chapter 3.)

"Yes. Do you know how many of the gang were taken?" asked the rancher.

"Two, so far as we know—one wounded."

"Then there's one more. One got through, with the sheriff close on his heels," said Mr. Lawless. "I'm rather anxious to see Mr. Henderson. There's been shooting, and—"

He broke off with a rather clouded brow.

The schoolboys fell silent as they rode on with the rancher.

There had been shooting on the plains, and it was quite likely that all the damage had not been upon one side.

It was clear that Mr. Lawless was a little anxious as to what had happened to the sheriff, and the schoolboys shared his anxiety.

Thompson came in sight at last, and they rode into the town, and stopped at Gunten's Store in Main Street as the dusk was falling.

There was a crowd in the store and in the street outside, and a ceaseless buzz of voices.

From the talk of the crowd the schoolboys quickly learned that two of the sheriff's men had come in on foot, and that their horses had been shot, and another had ridden home with a broken arm.

But where was the sheriff?

A roar of voices down the street drew the attention of the chums of Cedar Creek and the rest of the crowd.

Three horsemen were riding into Main Street—and the flare of the naphtha-lamps—from the dusk of the plain.

Mr. Todgers and Mr. Lawrence—the schoolboys knew them—were supporting the horse-man who rode in the middle, and he rode with bowed head and bandaged breast.

It was the Sheriff of Thompson!

Round the three surged the eager crowd as they halted outside the sheriff's house.

Mr. Henderson was lifted from his saddle, quickly but gently.

His face was deadly-white, his eyes almost closed, but he uttered no sound as he was carried into his house.

A hush fell on the crowd outside.

Mr. Todgers—Chunky's father—came out of

the sheriff's house with a grave face. Frank Richards caught his sleeve.

"He's wounded, Mr. Todgers?" gasped Frank.

"A bullet in the chest," said the farmer quietly. "Has someone fetched the doctor?"

"Poppa's gone for him," said Bob. "Here he comes."

Dr. Jones passed into the sheriff's house, and the door closed behind him.

It was some time before Dr. Jones came out, and then there were eager inquiries, though in low tones.

"I guess it's serious enough," was the doctor's reply. "But the sheriff's a good man, and he don't touch the tanglefoot, and I reckon he's got a good chance of pulling through. That's all."

That was the verdict.

Frank Richards & Co. rode homeward with Mr. Lawless with grave faces.

One of the road-agents had escaped, after all, and in his house at Thompson the sheriff lay between life and death.

As Frank and his companions rode out on the trail they left the frontier town in a roar behind them.

The sheriff was popular, and he had been struck down in doing his duty, and if the man who had fired the shot had been brought in a prisoner there is little doubt what would have happened to him.

It was fortunate for the captured outlaws that they were at Silver Creek, with many long miles of prairie between them and the enraged crowd at Thompson.

"If the galoot had been caught it would have been a case of Judge Lynch, I reckon," muttered Bob Lawless.

Vere Beauclere's face was pale. He was thinking of what might have been if his father had not broken with Poker Pete and his associates.

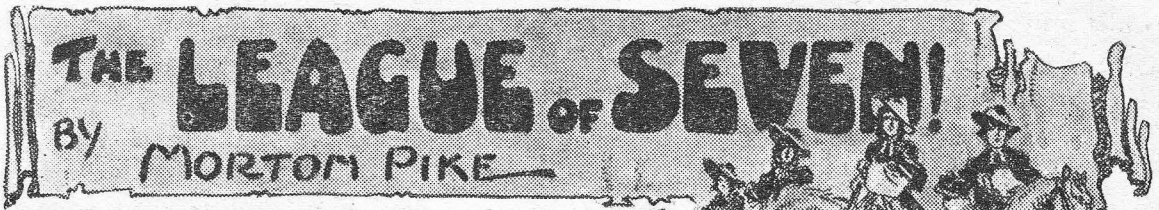
He little dreamed of what was threatening, and how soon those dreaded words "Judge Lynch" were to ring in his ears like a death-knell.

THE END.
(There will be another breathless tale of the Backwoods next week, entitled: "In the Grip of the Law.")

CIVIL WAR!

After many anxious months of plotting, the time comes to strike the first blow for the cause. The long, thin line of wild-looking men, badly armed, but full of hope and pluck, move forward to fight for the man they think will make a better monarch than the tyrannical, relentless James II.!

MONMOUTH STRIKES THE FIRST BLOW!

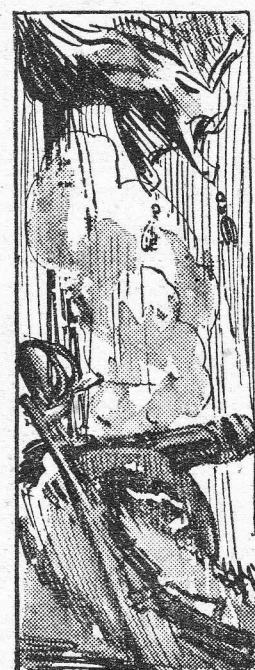


The amazing adventures of **DICK TREVOR**, adventurer, at the time of the great Monmouth Rebellion!

WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

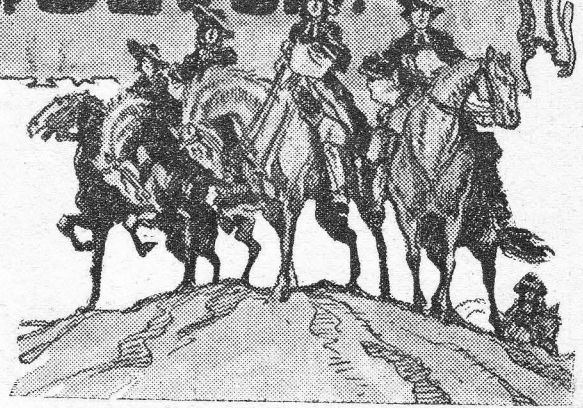
DICK TREVOR, nephew of Sir Anthony Trevor, who has come to London to seek his fortune, is walking through the city, visiting the places of interest, when he comes across a purse lying in the gutter. He picks it up, and, turning a corner in a road, is just in time to see a man running for his life down the street, and behind him he sees a crowd of yelling townfolk 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 realises 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.

Almost immediately upon Dick's arrival, the house is raided by the King's Guard. Sir Anthony Trevor, Dick's uncle, has betrayed the conspirators to King James.



Fortunately or the League the secret passage through which they escape is unknown to the traitor, and they are able to ride away unmolested. By various routes they gain a new hiding-place, where they stay in hiding. Meanwhile, Dick, who is with them, is made a member of the League, and they decide to call themselves the "League of Seven." A day later an express messenger arrives with the news

that Monmouth has landed at Lyme, and, in order to join the duke at once, The League set out for Lyme. Dick Trevor, with Ned Pouch, a friend of his, are detained at a certain village on the way, but eventually they arrive at Lyme Regis, a day or so later than Captain Lavender and the others.



(Now read on.)

Dick Trevor meets the Duke of Monmouth!

UPON the Church Cliff, overlooking the Channel, they had set up a standard of deep green silk. The sinking sun kissed its folds, which the breeze blew lazily out. All the world, indeed, seemed gathered here, for a dense mob of folk clustered in a semi-circle about a little group under the banner, a group of half a dozen gentlemen, supporting by their presence one tall gentleman richly clad in purple, who alone wore a plumed hat, the others standing bareheaded beside him. A very handsome man, he in the purple—a man of thirty-six, bearing some faint likeness to his father, the "Merry Monarch," in the length of his face and the form of his brow, but with a beauty of feature that Charles never possessed.

No wonder the country people flocked to see him, and stepped forward in one long procession, eager to fight for the gallant young prince who had promised to uphold their liberties, and whose person was well known in the West, whither he had oftentimes come a-hunting in happier days.

Then, too, he was framed as an accomplished jockey, for had he not carried off the prize at Newmarket in 1671, against his friend, "Tom of Ten Thousand," whom the vile Koningsmarck had had murdered; and the King of France's Plate, too, at St. Germain's! And what better appeal can one make to the hearts of an English mob than good horsemanship?

So up came the yokels, and the cloth-workers and the seamen, and all the tailors and shoemakers of Lyme and Axminster and Crewkerne and Bridport, and half a hundred sleepy little places, until the officer seated at a wooden drum, pen in hand, grew weary of setting down their names, and turned gladly at the sound of hoofs behind him, thankful for any diversion that would procure him a moment's rest.

The officer was none other than Harry Lavender, who had changed his red coat for a pearl-coloured silk, and who now sprang to his feet with a bound that overset the ink-horn.

"Your Grace," cried Harry Lavender, as they all turned to view the newcomer, "tis

Master Trevor, of whom I spoke, and the good lad, Ned Pouch, whose father is even now drubbing some notion of their exercise into the footmen yonder!"

Dick, flushing scarlet with excitement, flung himself from his saddle, and uncovered within a few paces of the standard, and Harry Lavender presented him without ceremony to the duke.

"Another volunteer for the good cause, sir," said Captain Lavender, pulling Dick forward by the sleeve. "Master Richard Trevor, of Trevor Court, a young gentleman whose skill with rapier and pistol has stood him in good stead in spite of his youth."

"If they equal his seat on horseback, then is Master Trevor exceeding well equipped for the battle of life," said the Duke of Monmouth, extending a frank hand to Dick, who bowed over it. "I have great happiness in this meeting, sir, the more so as I learn from Captain Lavender that you wish to espouse our cause."

"I am with your Majesty to the end," said Dick stoutly.

"Nay, we will keep the 'Majesty' until I have turned my uncle out of Whitehall!" laughed Monmouth. "At present 'your Grace' will suffice. My Lord Grey, you are wanting a cornet for your regiment. What say you if we appointed Master Trevor here?"

"I say right welcome to it," replied that nobleman, bowing to Trevor. "I would all the rest were of such mettle."

"Saw you aught of the King's troops, Master Trevor?" said the Duke of Monmouth, some anxiety in his voice, which he had lowered that the townfolk gathered near should not hear.

"Nothing but some red coats not far from this," answered Dick. "But we did not court their closer acquaintance, sir."

"Ha, your grace, 'twould be the Dorset Militia, from whom we have little to fear!" cried a squire who had joined the duke.

"Be it so," said Monmouth. "Captain Lavender, I fear me you are a-weary with so much scribing, and there are yet many more stout fellows waiting. Someone else shall take your place, and go you with Master Trevor here, to find him a lodging and stabling for that bonny mare, of whose possession I declare I envy him."

The duke smiled pleasantly, and bowed to Trevor who went away towards the town with Harry Lavender, and a heart bursting with loyalty to the handsome invader.



"Master Trevor, you will please to come to me at the George at nine of the clock, when you shall receive your orders," said my Lord Grey, as they passed him.

"I shall not fail, sir," replied Dick; and he felt as though another two inches had been added to his height.

"Who is my captain?" he asked Lavender. "He is the Lord Grey of Werke, Dick, and none of the best at that," replied Lavender. "He figured in one of the greatest of the many scandals of the last reign, and was also exiled for his complicity in the Rye House plot. Still, he is your commander now, and I doubt not you may find him pleasant enough, though I had rather you had served under the Earl of Dumbarton or Jack Churchill; but they are on the other side of the hedge now, boy, and we must e'en make the best of things. But tell me—how fared you on your journey down here?"

"We met with an amazing adventure," replied Trevor. "I will tell you. Perhaps you can find a solution to the mystery."

And in a low voice he narrated to the leader of the League of Seven all that had happened at that lonely inn.

When he had finished, Harry Lavender looked him straight in the eyes.

"You have had the narrowest chance of death that you are ever likely to have—no, I am wrong; you may have others, and from the same hand," said the ex-guardsman, his eye dilating, and his mouth setting hard.

"You think, then—" faltered Dick; but the captain interrupted him.

"I do not think—I know!" he said sternly. "Twas your heart that knife should have pierced. I can tell you whose hairy fist 'twas that drove it into so strange a sheath, and, if you wish, the brain that prompted it!"

Dick had turned very pale. "Ha!" said Harry Lavender. "I see that you have suspicions also, and they are right. Sir Anthony Trevor shall answer for this one day, for 'twas Mike Burke, his creature, who did that fell deed."

"And what manner of man is Master Mike Burke?" asked Dick, as they turned the corner of the street.

"A huge, red-headed brute, strong as a bull; a master of the rapier, and bold as a lion when the liquor is in him; a man without scruple, a rogue, a thief, a cunning scoundrel with as many disguises as a stage-player. Truly a dangerous enemy, Dick boy; but here are we at an hostelry where I have bespoken your quarters. 'Tis hard by the George, where the duke is staying, and I doubt not they can squeeze Ned Pouch in somewhere."

Ned had ridden behind them into the town, leading Dick's mare, and he now called aloud:

"Master Richard, there is someone following us from the duke, who, I think, has need of you."

The two friends stayed their steps, and saw Lord Grey of Werke coming towards them as fast as his heavy riding-boots would permit.

His round, clean-shaven face was red with the exertion, and he mopped his brow with a lace kerchief.

"Master Trevor," said my lord, "I am going to give you no rest. There is a matter of some importance, which I think will be to your liking."

"My lord, I am all attention," said Dick eagerly.

"Then, to be brief, 'tis this: We have just learned that a certain farmer, ill-disposed to his Grace, hath nigh upon twenty serviceable horses, which he has design to carry beyond our reach to-night. The place where they lie is but short eight miles from Lyme, and our cavalry badly in want of mounts. Will you take a half-score of men and bring them in?"

"Give me but two men—one of them a guide—and I warrant me that they shall be in the market-place before midnight."

"Yet rumour hath it that the militia musters at Bridport, so the service is not without its dangers."

"'Tis none the less to my liking on that account, my lord!" said Dick Trevor.

Ned had listened to the conversation with eyes and ears wide open, and now doffed his hat to my lord.

"By your leave, sir, there is hanging in yonder shop door some rope halter that would be mighty useful to have with us," he said.

"Take it, boy—take whatever you will!" said Lord Grey, waving his hand largely. "The town is ours, and I only trust we may find the rest of the country as accommodating as the good people here."

Ned sprang down and ran across the street, returning with a long coil of hempen cord on his arm. And Harry Lavender, having taken charge of Dick's belongings, and Lord Grey having beckoned two mounted men who chanced to pass at the moment, Cornet Dick Trevor vaulted into the saddle and trotted away after his guide.

The Herding of the Horses.

DUSK was falling over the countryside.

The last rosy glow still lingered in the western sky, but already the hedgerows were growing shadowy and dim; and, by the time Dick Trevor and his men passed Captain Daventry's outpost, it was almost dark.

"Good fortune attend you, Master Trevor," said that officer, coming out into the middle of the road. "If aught goes wrong, despatch one of your men back to me, and we will send in word to Lyme."

Then for half a dozen miles there was nothing but the gloom of the lanes, the tramp of their horses, and the droning flight of some belated beetle under the oak-trees.

They stopped on the hill-tops to listen, but the summer night was hot and silent.

"You are certain of the spot?" said Dick to the guide.

"That am I, sir, seeing I have worked for Farmer Cox this nine year. We are not far away now. And the horses are in a grassy meadow in yonder hollow."

Dick questioned the man closely, until he had mastered the lay of the ground, the situation of the farm, and all the winding cross-roads that plunged through their nut hedges. And at the bottom of a hill, overhung with a network of leafy boughs, the young commander called a halt.

"They are there, sir," whispered the man, holding up his hand.

And, in the stillness of the night, they could hear the stamp of hoofs, muffled by long grass, and the swish, swish of the herbage, as some restless animal waded through it, cropping as he went.

"Stay here until I whistle," said Trevor.

And, dismounting, he stole cautiously up the hill.

At the top was a gate, sunk deep in the hedge, and, stepping noiselessly to it, Dick rested his elbows on the topmost bar, and looked down into the meadow, where the horses stood.

There was the usual little orchestra of snorts and heavy breathing, occasionally broken in upon by a squeal; but as far as he could make out there were no watchers save himself, and he turned to reconnoitre the farm, whose chimneys rose above a hazel copse a musket-shot away.

As he turned, a dark figure approached, with the heavy, slouching gait of a yokel.

"Heigho! My stars! Who are you, and what do you here?" cried the man, suddenly seeing the boy when too late to retreat.

"I believe any man is free to look over a wayside gate, friend," said Dick quietly.

"'Tis my gate," said the man, because he had been so startled that he could not think of anything better for the moment.

"Then those will be your horses yonder?" said Dick. "For, to say truth, I had mistaken their tramping for a patrol of the Duke of Monmouth's rascals, and I crept up here to see if I might get safely by—which is my road to Bridport, unless I am wrong?"

"'Twill carry you to Bridport, sure enough, sir," said the farmer, immensely relieved by Dick's words. "'Tis a matter of four miles. And thither I go with these beasts, lest Monmouth snap them up before morning."

"Yet can you not take them without help, surely?" said Dick, with doubt in his voice.

"No, sir; for there be twenty-one, and all fresh grassed. But I have four stout

AMBUSHED BY THE KING'S MEN!



"Halt!" cried a sharp voice from the overhanging trees, and a moment later the road in front of the cavalcade was filled with soldiers. "Musketees, handle your firelocks! Now, sir, will you advance and give the countersign!" Dick Trevor pulled up his horse. He had fallen into the trap! (See page 20.)

THE FIRST BLOW!



Dick heard a hoarse groan beside him, and turned just in time to catch Colonel Venner as he reeled in his saddle. "The rogues have got me!" he gasped. "Ride on, for your life!" (See page 22.)

for 'tis parlous journeying nowadays for a single traveller. Maybe you go to join the King's troops at Bridport, young gentleman?"

"Nay; I have other business," said Dick sternly, springing suddenly at the farmer, seizing the man's throat with an iron grip, and bearing him back among the fern in the hedge-bottom. "If you utter a sound I shall most assuredly kill you! Lie quiet, and you will come to no harm."

Dick's action had been so unexpected that the man lay dazed for a minute, and the muzzle of a pistol pressed against his temple bade him eloquently to hold his peace.

One low whistle went out upon the air, and the next instant Ned and the two troopers were beside him.

"Quick!" whispered Dick. "One of you bind the man, and take my weapon. If he calls aloud, shoot him. You, my friend"—and he spoke to the second trooper—"give close ear to the road. Others will presently come by it. Ned, you and I will into the meadow. Is he bound? Good!"

And, closing the gate behind them, they went down the slope into the dell, where all the horses had clustered.

'Twas hazardous work, for the colts were timid, and the long legs had a habit of lashing out at unexpected moments. But the two lads soothed and petted and whispered strange things that horses understand, and one after another—bay, brown, black, roan, skewbald, and dun—they were haltered and led up to the gate, tied head and tail—all save a chestnut mare that promised such waste of precious time that they let her go.

"Thou old rogue!" said the kneeling trooper, who had been left with the prisoner. "I little thought to have humbled thee after this fashion."

"Joe Hedges, thou shalt hang for to-night's work!" replied the farmer, glaring at his former servant, and grinding his teeth with futile rage.

"Not so loud, Master Cox! Thou canst speak up when thou tell'st King James all about it!" grinned the trooper. "Meantime—"

And the pistol-barrel pressed warningly. "Open the gate, Ned," said Dick, coming up at the moment. "Into your saddles."

We have been over long already. I will take lead. You, Pouch, stay a few minutes beside this unfortunate man, whom the duke will repay for his loss, I doubt not. The others ride here you may be most needed. Now, forward!"

And, springing into his saddle, the cornet started his singular convoy, which filed out of the meadow and down the hill.

Even then it was by no means plain sailing, some of the young horses plunging wildly. But when they reached the level, and broke into a trot, things went more smoothly, and Dick's face smiled contentedly in the darkness.

"Be you sure, sir, that you will know the way?" said one of his men, riding up.

"If I have ridden a road once, I am never at a loss, no matter on the darkest night," said Dick. "But 'twere well to stay here. Pouch is over long, and I trust naught has happened to him."

They pulled in, and listened, and were rewarded by the gallop of a single horseman in their rear.

"Hasten, Master Richard!" cried Ned, dashing up. "The rogue is yelling lustily, and I heard voices answering him from the farm!"

Distant shouting fell upon their ears. It was like the bellow of a raging bull. And Joe Hedges laughed.

"E be a very violent man, be Master Cox," said he, "and a bad man to his people. Like as not they won't dare unfasten him till morning."

They started the horses once more, and kept them to a canter—up hill and down dale—one mile, two miles, three miles.

Away in the far distance shone the lights of Lyme Regis, and the soft wind from the sea lifted Dick's long curls.

"'Tis not beyond ten of the clock!" he cried, turning round in his saddle. "I know not what hour his Grace seeks his couch, but we shall bring him pleasant dreams to-night. Turn we not to the left by the elm-trees?"

"Ay, to the left, sir!" answered Joe Hedges. "T'other road makes for Axminster."

The man fell back to cudgel an unruly bay filly, and that brought him within three horses of the tail of the line, where Ned rode beside a great white cart-mare.

There was a hill before them, and the pace slackened.

"So-ho, my beauties, there is time enough to breathe you!" said Dick, bearing on the leader's halter, and bringing the cavalcade to a walk.

"Halt!" cried a sharp voice from the darkness of the overhanging trees. "Musketeers, handle your firelocks! Now, sir, will you advance, and give the counter-sign, or must we blow you to perdition?"

When it was too late, Dick saw that the road was barred by a company of infantry, and knew that they were the soldiers of King James!

Dick Trevor knew that his very life hung upon the balance for the next few moments, and yet he smiled calmly in the darkness.

"Sir," said he, removing his beaver courteously, "I have no password, seeing that I am upon a strange errand, and newly come into this part; but if you are of the Bridport Garrison, then are we well met."

fellows who will be here anon," said the farmer, unfastening the gate. "You are welcome to ride along with us, an you like,



Drawing his rapier Lord Grey turned in his saddle. "Charge, boys, charge! They run yonder like sheep!" There was a movement in the troop and the men began to break into a gallop. Before them in the darkness they could distinguish a street end, and Dick was heading straight for it.— (See page 22.)

"It matters not what we may be," said the officer sternly. "Who are you?"
 "I am Richard Trevor, nephew to Sir Anthony, of Trevor Court, in Somersetshire," replied Dick, with a great affectation of pride in the relationship, which he was far from feeling.

"Ah!" exclaimed a second voice, in the shadow of the trees. "Sir Anthony is a friend of his Majesty's; best have a care, captain!"
 The first speaker coughed, and planted the butt of his half-pike on the ground with a thud.

"For whom are you, sir?" he asked, still having some suspicion that all was not as it should be.

"I am for King James," replied Dick. "And even now I am bringing some horses for his service, at the entreaty of worthy Master Cox, who fears they may be gathered up by bad men."

"A thousand pardons, sir!" cried the officer, doffing his hat until its long feather swept the dust of the lane. "I know Master Cox well, and we have been expecting him. He rideth probably at the tail of your charge?"

"No, sir; he cometh on behind us with his household goods, thinking it safer that they should lie in Bridport; and I, passing with three of my servants, did offer my services, for the poor man was well-nigh frantic lest Monmouth's men should visit him!"

"'Twas well you came not by an hour since," laughed the officer, "else had you gone straight into the lion's den. This is the road to Lyme."

"Then are we well met indeed!" he cried. "Have you many in your party? They say the duke is very strong."

"We are but a post of twenty men, yet sufficient to hold this hill-top against yonder rabble, methinks, if I know aught of our Red Dorset boys!"

Suddenly a stern challenge rang out of the darkness, and Dick heard a faint crash among the nut-bushes half-way down the hill in his rear.

"There goes the boy Ned," he thought to himself. "They will soon learn of this unfortunate blunder at Lyme. My chance is to gain time until my Lord Grey gets to horse and comes to the rescue."

"Well, sir," said he, "if you will be good enough to point me out the way, I shall not be sorry to be rid of these beasts, for I have no liking for the task of groom; yet will I first get my fellows to shorten the string by tying them two and two, since they will travel the better. Ho, Gregory, Sam, Abel, come forward to me!"

And, turning in his saddle, he called to an imaginary following.

There was no reply.
 Nothing but the stamp of horses, some of whom were growing restive, and others cropping the grass by the laneside.

"The rogues!" cried Trevor, smiting his thigh with well-simulated wrath. "They have become white-livered, and left me to my fate, thinking you rebels, sir! How am I to conduct my charge into Bridport alone?"

"I will send two musketeers with you, Master Trevor," said the unsuspecting officer of militia.

"You are vastly good, sir; and if you

will allow your men to help me with the tethering-ropes, I shall be still more indebted to you!"

Dick dismounted as he spoke, and, with Beauty's reins over his arm, went down the line of horses.

From the vantage point of his saddle, he had seen figures moving against the sky to westward—dark-loomed outlines beyond the parched fields, and he knew that rescue was not far off, if he could keep the attention of the Royal post a little longer.

Spurs were sharp in those days, and one plunging horse was sufficient to sway the whole line, and send it curving like a letter "S" over the road.

The captain of the Red Regiment of Dorset ran to his assistance, and made matters worse, and in the end it required the aid of half a dozen musketeers before the frightened creatures were quieted, and fastened in pairs.

Dick was at the tail end of his troublesome column, and turning over in his mind whether it would not be a wiser thing to bolt for it down the hill now that he had the opportunity, when something hissed in the hedge close to him, and a hand grasped his riding-boot.

"Lie low, sir, until you hear a whistle," said a whisper. "Our men are creeping up like mice, and will be upon them in less than no time."

Dick could hardly believe his ears, and was at a loss to account for the speed with which help had come; but he was to learn the reason in a few moments.

The affable captain approached him, and tendered his snuff-box.

On a sudden a shrill whistle rang out, and the nut-bushes parted with a loud crash, as an avalanche of men sprang into the lane, and fell upon the astonished post.

Dick's wiry arms clasped the captain in a tremendous embrace, which prevented him drawing his rapier, and on every side rose the sound of struggling, of panting men wrestling in the dark, the slither of square-toed shoes in the dust of the roadway, and here and there a heavy fall, followed by the clash of a musket.

The officer of the Red Regiment gave up the struggle at once, knowing he was no match for the powerful nephew of Sir Anthony; but some words passed between them as they stood there.

"I ask your pardon, sir, if I detain you until I see how things turn," said Dick.

THE FURY OF THE CAPTAIN!



"You insolent puppy!" cried the captain. He sprang forward with his fist raised; but Dick caught him by the wrist, and spun him round. "Not so fast, my dear captain!" said Dick. (See next week's topping instalment.)

"You shall answer for this, rebel!" exclaimed the captain of militia, in a voice that choked with passion.

"I shall be happy to cross swords with you when and where you like, sir," said the boy, smiling. "But now I think I may release you, since my friends would seem to



—Then a crashing volley rang out. The street end showed a fringe of red and yellow flame, and out of the flame whistled a tempest of lead that jammed the advancing horsemen into a disordered bunch. Dick waved his sword. "Come on, lads! They have emptied their muskets!" (See page 22.)

Tell All Your Pals That Next Week's Long Instalment Is Greater Than Ever!

have the upper hand. I fear your snuff is all scattered!"

"Where is Master Richard?" said a voice. "Ah, well met, boy! And, by my boots, you were born under a lucky star!"

It was Harry Lavender, who bowed to the ruffled officer, and clasped Dick by the arm. "Get to horse, Dick. You are going to smell powder in earnest before an hour has passed," he whispered. "We are marching on Bridport; and 'tis fortunate that the boy Ned blundered into us not half a mile away, for we have picked up this party, which might otherwise have raised the alarm. Colonel Venner will send these horses into Lyme with the prisoners, and you stay with us. Grey's men are behind, but I doubt me that they will stand a night attack."

Dick turned to his captive. "If you are in the same mind to-morrow, sir, you shall have the satisfaction you spoke of. You know my name; yours is—"

"Captain Oliver Partridge, sir," returned the officer, bowing stiffly.

"Then, for the present, Captain Oliver Partridge, farewell," said Dick, raising his beaver.

"What on earth have you on your hands now?" said Harry Lavender, as they mounted and passed through the group of captured militia on the hill-top.

"Nay, 'twas not my fault," said Dick gravely. "The poor little fat gentleman objected to being held, and so we must 'e'en settle it like men of honour, I suppose!"

And he recounted all that had taken place. "Well, you precious young fire-eater," laughed Harry Lavender, "it will not hurt him if he is let bleed a little. But now there are sterner matters on hand. We are four hundred upon this business—Wade, Poukes, Goodenough, and Venner, with my Lord Grey's Horse bringing up the rear; and we must take Bridport before the trainbands complete their muster there."

The Battle of Bridport—The Charge!

It was the 14th of June, and a Saturday, and much hung upon the first serious conflict of the campaign.

The raw troops, armed with a scanty supply of muskets and pikes, were about to receive their baptism of fire; and Harry

Lavender, bethinking him of his Tangiers fighting, was thankful that the enemy was little better disciplined, and not too well affected to King James.

They had no picquets or patrols out, and the rebel force got close to the town undiscovered.

The sleepy sentinels nodded at their posts; tankards foamed in the taverns, and the Red Regiment of Dorset thought of anything rather than the seriousness of its position.

Then came loud voices of command. "Musketiers, handle your muskets! Throw forward your muskets! Fire!"

The night was lit up with a sudden wave of ruddy flame; the crash of a wild volley rang out, and amid an uproar of shouting, the King's garrison rushed to its alarm-post, and fell in.

"Hurrah, hurrah! We have them!" cried Harry Lavender, spurring his horse into the street. "Come on, boys! They fall back! Follow me!" Dick was beside him.

And then an answering volley burst forth, bright musket-barrels gleamed in the flash of the firing, and the stream of rebels drove the Militia towards the centre of the town.

"Hark!" cried Lavender. "Yonder are Wade's men, making good headway. If Grey charges home now, we have the place."

But there was no sign of the Horse.

"Back to my lord, Dick!" said Harry Lavender. "Tell him we can hold our ground, and he has but to take yonder street at a gallop!"

As Dick turned Beauty, he heard a hoarse groan beside him, and was just in time to catch Colonel Venner by the sleeve as he reeled in his saddle.

"Ah, young gentleman," gasped the colonel, "the rogues have got me in the stomach! I fear me I am spent."

"I trust not, sir. Let me lead you out of the press," said Dick.

And, pulling Venner's horse round, he supported the wounded man until he was clear of the houses.

"I shall do, my friend—I shall do!" groaned the colonel. "I will make my way back to Lyme. A curse upon it! Why does not my lord charge in upon them? We have opened the door for his boasted Cavaliers."

"If I can leave you, sir, I will hasten to him."

"Go, go!" said the unfortunate officer. And, seeing that he was able to clutch the holsters, and to hold the reins, Dick leaped Beauty over a bank, and galloped to where my Lord Grey, having halted his troop, sat watching the glare of the firing from a safe distance.

"My lord," cried Dick, "they call upon you to advance upon the enemy, and the town is ours!"

Lord Grey bit his lip, and bent towards Dick.

"I fear me my men will not stand," he whispered.

"Try them, my lord. Let me place myself beside you, and we will set them an example. They are ill used to action, I doubt not, but they are Englishmen!"

"A plague on this young savage!" muttered my lord to himself. "He promises to be a troublesome Cornet, and I would that Wade had had him." Then, aloud, and drawing his rapier, he waved it in the air, crying: "Charge, boys—charge! They run yonder like sheep!"

There was a movement in the troop, and the men began to trot.

Before them in the darkness they could distinguish a street end, and Dick was heading straight for it.

Half a dozen older soldiers set the pace for the others, and the troop broke into a mad gallop.

All was going well when another of those crashing volleys rang forth. The street end showed a fringe of red-and-yellow flame for an instant, and out of the flame whistled a tempest of lead that jumbled the advancing horsemen into a disordered bunch.

Dick, whose feather had been cut from his hat by a bullet, shouted:

"Come on, lads! They have emptied their muskets!"

But my Lord Grey of Werke set an ignoble example by turning his steed and spurring back.

The undisciplined troopers, wedged together in a mass of plunging, kicking, terrified horses, lost what little heart they had, and galloped after their commander.

(Another long instalment of our powerful romantic serial will be found in next week's bumper issue.)

LORD FISH OF GREYFRIARS!

(Continued from page 10.)

"Which I arrest you in the name of the lor, Jem Smith, alias Slippery Jim! And I warns you that anything you may say will be took down to be used in evidence agin yer!"

Mr. Sharp seemed petrified. His sallow face became sallower. He made one movement to spring away, but Tozer's grip was like iron. And before the rascal could recover from his astonishment Mr. Tozer had clicked the handcuffs on his wrists.

Hiram K. Fish stared at him in blank amazement.

"By gum!" he exclaimed. "What does this mean? Are you mad, man? How dare you touch Mr. Sharp!"

"Which his name ain't Sharp, sir, any more than mine's Robinson," said Mr. Tozer stolidly. "He's Slippery Jim, and he's been wanted by the police for months and months and months!"

"What!" "Wanted for embezzlement, sir, and signing another man's name to a cheque and swindling a hold gent wot was ass enough to employ him to find out a pedigree for 'im," said Mr. Tozer. "He ain't no more connected with the 'Eralds' Hoffice than I am!"

"Wha-a-at! Sharp, you hear what the man says? Speak up! Tell him who you are!" howled Mr. Fish, in a state that could only be described as flabbergasted.

Mr. Sharp smiled faintly. The game was up now, and he knew it.

"He knows who I am, sir," he replied. "It's all up! It's all right, bobby; I'll come quietly."

"Which you'd better," said Mr. Tozer.

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"But—but—but—" Mr. Fish gasped. "You—you are a thief! A swindler! Then when you've been telling me about the Fyshe de Fyshes—"

"All bunkum!" said Mr. Sharp calmly. "There never were any Fyshe de Fyshes—not that I know of, at any rate."

"By gum!" "Oh, I swow!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, in utter dismay.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "But I will say this for you, Mr. Fish," said the rascal coolly. "You ought to be proud of your simple, and confiding disposition. It's a very rare thing in a business man of your age, sir. I have found it very entertaining. Good-bye!"

And Mr. Inquiry Agent was marched off, with the handcuffs clinking on his wrists, and Mr. Tozer's firm grip on his arm.

Mr. Fish stood rooted to the ground. Fisher T. Fish was petrified. All his castles in the air had tumbled to pieces now.

"Well, I swow! I—I— This beats me!" gasped Mr. Fish at last. "Simple and confiding, me. Me simple and confiding! The scoundrel! They know me well on Wall Street as the sharpest business man in Noo York! Simple and confiding! Waal, carry me home to die! He's taken me in—me, Hiram K. Fish, of Noo York—taken in like a greenhorn from way-back! I guess I've had enough of this country! I guess I'm going back to Noo York by the next boat! Simple and confiding! Oh gum!"

And Hiram K. Fish strode away, still muttering to himself those insulting words "simple and confiding."

Fisher T. Fish looked round at the Greyfriars fellows when his popper was gone. His face was a study.

"Well, what price Fyshe de Fyshes now?" grinned Bolsover major.

"Drug in the market, I should say?" grinned Skinner.

"How long before you get to the House of Lords, Fishy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Your lordship looks a little bit down," chuckled Todd. "What's wrong, Lord Fish?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Fish seemed at a loss for words for a moment. The American junior was famous for never admitting a defeat. Whatever happened to him, he always came up smiling, and generally had some excuse to make. But it puzzled the juniors to guess what he could say now. His lofty pretensions had been humbled in the dust. It had been proved past all possible denial that there never were any Fyshe de Fysches, and under those circumstances Fish could certainly not claim any longer to be descended from them. Indeed, as Bob Cherry remarked, it really looked as if Fish was pinned down at last, beyond the possibility of a wriggle. But it took Fisher T. Fish only a minute or two to recover himself.

"I guess that guy was pretty cute," he remarked, in quite a casual way. "Pretty near as smart as an American, I guess. And I'm jolly glad he's been found out."

"Glad?" "Yepl! Rotten disgrace for a free American citizen and a real democrat to find that he was descended from a set of mouldy old lords!" said Fish calmly. "Jolly glad it was all a mistake! No, sir, no silly titles on my plate. None of your slabsided old nobility for me! I come from a country where Jack is as good as his master, and we laugh, sir, laugh at your mouldy old notions in this benighted country. As for the House of Lords, I guess I wouldn't be found dead in it! No, sir, not at any price!"

And Fisher T. Fish walked into the School House, leaving the juniors quite breathless. Fisher T. Fish had taken their breath away!

THE END.

(Don't forget that next week's tale of Greyfriars is full of thrills and dramatic situations.—Tell all your pals.)

SAVED BY HIS PAL!

Like a ship without a steersman, Valentine Mornington drifts down the sea of disaster! He gets farther and farther away from the straight path, and when the very end seems in sight Kit Erroll steps into his way, and stands by him like a true pal!

A SHOULDER TO SHOULDER FIGHT!



Saved From Himself!

A Story of School, Adventure and Drama, by the world-famous writer—

Owen Conquest.

(Author of the stories of Jimmy Silver & Co., now appearing the Boys' Friend.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Trouble Ahead!

"HAS Morny come in?" Jimmy Silver looked in at the door of Study No. 4 as he asked the question. There was rather a grim expression upon Jimmy's face. Kit Erroll was alone in the study, looking out of the window into the dusky quadrangle. He glanced round and shook his head.

"I think not," he answered. "He's not here, anyway!"
 "He's missed calling-over," said Jimmy.
 "I know."
 "You don't know when he'll be back?"
 "No."
 "I'll wait for him, if you don't mind."
 Erroll looked worried, but he nodded assent.
 "Sit down, then!" he said.

Jimmy Silver took a seat on the corner of the table. Erroll resumed staring out of the window, evidently in a glum mood. There was silence in Study No. 4.

A fat face looked in at the doorway a few minutes later, and the silence was broken by Tubby Muffin's fat chortle.

"I say, Morny's come in!" chuckled Tubby. "Bootles is jawing him no end for missing call-over! He, he, he!"

"That's nothing to cackle at, you fat duffer!" snapped Erroll.

Tubby Muffin seemed to think that it was, however. He chuckled again.

"We could hear Bootles in the passage," he said, "and Morny was cheeking him! Morny's come back in a jolly bad temper. I say, Erroll, why did Morny miss the cricket match this afternoon?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"I believe he's got the cane!" said Tubby. "Serve him right, you know. I heard a swishing in Mr. Bootles' study. He, he, he! Yaroooooh!" roared Tubby, all of a sudden, his fat chortle changing into a roar of anguish.

A grip of iron was laid on Reginald Muffin's neck from behind, and he was spun away from the door of Study No. 4.

Bump!
 Tubby Muffin sat down in the passage with a loud concussion, and a louder roar. Valentine Mornington, who had pitched him out of the way so unceremoniously, strode into No. 4.

Mornington's handsome face was dark and sombre, his eyes glistening under his

knitted brows. He gave Jimmy Silver a far from cordial look. Tubby Muffin blinked into the study.

"Yah! Rotter!" he howled.

Then, as Mornington swung angrily round, Tubby took to his heels and vanished.

"Had your tea, Morny?" asked Erroll mildly.

"No—I don't want any. Do you want anything here, Silver?" asked Mornington abruptly. "I'm not in much humour for company."

"I suppose you've been licked for cutting call-over," said Jimmy.

"That's my affair."

"Well, if you've been licked, I'll speak to you another time," said Jimmy, slipping from the table, taking no notice of Morny's unpleasant manner. "I'll look in again, Morny."

"You needn't!" said Mornington. "If you've got anything to say, get it off your chest, and have done with it. I warn you that I don't intend to be lectured, though, if that's what you've got in your mind. I'm not inclined to be trifled with just now!"

Jimmy Silver shrugged his shoulders. Valentine Mornington was plainly in the worst of tempers; but his black looks had no terrors for Jimmy Silver.

In fact, Jimmy's own temper was rising a little at Morny's mode of address.

"If you'd rather have it now, Morny!" he began quietly.

"Oh, get it over!"

"I will, then," said Jimmy Silver. "You cut the match with the Moderns this afternoon, Morny. It's the second match you've cut since you were elected junior captain."

"Is that your business?"

"Yes, rather! I've stood aside to give you a chance to make good as skipper," said Jimmy Silver, "but there's a limit! There was a time, Morny, when you were about the blackest sheep at Rookwood—"

"What?"

"We all thought that was over and done with. Now it looks as if you're dropping into your old ways again!"

"It's kind of you to take such an interest in me," sneered Mornington, "but I think I mentioned that I don't want any sermons!"

"I'm not going to give you a sermon; but to talk plain sense. If you choose to play the goat, it's your own affair, and you can go to the dogs your own way, I suppose!"

"Thanks!"

"But it's not good enough for the junior captain of Rookwood," said Jimmy Silver calmly. "I needn't go into details, Morny; but it's plain enough that you're playing the goat again, and, under the cires, you

ought to resign the captaincy. A gambling plunger isn't good enough for the job, and you know it!"

"You mean that you want the job again?"

Jimmy flushed.

"I meant to stand aside, and I've stood aside," he answered. "I've backed you up, and you know it! But when you're throwing your duties aside in the most flagrant way, for the sake of playing the goat, it's time somebody put his foot down. Do you think I don't know that you went out to gamble this afternoon?"

"I don't care what you know!"

"Very well. I want to ask you one question: Are you going to be junior captain, or are you going to be a giddy goat? You can't be both."

"I'm goin' to please myself!"

"That isn't an answer!"

"It's all the answer you'll get from me!" said Mornington, throwing himself into an armchair. "Go and eat coke!"

Jimmy Silver compressed his lips.

"I don't want to quarrel with you, Morny," he said. "I'd be only too glad to see you playing up, and I'd back you up no end, but I can't stand aside and see everything going to pot while you play the goat. If you won't do the decent thing, it's up to me to see that you don't do any more harm. You know your duty as skipper, and you don't do it. You don't even turn up at cricket practice now, and you're getting into rotten form, so that you wouldn't be much good even if you took the trouble to play in the matches; and you've stopped doing even that. It can't go on!"

"Is that all?" yawned Mornington. "If it is, will you give me a rest?"

"Morny!" murmured Erroll.

Jimmy Silver looked at the new junior captain, and his look was very expressive.

"You mean to keep on like this, then?" he asked.

"I don't mean to give an account of myself to anybody—least of all, to you!" answered Mornington.

"Very well! Then I'm up against you!" said Jimmy Silver. "That's a plain warning, Mornington!"

"Rats!"

Jimmy Silver clenched his hands. Morny's manner was very trying.

"And now," continued Mornington, rising to his feet, "I've heard enough, and you can get out, Jimmy Silver!"

"You cheeky cad!" exclaimed Jimmy. "I've a jolly good mind to punch your head before I go!"

"Go ahead, if you prefer to leave this study on your neck!" answered Mornington, with a sneer.

Mornington Has an Uphill Fight Before Him! Will He Win Through?

"By Jove!" Jimmy Silver made a stride towards the dandy of the Fourth, and Morny's hands went up promptly enough to meet him. Kit Erroll rushed between before a blow could be struck on either side.

"Stop it!" exclaimed Erroll sharply. "Clear off, Jimmy—and you, Morny, don't play the fool!"

"Look here, Erroll—"

"Oh, dry up!" snapped Erroll. Jimmy Silver left the study quietly enough. He did not want a fight with Mornington; he had come there to warn him, and he had warned him. The dandy of the Fourth threw himself into the arm-chair again, his eyes fixed loweringly on Kit Erroll.

"So you're takin' Silver's side, are you?" he said.

"Oh, talk sense!" said Erroll. "Silver's right in every word he's uttered, and you know it. You're not doing your duty."

"By gad!" Mornington burst into a laugh. It was unusually plain speaking from his chum, and it rather amused him.

"If you don't want to do a captain's duty, you can resign," said Erroll. "Why don't you do it?"

"No fear! I'm stickin' to the job. Swank, you know," said Mornington coolly. "It's my weakness. Besides, I'm not goin' to be bullied. And I'm not going to be preached at. That's a tip for you, Erroll."

"I'm not thinking of preaching at you, Morny; I know it wouldn't be any good," said Erroll sadly. "I wish you'd be more sensible. What's the good of playing the goat as you're doing now? I'm quite sure that you've lost your money this afternoon."

"Right on the wicket."

"Well, that must be an end. Now you've sold your bike, you won't be able to raise any more funds."

"The wish is father to the thought!" grinned Mornington.

"Well, yes; I'd rather see you stony than playing the goat like this."

"Well, I'm stony—no mistake about that," said Mornington, with a shrug.

"Luck has been against me. But I can raise the wind right enough. You forget that I've got a cousin in the Second Form here, and young 'Erbert would lend me the boots off his feet if I asked him."

Erroll started.

"You're not going to borrow money from 'Erbert, Morny?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"You couldn't repay it, for one thing, if you lose it."

"'Erbert won't dun me for it, if I don't."

Erroll drew a deep breath. The shocked expression on his face drew a mocking laugh from Mornington.

"Shocked—what?" he asked.

"Yes," said Erroll quietly. "I never thought you'd have fallen as low as this, Morny."

"Well, you've found me out, then," sneered Morny; "and now you've found me out, the best thing you can do is to drop my acquaintance."

"I shan't do that."

"You will if you can't keep off sermons," said Mornington. "I'm fed up—with you as much as with Jimmy Silver! Hang you both!"

"Morny!"

"Oh, rats!"

Mornington strode out of the study, and closed the door with a slam.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Lower Depths!

"OH, Master Morny! Course I will—anything you like!"

Jimmy Silver started. It was the following morning—Sunday—and the Fistical Four were sauntering in Little Quad after service. Lovell, Raby, and Newcome were talking—at the same time—and Jimmy Silver was listening. The opinion of the Co. was that it was high time that Mornington was "shifted" out of the junior captaincy, and they were glad to see that Jimmy Silver showed signs of coming round to their opinion.

From under the trees by the archway
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came the voice of 'Erbert of the Second Form—otherwise Mornington II. The chums of the Fourth could not help hearing it as they strolled by.

"Can you manage ten quids, 'Erbert?"

"Cert'nly, Master Morny."

"Don't call me 'Master Morny,' you young ass! Don't you know that you're the rich relation now, and I'm a dashed poor relation?"

"Oh, Master Morny! I never wanted the money," said 'Erbert. "I'd 'and it all over to you with pleasure, if I was allowed. And I've got a lot saved up, sir, and it's all yours if you want it, and I'm only too glad."

"You're a good kid, 'Erbert," said Valentine Mornington, with a touch of remorse in his tone. "I'm a beast to take your money."

"It's yours, sir."

"But I'm goin' to settle up, 'Erbert—Hullo!"

The Fistical Four came in sight through the trees, and Mornington stopped abruptly. Jimmy Silver & Co. walked on. The expressions on their faces showed plainly enough what they were thinking—indeed, the contempt in Arthur Edward Lovell's speaking countenance would have pierced the shell of a tortoise.

Morny turned crimson.

His recklessness had brought him low—so low that he despised himself; but the contempt of the others was still more bitter.

"Oh! Eavesdroppin'—what?" he exclaimed.

Lovell turned sharply.

"I heard!" he answered. "You know I couldn't help hearing, as I was passing close to you. Now you're borrowing that kid's money to lose in gambling. You're a hopeless cad, Mornington! You ought to be kicked out of Rookwood!"

"Hear, hear!" said Raby.

"You let Master Morny alone!" exclaimed 'Erbert of the Second, firing up at once. "'Tain't your business, anyhow."

"Come on!" said Jimmy Silver quietly.

The Fistical Four went their way, and disappeared through the arch into Big Quad.

Mornington looked on at the fag with a gloomy brow.

"Don't you mind them, Master Morny," said 'Erbert.

"I don't," muttered Morny. "But—but—Oh, dash it all!"

"I know it's all rot," continued 'Erbert. "You ain't going to gamble, are you, sir?"

There was an anxious note in little 'Erbert's voice, however.

"Suppose I am?" snapped Mornington.

"Oh, sir!"

"You'd better keep your money, kid."

"No fear, sir! Arter all, why shouldn't you 'ave a flutter if you want?" said 'Erbert loyally. "A gentleman like you, sir, ain't like the other blokes."

Mornington winced.

"Lovell was right!" he said moodily. "I ought to be kicked out of Rookwood. I should be if the Head knew. But—but I shall settle this up, kid—luck can't go against me all the time. It can't! I shall screw out of Tickey Tapp all I've lost, and more."

"I'll fetch the tin now, sir."

"After dinner will do."

"Ort right."

Valentine Mornington nodded to the fag, and walked away, his hands driven deep into his pockets.

His face was moody.

There were excuses for the reckless fellow, in some ways. Morny had been the richest fellow at Rookwood before his fall came—before his lost cousin had turned up, and the great Mornington property had passed to him as the rightful heir. And a chance had come—what Morny believed to be a chance at last—of restoring his fallen fortunes. At the secret gaming-den, run by Tickey Tapp in the bungalow on Coombe Heath, the infatuated junior hoped to "break the bank"—the delusive hope that has led many a reckless plunger to ruin. It was wrong—wickedly wrong—but the old reckless instincts had revived in Mornington at the thought of it, and all other considerations were thrown to the winds.

And instead of winning, he had lost incessantly at Tickey Tapp's roulette-table—as he might have expected if he'd known more of the shady side of the world. Mr. Tapp was not in the business for his

health, and it was not likely that he could live upon losses. Swindling is the inseparable associate of gambling, and although Morny was not aware of it, Mr. Tapp's roulette-table was arranged to bring up the numbers at Mr. Tapp's own sweet will. Roulette was supposed to be a game of chance; but it may safely be said that roulette never is, and never was, played as a game of chance. It is played to win money from foolish punters, and it answers that purpose admirably. Morny's eyes would have been considerably opened if he could have examined the construction of Tickey Tapp's roulette-table.

But he was not thinking of that. He was thinking how cruelly luck had been against him—how his most careful calculations had come to nothing.

Mornington's brow was moody when he came in to dinner.

Erroll looked at him rather anxiously across the table, but Morny did not catch his chum's eye.

After dinner Erroll joined him in the passage.

"Coming out?" he asked.

"No."

With that abrupt answer Valentine Mornington turned away, and went to join 'Erbert. A few minutes later, with the fag's savings in his pocket, Mornington started for the gate.

Jimmy Silver & Co. saw him go.

"On Sunday, too!" said Lovell.

"Perhaps—" began Jimmy Silver. Lovell interrupted him.

"Perhaps be blowed! You know what he's going out for. And that cad's junior captain of Rookwood—that's the fellow! He's got to be sacked out of that, anyhow!"

And Jimmy Silver was silent.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tracy Makes a Discovery!

"DASH it all, not on Sunday!" Adolphus Smythe of the Shell made that observation. And Howard nodded assent.

Tracy of the Shell looked obstinate.

"What does it matter?" he asked.

"My dear man," said Adolphus, "there's a limit. I know it's hard cheese. Twice we've been goin' to sample the roulette at Tickey Tapp's bungalow, and twice we've been sheered off by that cad Mornington."

"The coast's clear to-day," said Tracy.

"Very likely; but, dash it all, there's a limit! I'm not goin' there on Sunday."

"Oh, rot!" said Tracy sulkily.

"There's such a thing," said Adolphus loftily. "as good form. Tracy, I like a flutter as well as the next man. But gamblin' on a Sunday is dashed bad form, and I'm not goin' in for it."

"I must say I agree with Smythey," remarked Howard. "It will keep, Tracy."

Tracy grunted.

"Since that cad Morny's been captain, he's meddlin' with everything of the kind," he said. "He actually stopped us near Tickey Tapp's place the other day 'an' sent us back, threatenin' to report us to Bulkeley. Now we've got a chance—"

"Chuck it!" said Adolphus.

"And I've got a suspicion," went on Tracy. "There's been a lot of talk about Morny lately. While he's down on the Giddy Goats, it looks a great deal as if he's playin' the giddy goat himself. I half suspect that when we found him near the bungalow the other day, he wasn't lookin' for us, but was goin' there himself!"

Smythe whistled.

"That's rather thick!" he said.

"Well, I suspect it. It's just in Morny's line, as he used to be. Now, I'm goin' to risk a visit to-day," said Tracy. "If I find Morny hangin' about, I'll tell him what I think—and sharp, too! Will you fellows come?"

"Not on Sunday."

"Oh, rats!"

Allan Tracy turned on his heel, and went out of the gates by himself.

Even Smythe of the Shell had his limits; but Tracy did not agree. He was keen to try his luck at Tickey Tapp's table, and he was determined that it should not be put off any longer.

He walked away down Coombe Lane, and turned into the footpath through the wood.



WHAT HE HAD ESCAPED FROM! Mornington clambered up the tree and looked out. He saw the police surround the bungalow—the place where he had been only a few minutes ago. A little later and all would have been lost. Erroll's warning had come in time to save him! (See Chapter 5.)

As he entered the leafy path in Coombe Wood he gave a start.

Ahead of him, under the trees, was a well-known figure—the elegant figure of Valentine Mornington. Morny was standing, with an expression of impatience on his handsome face, in talk with Kit Erroll. And Tracy stepped from the path into the trees at once. He did not want to be observed.

There was a bitter expression on the Shell fellow's face.

He more than half-suspected that Mornington was a visitor at the bungalow himself, while exercising his authority as junior captain to turn back the Giddy Goats from such pursuits. And that thought made Allan Tracy feel very bitter indeed.

Keeping away from the path, Tracy of the Shell moved on quietly through the trees, and drew near the spot where Mornington and Erroll were standing. He was curious to hear what was being said, for the attitude of the two juniors was a plain indication that Erroll was seeking to restrain his chum, and that Morny's impatient temper was rising. As he came behind the bushes close by the path, Tracy caught Morny's voice, raised a little in anger.

"You don't know anything about it, Erroll! You're talkin' out of your hat! Give us a rest, for goodness' sake!"

"Listen to me a minute or two, Morny," came Erroll's quiet tones. "I know more about it than you fancy."

"I don't see how you can," sneered Mornington. "You're too good to have played roulette, I suppose?"

"I never played it, certainly. But I've seen it played."

"You have?" ejaculated Mornington, in astonishment.

A pained look came over Erroll's face. Through the interstices in the bushes Tracy was watching them curiously as he listened.

"You know I had some rather strange experiences before I came to Rookwood, Morny," said Erroll. "I don't like speaking of that time, or thinking of it. But now—"

He paused. "You know, old chap, that for a time I was with a rascal called Gentleman Jim, who had taken me away from my father. The man was a rascal in every way—a thief and a gambler. At one time he ran a roulette bank, on Monte Carlo lines—secretly, of course, as it is illegal in England."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mornington.

"Foolish fellows used to come to him to play," continued Erroll. "I have seen them, sometimes, I've seen them calculating the run of colours and numbers, and so forth, the fools! For I knew the secret, Morny. I've seen the roulette-table when it wasn't in use. And I tell you, old chap, that the croupier can bring up any numbers he pleases."

"It's impossible!"

"Not impossible, Morny—easy! I've seen Gentleman Jim practising with the wheels when the punters weren't there. He used to make me call out numbers for him to turn up on the wheel, as an exercise of his skill."

"Oh, gad!" muttered Mornington.

"But even swindling to that extent was not enough for him," said Erroll, "and

he had a contrivance fixed under the table, worked by the foot, to stop the wheel any moment he chose. As a rule, he depended on his skill in turning the wheel. But in exceptional cases—when there was a heap of money on the board—he used that contrivance to make sure of a win. He was afraid to use it too often, lest it should be detected; but it was always there if he needed it."

"And you've seen it?"

"I've seen it, I tell you, Morny, if a player could dodge the cheating of the croupier, by placing his stakes after the wheel has started, he can always be beaten by secret trickery. Dash it all, old man, do you think that professional gamblers can afford to play fair? A run of luck on the side of the player might break the bank at any time, if they played a square game. They couldn't afford to, if they wanted to."

"I've heard of the bank bein' broken at Continental casinos."

"You mean you've read cunning advertisements, for that is all such reports are," Mornington was silent.

"Apart from it's being wrong and rotten, Morny, you're throwing your money away," said Erroll.

"Oh, hang it all!" exclaimed Mornington irritably. "The man you speak of may have been a swindlin' hound, but they're not all the same. Tickey Tapp's bank isn't the same."

"But—"

"I'm going to try my luck, anyhow. I don't believe half you say, Erroll! you're

prejudiced. Look here, come with me. It isn't far. It's the first bungalow past the wood—Heath Bungalow. I can get you in. Come with me, and try your luck, too."

"I wish you'd come with me, Morny—back to Rookwood. This sort of dingy footing isn't good enough for you."

"Oh, rats!"

Mornington turned and strode away up the footpath, to end the discussion.

Erroll looked after him with a troubled brow, and walked slowly in the same direction.

In a few minutes Mornington was out of sight.

Behind the bushes, Tracy of the Shell grinned, and resumed his way through the wood.

He was sure now of what he had only suspected before.

Mornington was a regular visitor at Tickey Tapp's gaming-table, and that was why he had turned the Giddy Goats back from the bungalow—because he did not wish them to discover him there.

He would not turn Tracy back this time.

The cad of the Shell hurried on, and came out into the footpath again when he was well ahead of Erroll, and hurried along the footpath towards the heath.

As he emerged from the wood, at last, upon the open heath, in sight of the bungalow, he sighted Mornington.

The footsteps caught Morny's ear, and he turned, a dark look coming over his face at the sight of Allan Tracy. He strode up to the Shell fellow.

"So you're here again!" he said. "Clear off!"

Tracy smiled evily.

"I'm goin' in," he answered. "Let's go in together, old top! I know what you are here for. I'm on the same game. Coming?"

"What?"

"Coming?" grinned Tracy.

Valentine Mornington did not answer. He seemed taken aback, and his eyes gleamed at the Shell fellow with menace in them.

"You're goin'—where?" he exclaimed at last.

"Into the bungalow."

"You're not!" said Mornington quietly. Tracy laughed.

"I think I am," he answered. "Don't come the captain with me now, Morny; it won't work. That chicken won't fight, old top. You've been there yourself—many a time. You were goin' there when I met you here the other day. I suspected it afterwards, an' I know it now. Report me to Bulkeley, if you like—or to Mr. Bootles—or the Head. I'll report you at the same time. See?"

And Tracy laughed again, quite enjoying the situation.

Mornington did not speak. His eyes were glittering, but the Shell fellow did not heed his threatening look. He felt that he had the whip hand.

"You've been playin' us for fools," he said; "playing captain and keeping us in order—by gad! And all the time you've been gambling in Tickey Tapp's den yourself. My word!"

"Not all the time," said Mornington quietly. "Only the last few days, Tracy."

"I don't care! I'm goin' to do the same, and I defy you to interfere with me again."

Morny's hands' hands' clenched.

"Will you let me pass?" asked Tracy.

"No."

"You're goin' to try to stop me?"

"Yes."

Tracy set his lips.

"I know your game, and you've admitted it," he said. "Yet you think you're coming the captain over me, all the same."

Mornington nodded.

"Why, you—you cheeky bound!" shouted Tracy, in rage and indignation. "Get out of the way."

"You're going back, Tracy."

"No fear!"

"As junior captain, I'm bound to keep you out of such a den as Tickey Tapp's," said Mornington coolly. "I may let duty slide in some ways, but not in every way. See? You're goin' back."

"I won't! And if you interfere with me, Mornington," said Tracy venomously. "I'll go straight to Bulkeley of the Sixth, and explain to him."

"What proof will you give?"

"Proof?" repeated Tracy.

"Yes; Bulkeley will want some proof before he takes any notice of a yarn like that."

"Why, you—you—" stammered Tracy.

"You're known to be a liar," said Mornington. "Bulkeley himself has punished you for lying. Your word isn't worth much, old scout."

Tracy trembled with rage. He realised that if Mornington chose to deny his accusation, he had no proof of it to offer. He did not hold the whip-hand so effectively as he had supposed.

"Mind your own business, then," he muttered. "You're goin'. Why shouldn't I go?"

"Because I won't let you," answered Mornington. "Never mind whether I'm goin'—I shan't take the trouble to argue with you. But you're going back to Rookwood, you measly cad—and sharp!"

Tracy clenched his hands and strode on. He was in too great a rage to feel, at the moment, his usual fear of Mornington.

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Morny caught him promptly by the shoulder.

Whether it was a lingering sense of duty, or simply his repugnance to have Tracy's eyes upon him while he was standing at Tickey Tapp's green table, the junior captain was quite resolved that Tracy should not enter the bungalow.

"Let go!" panted Tracy thickly.

"Get back!"

Tracy's furious fist crashed into Mornington's face, and the junior captain staggered back with a cry.

The next moment he straightened up and was springing forward.

The mark of Tracy's blow showed red on his cheek, and his eyes were glittering with passion.

Mornington's temper, never perfect, had been sorely tried during the past few days, and now it was at its worst. And Tracy's blow had stirred up all the bitterness in his heart.

He attacked savagely. Tracy, almost equally enraged, gave blow for blow, and for a couple of minutes he held his ground.

But there was no resisting Mornington's furious attack.

The Shell fellow was driven back and back, till he was under the trees of the wood again, and all the time Mornington was raining fierce blows upon him.

A powerful drive sent Tracy spinning at last, and he rolled gasping at the foot of a tree. Mornington's eyes gleamed down at him.

"Get up, you cad!"

Tracy groaned.

"Do you want any more?" asked Mornington, between his teeth.

"Hang you! No!" gasped Tracy. "I'll make you suffer for this!"

"Get up and go, or I'll begin on you

with my boots!" answered Mornington contemptuously.

Tracy dragged himself to his feet. With a look of bitter malice at the junior captain, he limped away up the footpath.

Mornington watched him till the thicket hid him from sight; then, with a contemptuous smile, turned on his heel and strode swiftly towards the bungalow.

"Oh, gad! Ow!" mumbled Tracy, as he dragged himself along the footpath. "Oh! By gad, I'll make him repent this—and I know a way. Ow!"

"Hallo! What—"

Tracy halted as he met Kit Erroll face to face on the path. Erroll stared at his bruised face.

"Your pal did this," muttered Tracy.

"Morny, by gad! But I'll make him sorry for it! Oh! Ow!"

"Where is Morny?" asked Erroll uneasily.

"Gone into Tickey Tapp's bungalow to gamble," hissed Tracy. "He's beaten me off, the cheeky cad! But I'll make him sit up for it! Let him wait a little."

"You're not going to sneak at Rookwood!" exclaimed Erroll.

Tracy gave a bitter laugh.

"No; Morny's pointed out that that cock won't fight. I've thought of something better than that. I'm going to the police-station."

"What!"

"Do you think the police wouldn't like to know what's going on at that place?" sneered Tracy. "Morny's there with a gang of gambling outsiders, breaking the law. Let him wait a bit. I'll make him sorry he's laid his hands on me, the cad!"

"Tracy, stop—"

With a sneering laugh Tracy turned off the footpath and plunged through the wood, taking the shortest cut towards Coombe.

Kit Erroll stood rooted to the ground.

There was no mistaking the malicious determination of the cad of the Shell. What a more decent fellow might have done from a sense of duty, Tracy intended to do from malice; but it came to the same thing. It meant a police raid on Tickey Tapp's headquarters—and Mornington was there!

Erroll felt his brain whirl as he thought of it.

Mornington—taken by the police in the midst of a gang of shady, disreputable gamblers, at an illegal roulette den! The thought almost stunned him.

It meant disgrace, ruin, certain expulsion from Rookwood, with every circumstance of shame and ignominy! It meant that, without the shadow of a doubt, to any Rookwood fellow found at Tickey Tapp's den.

Mornington had gone his way with wilful obstinacy, flouting his chum, scorning his good counsel, reckless of the consequences. But he was still Erroll's chum, and it was of his good qualities, not of his reckless folly, that Kit Erroll thought then.

His mind was quickly made up. Of the danger to himself he hardly thought; his only thought was to save Mornington, if he was yet in time. And as Tracy of the Shell tramped away through the wood, Kit Erroll broke into a run along the footpath, and he was heading for Tickey Tapp's bungalow on the heath.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Green Table!

"MAKE your game, gentlemen!"

A fat, coarse-featured man draped out the words as he sat before the roulette-wheel.

Mornington of Rookwood pushed aside the hangings in the doorway, and entered the roulette-room as Tickey Tapp was speaking.

Tickey Tapp glanced at him as he came in, and gave him a friendly nod. He recognised one of the best customers of his peculiar business.

There were a dozen punters in the room already, gathered round the green cloth, and the game was going strong when Morny entered.

The dandy of Rookwood came up to the table.

"Make your game, gents!"

Coins and currency-notes fluttered on the board. With a twist of his hand, Tickey Tapp sent the wheel spinning, and spun

the little ivory ball in the opposite direction. Most eyes were fixed on the spinning wheel, growing more eager as it slowed down, and the ball spun past the little numbered pockets.

On the green cloth of the table were yellow numbers, corresponding to the numbers on the wheel. The number of the pocket in which the ball finally rested was the winning number, and the unthinking punters fondly imagined that it rested there by chance. On one number—17—a wealthy punter placed a five-pound note, and, if 17 came up, Tickey Tapp was bound to pay him £175 by the rules of the game—thirty-five times the amount of the stake. And, as a few such coups would have cleared Mr. Tapp out of all his resources, it was pretty certain that such a win would not happen often, if it happened at all.

Mornington, mindful of what Erroll had said, in spite of himself, watched the turn instead of playing.

The wheel slowed and slowed, and the ball dropped into a pocket. It dropped in at 5—a good distance from 17 on the wheel. Tickey Tapp had not run the remotest risk of 17 turning up a winning number.

Morny's brow clouded.

The incident bore out Erroll's statement that the croupier was able to turn up whatever numbers he chose, from skill and long practice at spinning the wheel. Sometimes, doubtless, he blundered, but, as a rule, he could rely upon his skill. He did not need to exert it always. When most of the numbers were covered, it was enough to let the ball run by chance, for it was certain that, whoever won, the bank would win more. There could only be one winning number, and there might be thirty-five losing ones, as well as zero. But when a large and reckless stake portended danger to the bank, the croupier called upon his skill.

Mornington's hand was in his pocket on the banknotes little 'Erbert had lent him, or, rather, given him. But he did not draw out the money.

In spite of the fever of gambling that burned in his veins, Erroll's warning weighed upon him. To play and lose was one thing, but to throw his money into the grasp of a swindler was quite another; that was not even gambling—it was sheer imbecility.

And Morny resolved to watch the game a little before he played. It was the dawn of returning good sense.

"Make your game, gents!"

Tickey Tapp had taken in his winnings—a considerable sum, including the five-pound note of the wealthy punter. He had the ball in hand, ready for a new spin.

Mornington stood motionless, watching.

The room was hot and stuffy, the windows covered with dark curtains to prevent possible observation from without. There was a cloud of cigarette-smoke in the air. Somehow it was borne in upon Morny's fastidious mind, as never before, in what dingy surroundings he was finding himself. Next to him stood a fat man, evidently a bookmaker, who was warm with whisky and perspiration. Morny moved a little away from him. The scales seemed to be falling from his eyes. Somehow the roulette-table was losing its fascination already.

Money showered on the green cloth again.

Tickey Tapp's patrons evidently had "money to burn." Without it, it was not much use visiting Mr. Tapp. At the roulette-table only ready cash was admitted.

The wheel was spinning again, and the ball revolving. Among smaller stakes, there were three fivers on the table—on numbers 17, 18, and 38. And it was zero that came up.

Mornington's frown deepened.

In the next round the fat bookmaker placed a five-pound note on zero. And zero came up again, and Tickey Tapp passed a bunch of banknotes to the winner. There was a murmur round the table, and Morny started.

But at the same time—his eyes opened now, as it were—he caught the furtive smile that passed between Tickey Tapp and the bookmaker.

And he understood.

The two were confederates in the game, and the pretended punter was allowed to

win to encourage the others. Tickey Tapp's banknotes had been paid over to an apparent winner, but they were still "in the business."

Mornington had been determined not to listen to Erroll's counsel; he had been determined to fling consideration to the winds. But he could not help himself.

The warning had taken effect, and he could not help it; his natural strong sense would not allow him to be deceived now that his eyes were opened.

He felt a sickening at the heart. The glamour of the game of chance was gone now—now that he knew it was not a game of chance at all, but a deliberate swindle which was worked as an absolute certainty—for the bank.

He felt disgust and contempt for the obtuseness of the punters, who could not see what was so plain to him, forgetting that a very short time before he had been as blind as the rest.

He still watched, without playing. Some of the punters, he noted, seemed to have lingering doubts, in spite of themselves, for they were careful to place their stakes after the wheel had started, and the croupier had taken his hand from it. There was only one reason why they should do so—a lingering doubt that the croupier could control the wheel. After he had taken his hands from it they felt safe to stake.

Morny found himself watching one of those cautious punters. He was a young man with a vacant face, a fair moustache, and an eye-glass, evidently wealthy. He had lost again and again, and now he was playing for larger stakes, and carefully refraining from placing them till the wheel had started.

But he continued to lose. Once or twice, when he threw on a pound note, he won. But when he played with fivers and tenners he had no luck. The explanation was simple enough. Tickey Tapp could afford to leave sovereign stakes to chance, but he could not afford to pay out hundreds of pounds.

Some secret contrivance, invisible to the players, existed, which enabled Tickey Tapp to control the wheel surreptitiously up to the very moment that it stopped. Mornington's lip curled.

His money remained in his pocket. He had come there to gamble, not to throw his banknotes away; and now he knew that by placing them on the green cloth he was throwing them away as surely as if he had dropped them into one of the old quarries on the heath.

The knowledge that the game was "rigged" did what appeals to his better nature had failed to do. Morny was "fed up."

But, with that feeling, there came shame for what he was doing—shame at his vile surroundings and the wretched greed that had brought him there.

And this was Sunday! A hot flush came into Mornington's cheeks. He made a step towards the doorway. And, as he did so, there sounded through the room a loud knocking.

Knock, knock, knock!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. Saved by His Chum.

TICKEY TAPP started to his feet.

Knock, knock!

The wheel was revolving, but no one regarded it now. For at the sound of the loud and insistent knocking, one alarming thought was in all minds.

"The police!"

The hangings at the door were pulled hastily aside, and a startled face looked in—the face of the doorkeeper of the bungalow.

"What is it?" muttered Tickey Tapp.

Tickey Tapp hurriedly followed the man from the room. Mornington caught the doorkeeper's hurried whisper.

"There's a young gent, sir. He says the police—"

"The police!" muttered Mornington; and his heart was like lead within him.

Tickey Tapp looked back from the doorway.

"Calm yourselves, gentlemen! There's a way out in case of need. No one need be alarmed."

Then he disappeared.

Mornington followed him down the passage.

In the little hall of the bungalow a junior in Etons was standing, and Mornington uttered an exclamation as he saw him.

It was Kit Erroll.

"What the—!" Tickey Tapp was beginning.

Mornington ran forward.

"Erroll, you here? Are you mad?"

"I came to warn you, Morny—"

"But, the police— For goodness' sake, clear—"

"I've come for you—"

"Look 'ere! Wot does this 'ere mean?" interrupted Tickey Tapp. "You've been hammering on the door till you was let in, young feller. Now, wot do you want? You've come to give us the office—"

Erroll gave the sharper a stare of contempt.

"You!" he said scornfully. "I'd be glad to see you in the hands of the police—more than glad! I've come to warn my friend, Morny, come with me at once. Tracy's gone to the police-station, and they may be here any minute now!"

"By gad!" muttered Mornington. "So we've been given away, have we?" muttered Tickey Tapp savagely.

"You have, and serve you right!" answered Erroll coldly. "I hope the police will be here before you can escape. Morny, come—come; there's not a moment to lose!" He turned to the door.

The doorkeeper had put on the chain after admitting Erroll, and the Rookwood junior removed it.

"Come!" he said.

"Better keep in cover if the beaks are about!" said Tickey Tapp. "There's another way out."

"Keep it for your rascally associates!" said Erroll. "There's still time. Morny, come—come!"

He threw open the door.

Mornington followed him from the bungalow without a word. The door was slammed after them, and the chain rattled into its place.

Erroll's eyes swept over the open heath that glistened far and wide in the afternoon sunshine. From the direction of the village two or three police helmets could be seen bobbing amidst the gorse. The police were coming already.

"You fool, Kit!" muttered Mornington. "You fool! Do you know what you've risked by comin' here?"

"I know! Come, Morny!"

Erroll took his chum's arm in his grasp, and started towards the wood. Morny ran with him, without protest.

Every minute was precious now, for if the police arrived it was certain that they would stop anyone seen leaving the bungalow.

But there was still time.

The two juniors plunged into the shades of the wood, and the thick trees swallowed them up and concealed them. Then Valentine Mornington stopped.

"Come on, Morny!" urged Erroll. "Rookwood's the safest place now. Some of the cads there may talk if the police—"

"They won't be nabbed now," said Mornington coolly. "There's a secret way out, and they've had warnin'."

Erroll bit his lip hard.

"It was for your sake I came, Morny," he said. "For the rest, I'd be glad to see them taken!"

"They're no worse than I was."

"I don't agree with you, Morny. But come on—come on—"

"Let's wait and see what happens. We're safe here, old top."

Mornington clambered upon a branch, and looked out over the heath. The police were even now knocking at the door of the bungalow. Mornington drew a deep breath.

The police had lost little time in acting upon the information given them. A little later, and all would have been lost—for Mornington! Erroll's warning had come in time to save him!

He dropped from the tree.

"Come on!" he said abruptly.

The chums hurried along the footpath. What was happening at the bungalow they did not know, and they cared nothing.

Whether Tickey Tapp and his honourable

company had escaped in time, or whether they were rounded up in the gambling den, was a matter of small moment. The two juniors were thinking of their own narrow escape.

They hurried on in silence. Not a word was spoken till they reached Rookwood. Jimmy Silver was standing in the gateway, chatting with 'Erbert of the Second Form. 'Erbert looked up quickly at Valentine Mornington.

Morny came up, unheeding the dark frown that gathered on Jimmy Silver's brow.

"I—I've been waitin' here for you to come in, Master Morny," muttered 'Erbert.

"I—I—"

Mornington smiled.

"I've got something here for you, kid," he said. "I find I sha'n't want your banknotes, after all. Thanks all the same!"

"Oh, Master Morny! But—"

Mornington thrust the notes into the bag's reluctant hand.

"It's all serene, kid. I sha'n't want them," he said. "Go and lock them up at once!"

"Orl right, Master Morny!"

Valentine Mornington walked on with

Erroll, leaving Jimmy Silver staring after him blankly.

There was a curious expression on Erroll's face. Morny's action had surprised him, as well as Jimmy Silver.

"Time for tea, I think, old top!" yawned Mornington.

"Yes, old chap."

The chums did not speak again till they were in Study No. 4. Erroll lighted sticks in the grate and shoved the kettle on them, Mornington watching him with an odd smile.

"Well?" he said, as Erroll looked up.

"Well?" said Erroll.

"Do you know you're a thumpin' fool?"

"I hope not."

"You are, an' no mistake about that. Suppose the beaks had been a little quicker, and you'd been nabbed at Tickey Tapp's show along with me? We should both have been expelled from Rookwood!"

"I know," said Erroll, in a low voice.

"And yet you risked it?"

"Yes."

"Well, you're a thumpin' ass! And a jolly good pal!" said Mornington, his tone changing.

"Erroll, old chap, I've been

a beast—a regular beast! There's a bad strain in me somewhere, and it works out at times. I suppose I can't help it."

"Try!" suggested Erroll, with a smile.

"Everythin' you told me about that rotten game is true, and even if it wasn't, what was I doin' there, anyhow?" muttered Mornington.

"If it's any satisfaction to you, Kit, I'm ashamed of myself."

"If that's all over, Morny—"

"It's all over, Kit. Honour bright!"

"Then there's no reason why you shouldn't make a jolly good success as junior captain," said Erroll brightly.

Mornington shook his head.

"I've been thinkin' about that," he said.

"I know what I ought to do, and I'm goin' to do it. But never mind that now. Let's have tea."

And Mornington and his chum sat down to tea in a more cheerful mood than either had known for some time past. The clouds had rolled by in Study No. 4 at last.

THE END.

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