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X EVERY STORY'S A WINNER—and THERE'S 5 OF THEM *inside!* X

The POPULAR

Week Ending
December 8th,
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New Series.
No. 515.

EVERY
TUESDAY.

2d



RUBBISH FOR SALE—WHAT OFFERS?

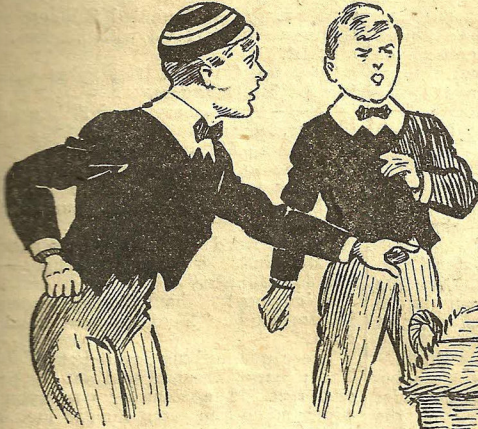
An Amusing incident from "Baggy Trumble's Bargain Sale!" In this issue!

A LAUGH FROM FIRST TO LAST!

You will start this story with a laugh, and finish it with a laugh—because Percy Cuthbert Gunner takes the leading part, and when Gunner is in the limelight there's plenty of fun going!

GUNNER'S HAMPER!

By
OWEN
CONQUEST



A ROLICKING LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. OF ROOKWOOD.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
News for Gunner!

"I SAY, you fellows, have you seen Gunner?"

Jimmy Silver & Co., of the Fourth Form at Rookwood, halted and surveyed the excited countenance of Tubby Muffin, the fattest junior in the school.

"What's up, Fatty?" said Jimmy Silver good-naturedly.

"Gunner!" gasped Tubby. "Where is he?"

"Echo answers, 'where?'" murmured Lovell.

"Have you seen him? Most important!" said Tubby breathlessly.

The Fistical Four chuckled.

"Has Gunner had a remittance, I wonder?" remarked Newcome.

"That's it!" said Raby, with a shake of the head. "Tubby's off to borrow it off him before he can spend it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—your asses!" gasped Muffin.

"It's not that at all. Gunner hasn't had a remittance—at least, not that I know of—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a hamper come for him!"

"Well, we haven't seen him," grinned Jimmy Silver, "so roll away, barrel!"

With an indignant blink at the Fistical Four, Tubby Muffin rolled off to continue his frantic search for Peter Cuthbert Gunner.

Tubby Muffin, besides being fat, was both unscrupulous and greedy; also he was the Paul Pry of the school, and knew all about everything before any body else at Rookwood.

At the moment he was in possession of the valuable information that a large hamper had arrived at the porter's lodge addressed to P. C. Gunner of the Fourth, and Tubby considered it his bounden duty to carry the good news as quickly as possible to Gunner, in the hope of getting a share of the good things as his reward.

He rolled breathlessly away into the quarters occupied by the Classics and along the Fourth Form passage as far as the study which was occupied by Gunner and his studymate, Dickinson minor.

Tubby burst into the study like a whirlwind, to find Peter Cuthbert Gunner writing at the study table, while Dickinson minor sat in a corner reading.

Gunner was a big and hefty youth, distinguished more for brawn than for brain. Throughout the Classical Fourth he was considered to be several sorts of an ass, but this did not prevent Peter Cuthbert from having an excellent opinion of himself.

He was now engaged in writing lines, and at Tubby Muffin's sudden irruption he looked up and directed a deadly glare at the intruder.

"I say, Gunner!" gasped Tubby.

"Clear off, you fat clam!" exclaimed Gunner. "I'm busy!"

"But—but it's important, Gunner!"

"Clear off!" roared Gunner, springing up and seizing a ruler, and, incidentally, upsetting the inkpot over the lines on which he was engaged. "My hat, I'll teach you to come bursting into a fellow's study!"

He made a lunge with the ruler, and a fiendish yell came from Tubby as he received a violent prod in the region of the waistcoat.

"Ow! Yaroooh! Hold on, Gunner!"

"Clear out!" roared Gunner. "Take that—and that!"

"You dangerous ass!" shrieked Tubby, turning to flee. "Your hamper, it's come!"

"What!" exclaimed Gunner, holding his hand for a moment. "What's that you say, Tubby?"

"Your hamper! Ow! Bless if I'll tell you now, you ass! I'm hurt!"

"Never mind," said Gunner, "you've told me now. So a hamper's come for me, has it?"

Tubby Muffin rubbed himself ruefully.

"Yes, it's come. Old Mack's got it down at the lodge. I came to tell you about it, Gunner."

"Good!" said Gunner. "Now you've told me you can roll away! Clear off!"

"Why, you—you—"

Tubby Muffin fairly spluttered in his indignation and wrath. After all the trouble he had taken to bring the good news to Gunner, this was cavalier treatment indeed!

"Buzz off!" said Gunner laconically.

"Unless you want some more of this ruler—like that!"

"Ow!"

Muffin gave a gasp as of a punctured tyre, and buzzed off! Gunner was too dangerous with a ruler at close quarters.

So Tubby retreated, but he did not retreat far. He was indignant and he was hurt, but he was a sticker, and he had no intention of letting the owner of that big hamper out of his sight for long.

Meantime, Gunner was surveying his inkstained imposition wrathfully.

"That fat clam has spoiled half an hour's work!" he growled. "However, I'm fed-up with writing lines. You can help me with them after prep, Dickinson!"

"Right-ho!" mumbled Dickinson, who was a mild youth, and easily subdued by Gunner's lofty manners and customs.

"We might as well go down to the lodge and get the hamper," continued Gunner. "I expect it's from my old Uncle Thomas. I spent a day with him last hols, and he's a decent old chap, although he's got a mania for fossils and things. But he said he would send me a surprise some time this term. It's getting near Christmas, and I expect he knew a hamper would be just the thing. Jolly decent of the old sport!"

"Rather!" said Dickinson minor heartily.

"Well, come down and give me a hand and we'll get it into the study, otherwise that fat duffer Muffin will be sticking his paws into it," said Gunner.

He wrenched open the door and marched out into the passage, followed by Dickinson minor.

In the passage Gunner almost bumped into a fat form.

"What, you here, still, fatty?" he growled.

"Yes, Gunner. I'll come down to the lodge with you and—and help you to carry the hamper!" squeaked Tubby.

"Oh rats!" said Gunner rudely.

"Come on, Dicky!"

Gunner and Dickinson minor strolled

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down the passage, and Tubby trotted hopefully after them, snubbed, but by no means defeated.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Hard Lines for Gunner!

"HALLO, Mack! That hamper's for me, I s'pose?"
Thus Tommy Dodd, as he was sauntering by the porter's lodge with his bosom pals, Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle.

A very large hamper stood just outside the door of the lodge, and old Mack, the porter, stood on guard over it. Naturally, that enormous hamper caught the eyes of the three heroes of the Modern House at Rookwood.

Old Mack grunted.
"Which it isn't, Master Dodd!" he said emphatically. "That there hamper's addressed to Master Gunner, and I wish he'd come and get it, because I ain't going to carry it up to his study!"

"Quite right, Mack!" said Tommy Dodd approvingly. "We'll take it up for you."

"Which you'll leave that hamper alone, Master Dodd!" said Mack, still more emphatically. "I knows you and your tricks, so clear off!"

Tommy Doyle wagged a forefinger reprovingly at the old porter.

"Sure, and ye're not suspecting us of any evil designs on that hamper, Mack darlint!" he exclaimed.

"For shame, Mack!" chimed in Tommy Cook reproachfully.

The old porter snorted. He had had considerable experience of the three Tommies' playful ways during the hundred years or so—according to popular rumour—that he had been the Rookwood porter. The three Tommies, grinning, were about to continue their stroll when a sudden sound arrested them.

It was the noise of a barrel organ which came from the road just outside the gate. They looked at each other and started.

"My hat, a giddy hurdy-gurdy!" said Tommy Dodd. "What a lark!"

The school porter heard the sound at the same time, and his face, naturally rather red, grew purple with wrath.

"An orgin!" he gasped. "An orgin outside my gates! What impudence! I'll learn him!"

With a snort of wrath, the old porter made a dash for the gates in order to give the daring organist a piece of his mind.

The three Tommies exchanged glances. Now was their chance! As if moved by the same spring, they skipped over to where that large hamper was reposing on the ground and laid violent hands upon it. And long before old Mack had finished explaining to the Italian gentleman in charge of the organ the heinousness of the crime of playing a hurdy-gurdy outside the stately gates of Rookwood, the three Tommies were half way to the Modern House with their loot.

"That was neat!" chuckled Tommy Dodd. "And in accordance with the best traditions of the Modern House."

"That hurdy-gurdy chap turned up just at the right moment!" chuckled Tommy Cook. "My word, this hamper's heavy!"

"Faith, and wait till we get it into the house!" said Tommy Doyle. "We'll soon lighten it a bit!"

They were well on towards the door

of the Modern House when Tommy Dodd looked over his shoulder.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "Look out!"

"What!"

"It's Gunner!" gasped Tommy Dodd. "Quick! Get a move on! He's come after his hamper."

The Three Tommies broke into a run as fast as they could, considering the weight of the huge hamper. There was a shrill yell from behind them. The keen eye of Tubby Muffin had espied their burden. Gunner's hamper, of which Tubby was hoping great things, was in the hands of the enemy!

"Look out, Gunner!" he yelled. "Your hamper! They've got it—those Modern boonders!"

"What?" roared Gunner.

Tubby Muffin fairly danced in his excitement.

"After 'em—quick!" he shrieked. "They've got your hamper!"

With a roar like a bull, Peter Cuthbert Gunner made a dash at the raiders, followed by Dickinson minor and Tubby Muffin, who rolled along at surprising speed.

"Put it on!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

The hue and cry was very close behind them when the three Tommies scurried into the doorway of the Modern House with their precious but remarkably heavy burden.

"Sling it down under the stairs!" panted Tommy Dodd.

"Look out! Here they come!"

"Rescue, Moderns!"

The next minute Gunner dashed in at the door like a bull, with his faithful followers behind him.

"You rotters!" he roared. "That's my hamper! Give it up!"

"Not to-day, Gunner!" chuckled Tommy Dodd. "Chuck him out, you men!"

The next moment a wild and whirling conflict was in progress in the Hall of the Modern House. Peter Cuthbert Gunner fought gallantly, and his followers backed him up well; Dickinson minor from a sense of loyalty, Tubby Muffin from a fear of losing the hamper. But the three Classics had run their heads into a hornets' nest.

At Tommy Dodd's cry of "Rescue, Moderns!" juniors came rushing from all sides of the Modern House, and before Gunner knew where he was, he was rolling down the steps into the quad in a state of breathlessness and indignation impossible to describe. His followers came rolling after him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Tommy Dodd exultingly, from the top of the steps, as he mopped at his damaged nose, which had come into contact with one of Gunner's hard fists. "Try again, Gunny! Hallo! Cave!"

At the word the crowd of Moderns appeared to melt away, and a sudden silence fell.

Peter Cuthbert Gunner, however, who had gathered himself up for a final effort, did not observe this lull. He charged up the steps with a roar, and rushed straight into an angular figure in cap and gown, whose appearance had caused the sudden flight of the Modern youths.

There was a heavy concussion, and Peter Cuthbert sat down again, and rolled down the steps to the ground. The figure in cap and gown staggered back against the wall.

"Boy!" came in a rasping and wrathful voice. "Boy, how dare you?"

The unfortunate Gunner could only gasp. It was just like Gunner to butt into and knock down Mr. Manders, the Housemaster of the Modern House, and

the worst tempered and most unpopular master at Rookwood.

Mr. Manders pulled himself together and tightened the grasp on the cane which he had been carrying.

Mr. Manders generally had a cane within easy reach. He rustled out of the House and down the steps.

"Boy!" he gasped. "This unprovoked assault, this ruffianly outrage—"

"S-s-sorry, sir!" panted Gunner, still sitting on the ground with his head in a whirl.

"Get up, Gunner! Get up at once!" snorted Mr. Manders.

"I—I—I'm sorry, sir!" gasped Gunner, scrambling to his feet. "I didn't see—I didn't know—"

"Quite so, Gunner; but I shall teach you not to charge about in this unseemly manner. Hold out your hand!"

"I—I—I came—"

"Not a word! Hold out your hand!" "But—but, sir, my hamper—"

babbled Gunner.

"Nonsense!" shouted the incensed Housemaster. "Hold out your hand at once!"

There was nothing for it but to obey. The unhappy Gunner held out his hand and received a stinging out upon it which made him jump a clear foot into the air.

"Ow!" yelled Gunner. "Yow! Wow!"

"Cease those ridiculous noises at once, Gunner!" fumed Mr. Manders. "Hold out your other hand!"

Swish!

"Now, go!"

Gunner went, tucking his hands under his armpits, and yowing and wowing as if for a wager.

Tubby Muffin and Dickinson minor had wisely disappeared, and the unfortunate Gunner was left to stamp his way across to his own quarters in a state of mind that was positively Hunnish.

Gunner was hurt, and he had lost his hamper, and the Moderns had scored over him!

It was not Gunner's lucky day!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Leave it to Jimmy Silver!

IT is hardly necessary to say that Peter Cuthbert Gunner, on arriving in the Classical quarters, was not silent on the subject of his wrongs. That incensed and much-wronged youth, in fact, kicked up, in the words of Tubby Muffin, a first-class shindy.

Naturally, the new was not long in reaching the end study, the famous apartment which housed Jimmy Silver and his chums, Lovell, Newcome, and Raby.

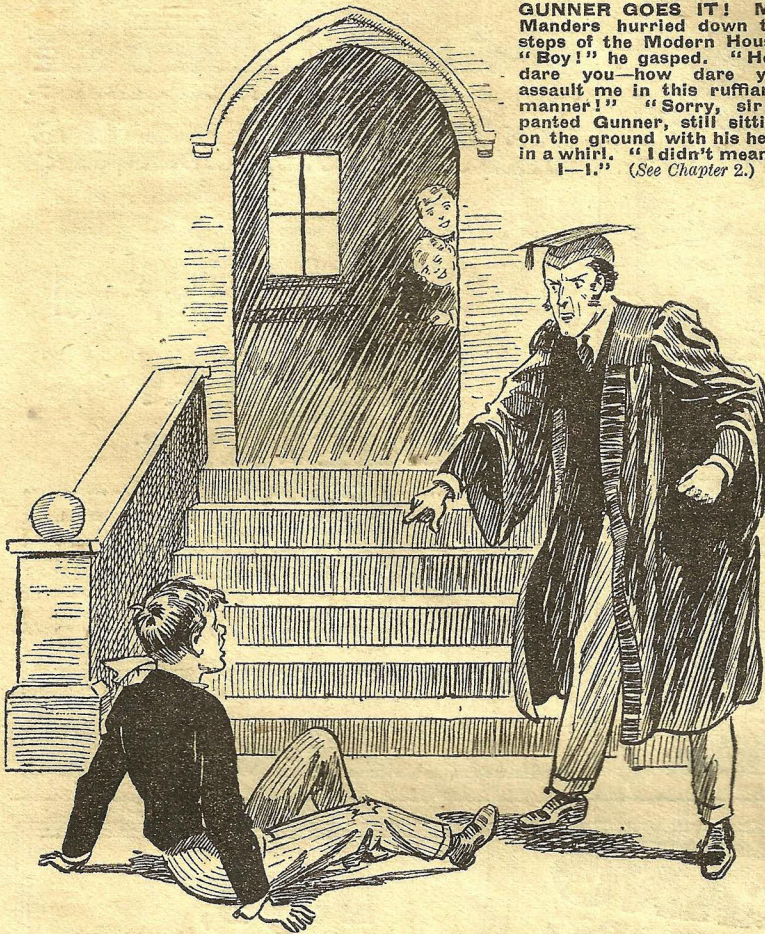
Jimmy Silver was junior captain at Rookwood and the acknowledged leader of the Classics in the friendly warfare which raged perpetually between the Classical and Modern sides at the old school.

Peter Cuthbert Gunner, in fact, made it a point personally to draw the attention of Jimmy Silver & Co. to his undoubted wrongs. Gunner, in spite of his wrongs, or, perhaps, because of them, was unduly aggressive and even rude.

After pouring out his story to the Fistical Four he banged his large fist on the table of the end study to lend emphasis to his words.

"So there you are, Silver!" he belated. "You call yourself leader of the Classics, and here you let the Moderns run off with my hamper right under your nose!"

(Continued on page 25.)



GUNNER GOES IT! Mr. Manders hurried down the steps of the Modern House. "Boy!" he gasped. "How dare you—how dare you assault me in this ruffianly manner!" "Sorry, sir!" panted Gunner, still sitting on the ground with his head in a whirl. "I didn't mean—!" (See Chapter 2.)

Jimmy Silver stared. "Draw it mild, Gunner," he said. "I admit you've had a thin time; but I wasn't there! If I had been—"

"Why weren't you there?" hooted the indignant Gunner. "That's what I want to know! What's the good of a leader if he's not there when he's wanted? Here's my hamper gone, and I—"

"Yes, yes; we've heard all that before," said Jimmy Silver gently.

"I should think everyone in Coombe, if not in Latcham, has heard it, too," remarked Lovell, sotto voce.

"Well, I say it again!" bellowed Gunner. "It's an outrage, that's what it is! Those blessed Moderns have dished us!—Blest if I know why you were ever made leader, Jimmy Silver! Now, if I was leader—"

"Well, you've shown what you can do," said Newcome. "You've lost your hamper—"

"And been chucked out of the Modern House—" put in Raby.

"And been caned by Manders!" remarked Lovell.

"Why, you—you—" Gunner glared speechlessly.

He gasped for breath, and appeared to be struggling for words.

Jimmy Silver regarded the outraged youth with a benign smile.

"What you really mean, Gunner, I gather, is that the Moderns have been

too much for you," he said soothingly. "You want us to take the matter up?"

"You—you call yourself captain—" spluttered Gunner.

"Exactly! You have mentioned that before," smiled Jimmy Silver. "You want me to take the matter up? Very well, Gunner, leave it in my hands. It's only ten minutes to afternoon school. You'd better get off and clean yourself up."

Gunner snorted, and looked at Jimmy Silver & Co. suspiciously. He seemed uncertain as to whether they were or were not pulling his august leg.

"Well, I say this—" he snorted again.

"You say a lot too much, Gunner," said Lovell blandly. "Good-bye!"

"Bye-bye, Gunner," chuckled Raby and Newcome.

And the Fistical Four gently but firmly pushed the ill-used Gunner forth from the end study. As the door closed behind him, Jimmy Silver eyed his pals.

"Well, chaps," he said, "it's up to us. We must get that hamper back right away for old Gunny before those Modern blighters scoff the contents."

"Yes, rather! The question is how?" said Lovell.

"I think I've got it," said Jimmy Silver thoughtfully. "Suppose one of us—say you, Lovell—wandered off for a stroll now, just before lessons?"

"Well?"

"Suppose he went down to the priory

ruins so that he didn't hear the bell for classes when it went?"

"But what—"

"Suppose," continued Jimmy Silver, heedless of the interruptions—"suppose he strolled back ten minutes after class-time?"

"If I did that I should jolly well get socks from Dickie Dalton," said Lovell. "You know that, Jimmy."

"That's a detail," said Jimmy Silver blandly. "The point is—"

"Is it a detail?" bellowed Lovell. "I'm not going to get lines or a licking from Dickie Dalton!"

"Shush!" said Jimmy Silver. "Just listen a second, old man. If you're not in class when it's time to begin, what will happen? Why, Dickie Dalton will notice your absence, and he will ask me, as captain of the Form, if I know where you are. I shall say that I thought I saw you near the priory ruins just before classes. He will then send me out to fetch you in."

"And when I do come in I shall get lines!" snorted Lovell.

"Quite so," said Jimmy Silver. "But, as I said before, that's a detail!"

"Look here—"

"If you want to get Gunny's hamper back you will have to risk getting a few lines, or even a licking," said Jimmy Silver. "If it's lines, we'll all help you do them."

"I don't see—" said Lovell somewhat excitedly.

"Don't you see that if we're both out of class together we could pop into Tommy Dodd's study and pinch the hamper?"

"My hat!"

"And bring it over here to this study, and pop back again into class all in a space of about five minutes," said Jimmy Silver. "Of course, if you won't take the risk, Lovell—"

"My hat, it is a scheme!" said Lovell, in somewhat unwilling admiration.

"Blest if you haven't thought of something, Jimmy! But why shouldn't you be the one to cut classes?"

"Because it's necessary that there should be two of us out together, and if I were out already, Dalton might send anybody to look after me. If I am in class he is bound to send me," explained Jimmy Silver patiently.

"That's so!"

"Good for you, Jimmy!"

There was no doubt that Raby and Newcome approved of their leader's ingenious plan.

"If you don't want to do it, Lovell, I will," said Raby.

"Rats!" said Lovell. "I'll do it, of course! I can easily tell Dickie that I didn't hear the bell for classes; and it will be true, because I shall go far enough away not to hear it!"

"Ha, ha! That's the game!"

"Then that's settled," said Jimmy Silver. "You buzz off, Lovell, and get out of earshot as quick as you can. As soon as I get sent out of class I will meet you by the fountain."

"Suppose Dickie Dalton doesn't send you?" said Lovell.

"Well, that's possible; but I think he will. If not, you'll have to try and take the hamper yourself and hide it somewhere, if you can't get it to the study," said Jimmy. "It's the only way. We shall have to risk something."

Jimmy Silver was not leader of the Classics for nothing. Besides being the heftiest fellow with his fists, he was hard to beat as an amateur strategist.

The Fistical Four owed their prominence to the undoubted fact that their little stunts almost invariably came off, and this was largely due to Jimmy Silver's habit of thinking things out in detail in advance; herein lay the success of the end study.

This case was no exception. Mr. Dalton had hardly seated himself at his high desk in order to commence the history lesson, before, running his eye over the Form in front of him, he noticed the absence of Lovell.

"Why is Lovell not here?" he said sharply. "Silver, do you know where Lovell is?"

"I saw him just before classes, sir," said Jimmy Silver demurely. "He was down by the priory ruins. Perhaps he did not hear the bell, sir."

Mr. Dalton frowned.

"He ought to have heard the bell," he said. "Just run down and see if you can find him. Silver. Be back in five minutes, whether you find him or not."

"Very well, sir," replied Jimmy Silver quietly, smothering a grin at the success of his plan.

He raced round to the fountain, and joined Lovell, and together the two slipped into the Modern House and up into Tommy Dodd's study, where they found the hamper which was strongly corded, still unopened.

In five minutes they were back in the Fourth Form classroom, and the hamper was safely under the table in the end study.

Arthur Edward Lovell duly explained that he had not heard the bell, and was duly awarded two hundred lines. After this interruption afternoon lessons proceeded on their normal monotonous course. Lessons over, the Fourth Form streamed out of the class-room. Peter Cuthbert Gunner strode up to Jimmy Silver and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Look here, Silver!" he remarked

loudly. "If you've got a wheeze for getting my hamper back, let's have it! We've got to do something, and do it quick, otherwise those rotters will scoff my tuck!"

Jimmy Silver, who was chatting pleasantly with his chums, looked over his shoulder.

"What hamper is that you're talking about, Gunner?" he asked blandly.

Peter Cuthbert stared.

"Why, you ass, my hamper—the one those Modern rotters raided!" he exclaimed excitedly.

Jimmy Silver raised his eyebrows.

"Oh, your hamper! Yes, I remember now, Gunny! It's in my study under the table. Kindly remove it, will you?"

"Why—what—where—"

Peter Cuthbert fairly spluttered.

"If not removed before bed-time it will be sold to defray expenses," grinned Lovell.

There was a general shout of surprise and laughter. Peter Cuthbert Gunner, after one dazed look at the Fistical Four, rushed upstairs, followed by an excited crowd. He dashed into the end study and dragged out from underneath the table his hamper, still securely corded up and obviously unopened.

"Well, my hat!" was all Gunner could say.

But even then Rockwood had by no means heard the last of Gunner's Hamper.

THE END.

Do you want another good laugh? Of course you do! Then don't miss "UNCLE THOMAS' SURPRISE!" next Tuesday's rib-tickling yarn of Jimmy Silver & Co., featuring that cheerful chump—Percy Cuthbert Gunner!

"THE DEATH RIDE!"

(Continued from page 22.)

The sheriff's hard face worked.

"Kid, I got my duty to do! You're an outlaw, and you're my mutton if I can get a cinch on you. You better let drive a bullet through me while you got the upper hand. I ain't got any kick coming if you do."

"Forget it!" said the Kid lightly.

That night the Kid camped in an arroyo in the Staked Plain, and the sheriff slept in the Kid's blankets, his feet to the camp-fire—sleeping the deep sleep of exhaustion.

The Kid sat on a rock by the fire and looked at the sleeping man, rolled in the blankets, with a whimsical grin.

There was a mutter from the sleeper. In the deep silence of the night in the desert, broken only by the faint crackling of the fire, disjointed words dropped from the sheriff's lips—words that told what dreams haunted his fevered brain.

"I'll get you yet! I'll sure get you yet!"

"Sho!" murmured the Kid.

The sheriff was sick and helpless; it would be days before he could travel. The Kid had saved his life—and his life still hung upon the Kid.

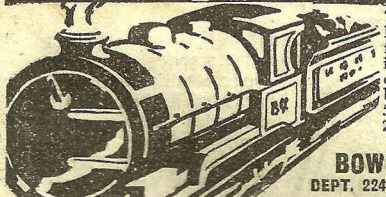
The Rio Kid glanced at his mustang nibbling the scant grass in the arroyo. To mount and ride, leaving his enemy there, was easy.

But if the thought crossed the mind of the boy outlaw, it came only to be dismissed. He rose from the rock, yawned, and stretched himself on the bare earth to sleep.

THE END.

(The Rio Kid's adventure is not yet over. He has still to get back with the wounded sheriff. See next week's roaring Western yarn!)

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