

5 SMASHING COMPLETE STORIES and SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT!

The POPULAR

2^d

AT THE
MERCY
OF THE
RAPIDS!

Being the Schooldays "Out West" of Frank Richards, the famous author.

The PERIL OF THE RAPIDS!

CHRONICLED,
in his well-known
vivid style, by
Martin Clifford

◆◆◆◆◆
Good Samaritans!
◆◆◆◆◆

"**H**OLD on, Bob!"
"What's the row?"
"Look!"

School was over at Cedar Creek, the pupils making for home.

Frank Richards and his cousin, Bob Lawless, were trotting along the forest trail homeward, chatting as they rode.

Frank suddenly pulled in his pony as a figure came in sight on the trail ahead.

It was that of a man in shabby clothes and dilapidated boots, with a ragged Stetson hat on the back of his untidy head. As he came plodding up the trail he was lurching strangely from side to side, with a curiously unsteady gait.

Bob Lawless looked at him, and his lip curled.
"Come on, Frank!" he said curtly.

"Hold on," said Frank. "What's the matter with that fellow, Bob? He must be ill!"

"Oh, he's all right. Come on!"

Frank glanced at his Canadian cousin in surprise.

As a rule, Bob was the first to extend a helping hand to a stranger in distress. Frank had known him to ride a dozen miles to help a new settler in the section to clear his land or run up a shack.

But Bob's good-natured face, as he looked at the lurching figure on the trail, expressed only contempt and disgust.

"Dash it all, Bob, the man must be ill," exclaimed Frank warmly. "I'm jolly well going to see. Do you know him?"

"Yes," said Bob shortly. "I've seen him about often enough. He hangs out at Cedar Creek town."

"Who is he?"
"Nobody you want to know. His name's Beauclerc."

"Well, I'm going to stop."

"He's a remittance man," growled Bob; and if you weren't a howling tenderfoot, you'd see what's the matter with him."

Frank had halted his pony, and Bob did likewise, though with evident unwillingness. The boys watched the man as he came towards them.



new clothes and put on more side. When it doesn't, they loaf about in tatters, or beg, or borrow, or steal. That chap is a good specimen. He's supposed to have no end of big connections in England, and they're glad to give him a handsome allowance to keep him a few thousands miles away."

"Oh!" said Frank, rather blankly.
"Want to make his acquaintance now?" grinned Bob.

"But if he's got a handsome allowance from his relations in England, he doesn't seem to thrive on it," said Frank, with a pitying glance at the remittance man's wretched clothes.

"Because he gambles it away as fast as he gets it," said Bob. "I've seen him painting the town red in Cedar Creek and the other camps. He gets a job, of sorts, sometimes, but he's too lazy to work—and too aristocratic." Bob sniffed. "That's not the kind of man that Canadians want to see arrive from the Old Country, Frank. But they come, all the same."
"He looks ill, Bob."

"Oh, you champion duffer!" growled Bob. "He's only suffering from an overdose of tangle-foot."

"Of—of what?"
"Tanglefoot—whisky."

"What's a remittance man?" asked Frank. It was the first the English lad had heard of that curious and well-known character of the Far West.

Bob grunted.

"A man who lives on remittances from home," he said. "There's a good many of them spoiling the landscape in British Columbia, I can tell you. Shiftless wasters who come out to try their luck in the Colonies, you know. The way they try their luck is to hang round the stores, playing poker with the cattlemen, or drinking, or putting on side."

"When their remittance arrives from some ass in the Old Country they sport

◆◆◆◆◆
Swanker—But Hero!
◆◆◆◆◆

(Copyright in the United States of America.)

Frank felt his compassion simmer down very considerably.

To a healthy, clean-minded lad there is probably no sight more repulsive than that of a man in a state of intoxication.

Frank was about to set his pony in motion again, to ride past the approaching remittance man, when the latter gave a sudden lurch and pitched over heavily among the larches beside the trail.

He made an effort to rise, but sank back again.

Frank paused once more.

"Bob!"

"Oh, come on!"

"We can't leave him there," said Frank. "He's an awful beast, but—hang it all—it will be dark in an hour or two, and he can't get home—like that!"

"Let him sleep there, then!"

"And wake up with pneumonia, perhaps," said Frank. "Look here, Bob, you can get on to the ranch if you like, I'm going to lend the poor chap a hand."

Bob Lawless gave his cousin a rather impatient look, but his good-humour conquered, and he grinned.

"Oh, all right! If you want to, I guess I'll help. Jump down."

"I knew your bark was worse than your bite," said Frank, laughing. "Let's get him home. I suppose he doesn't live far away."

"About six miles."

"Oh!"

"He lives in a shack outside the town, on the creek," said Bob. "He's not at home much, for that matter—not when he's got any money, at all events."

"Does he live alone?"

"Except for his son, yes."

"He has a son?" said Frank.

"Yes; not a specially nice chap, either," said Bob. "Proud as Lucifer, and poor as a church mouse."

"Must be a pretty hard life for him!"

"He doesn't make it any easier by his manners and customs," Bob laughed. "You see, Franky, there are all sorts of folk in this country. Every fellow who comes out from England isn't a fellow like yourself. Some of the immigrants are silly duffers who don't know enough to go in when it rains."

"This man Beauclerc is one of them, and his son's another. He dresses in tatters, and puts on airs of superiority that make a fellow want to punch his head," Bob grunted. "If we take his father home, he will most likely insult us, and we may have to pull his nose!"

"We'll chance that!" said Frank, laughing.

The cousins had dismounted, and they approached the wretched figure sprawling in the larches.

Now that he was closer, Frank Richards did not need telling what was the matter with the man. There was a very powerful aroma of spirits about him.

Repressing his disgust, Frank bent over him. The man looked up at him with glassy eyes.

In spite of his degraded state, Frank noted that his features were handsome and well-cut. In spite of all, there was an air of what had once been refinement about the man.

"Let me alone! Can't you keep your hands off a gentleman?" he muttered in husky tones, which yet had a trace of cultivation left. "Let me alone!"

"You can't stay here," said Frank.

"Turn me out, will you?" muttered the remittance man. "Ha! You low scoundrel, it would be an honour to you to brush my clothes!"

"What on earth does he mean?" said Frank, in perplexity.

Bob grinned.

"He thinks he's talking to some saloon-keeper, who's turned him out," he said. "Not before it was time, I should think. Hallo! He's gone to sleep!"

"We'll stick him on my pony," said Frank. "I can walk."

"Right-ho!"

The remittance man said nothing further. He was unconscious. He did not even open his eyes as the two lads lifted him up and placed him on Frank's pony.

Bob Lawless remounted his steed, riding close, and supporting the man, and Frank walked, helping to support the poor wretch, and leading the pony. It was a strange enough procession, following the long trail under the trees in the sunset.

The Son of the Remittance Man!

"HERE we are!" exclaimed Bob Lawless at last.

Some distance from Cedar Creek town, on the banks of the creek, stood a long shack on half-cleared ground, surrounded by patches of bush.

There was no sign of life about the place, as the boys halted outside, and lifted their charge to the ground.

"This the place?" asked Frank.

"Yes. The kid must be somewhere about. Get him inside."

Lascelles Beauclerc was lifted by his shoulders and his feet, and carried into the shack, of which the pine door stood wide open.

There were only two rooms in the shack, one the living-room and the other the bed-room.

The furniture consisted chiefly of old packing-cases and boxes and a rusty stove.

But the bed-room into which the man was carried was very clean and tidy.

There were two beds, made up of old cases spread with buffalo hides.

On the larger one the insensible man was laid.

Frank glanced round him with saddened eyes.

He was thinking of the remittance man's son. What surroundings for a growing lad, was the thought in his mind.

"Vere doesn't seem to be around," remarked Bob. "Working out in the fields, perhaps."

"Vere!" repeated Frank.

"Yes. The kid's name is Vere Beauclerc."

"What a stunning name!" said Frank, with a smile.

"Oh, we don't go much on names out here," said Bob carelessly. "Beauclerc or Brown, Plantagenet or Pudkins, it's all the same, so long as a man's a man. We haven't any use for snobbery in Canada—too busy!"

Frank laughed.

"I guess we can leave him here," said Bob. "The kid will find him when he comes in. Hallo! Here he is! Talk of angels."

There was a step in the outer room, and a lad of about fifteen came striding across.

He stood in the doorway of the inner room, looking at the two intruders with a flash in his eyes.

Frank Richards regarded him with

keen interest. He was somehow very much interested in this scion of a noble family in the Old Country, who found himself among such strange surroundings in the great West.

Vere Beauclerc was somewhat tall for his age, slim, and gracefully built. His face was extremely handsome, but it was marred by an expression of haughtiness which seemed strangely out of place there, for he was dressed with painful shabbiness.

But he might have been a nobleman, at home in a baronial hall, by his manner.

"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed, and his voice was sharp and haughty. "You have no right here!"

For the moment Beauclerc did not see the still figure on the bed. His dark, flashing eyes were fixed upon the two boys.

Frank felt his cheeks flush at the tone of the remittance man's son. Bob's eyes gleamed.

"Do you think you can enter this house as you please?" Beauclerc went on passionately.

"Oh, cheese it!" broke out Bob. "Do you think we want to enter your blessed old shack? We came to bring your father home."

Beauclerc started.

"My father!"

Bob made a gesture towards the bed.

"Oh! Is my father ill?"

"Er—er—that is—you see—"

Bob broke off suddenly.

Vere Beauclerc understood, and a crimson flush dyed his face to the very ears as he went hastily to the bedside.

Bob touched his cousin's arm.

"Come on, Frank! Let's get out."

Frank followed him from the shack. They caught the ponies that were browsing outside, and were about to mount, when Vere Beauclerc came hastily out of the shack.

His handsome face was still flushed, but his manner was changed.

"I am sorry I spoke to you as I did," he said. "I—I did not know you had brought my father home."

"All serene," said Bob carelessly. "No bones broken."

"I am very much obliged to you."

The words almost seemed wrung from the boy. It was plainly an effort to him to curb his proud and passionate temper, and speak civilly to the two strangers who had seen his father in such a state of degradation. "I thank you very sincerely!"

"Not at all," said Frank, speaking for the first time. "I am very glad we found Mr. Beauclerc in the wood."

Beauclerc gave him a quick look.

"You are very kind!" he said.

He raised his ragged hat gracefully, and turned back into the shack.

The cousins mounted, and rode away down the creek, heading for the distant Lawless Ranch.

"Popper will be wondering what's become of us," said Bob, as they set their ponies to a gallop. "Get a move on!"

The sun had almost disappeared now, and the comrades rode on in growing dusk.

Frank Richards' face was very thoughtful.

He could not help thinking of the lonely lad in the shack, friendless in the country, and repelling by his own foolish pride the kind-hearted people who would have been his friends.

"That's a rotten life for that chap, Bob," he said at last. "Couldn't something be done for him?"

Bob shrugged his shoulders.

"He would probably want to knock you down if you proposed to do anything for him," he said. "He's as proud as Lucifer, I tell you! Sort of wraps himself up in a mantle of pride, you know. His father would take a drink from a half-breed hobo, but that kid wouldn't accept a meal in charity if he was starving!"

"I think I can understand him a bit," said Frank. "I—suppose he doesn't go to school?"

Bob's lip curled.

"No. The lumber school isn't good enough for him, I dare say."

"The poor chap's got nothing left but his pride, Bob. You can make allowances for that."

"Oh, yes!" said Bob carelessly. "Of course, he'd have to swallow his pride, and go to school if the district was more settled. But, as it happens, he can do as he likes, and he doesn't like."

Over the Rapids!

"LOOK out for squalls!"

"It's all right!"

"Pride goeth before a fall!" grinned Bob Lawless.

It was the next day, and morning classes had finished at Cedar Creek School. Frank Richards was standing in a birch-bark canoe on the creek, and Bob was watching him from the bank—a little anxiously.

Frank had done a good deal of canoeing with his cousin, and had picked up the use of the paddle. But he was ambitious to handle a birch-bark canoe on his own, and he was trying his luck.

"It's all serene, Bob!" he said, laughing. "Easy as falling off a form."

"I say, old chap, do be careful!" said Bob. "If you get out into the rapids—"

"I'm not going near the rapids."

"You mayn't be able to help it when you get into the current," said Bob. "There's been a lot of rain, and the creek's swollen. You can see that."

"All serene."

"Better let me come. You can try it on your own on the lake at the ranch."

"I'll try it here," said Frank.

"Well, a wilful ass will have his way!" said Bob. "Keep her head to the current, anyhow, if you get carried down."

"I shan't get carried down," said Frank cheerfully.

And the canoe shot out into the creek.

Bob watched the English boy anxiously. He knew that there was danger for an inexperienced canoeer, a fact that Frank did not realise. He ran along the bank as the canoe glided along.

It seemed plain sailing enough at first, and Frank was glad that he had made the venture alone.

But he discovered soon that the trees on shore were fleeting by with great swiftness, and that Bob, running along the bank, was left behind. He was shouting, but his voice was lost in the distance.

Frank decided to turn back. The swiftness of the water warned him that he was getting near the rapids.

The rapids on the creek were not of a dangerous character to one who knew the ropes. Eben Hacke would have cleared them with ease, or Bob himself. But they were very new to the lad fresh from the Old Country.

THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

Frank had persuaded himself that he was quite a master of the paddle. To his surprise, the canoe refused to come round.

Instead of doing so, the light little craft rocked broadside on the swiftly running water, and very nearly capsized.

Frank's heart thumped.

He paddled desperately, and the canoe righted, but with her nose on the current, gliding swiftly downstream.

"My hat!" muttered Frank, in dismay.

He had made the interesting discovery that he could not round the canoe in the swift current, and that if he attempted it again he would probably finish his voyage at the bottom of the creek.

There was nothing for it but to run with the stream and get ashore as best he could. The canoe was light enough for him to carry it, or drag it, at least, back to the school landing.

But even getting ashore was not easy for the inexperienced paddler. The rain-swollen waters were rushing on, and ahead Frank could hear the deep, threatening murmur of the rapids.

He set his teeth hard.

By luck more than anything else he kept to the main channel, and avoided the dangerous snags that rose on both sides from the swirling water.

The din of the waters seemed deafening to his ears. Foam curled round the bow as the canoe fled on.

He realised that he was "shooting the rapids."

The speed slackened.

Frank panted for breath. The rapids were behind him now, though the water was still running fast. The worst of the danger was over. From somewhere on the bank he heard a sudden shouting.

It was a warning, he knew; but before he quite realised it there was a stunning crash.

The canoe had crashed into a floating log, and in a twinkling it was capsized, and Frank was struggling in the water.

His head struck something as he struggled. It was the bottom of the overturned canoe. His senses were leaving him, but he still struggled to swim.

The water flooded over his head, but he came up again, bravely fighting for his life in the heavy swirl. But his head went under again.

The last thing he knew was that a sudden grasp was fastened on his collar, and he was dragged up.

For a second he caught a fleeting glimpse of a face beside him in the swirling water, and then his senses left him.

Frank's Rescuer!

FRANK RICHARDS opened his eyes.

There was a dull ache in his head. He gazed about him dizzily.

He was lying in the grass by the shining creek that rushed and sang by within a few feet of him.

He lay in a pool of water, wet to the skin, drenched, and dripping. Something was supporting his head, and as his senses cleared he realised that it was a strong arm. A face bent over him, a handsome face he remembered.

"Feel better?"

"Beauclerc!" gasped Frank.

The son of the remittance man nodded and smiled.

"Yes. I saw you come over the fall, and shouted to you. You're not used to a canoe, are you?"

Frank laughed breathlessly. He was quickly recovering.

"I thought I was, but I'm not. Thank you for fetching me out. I should have been drowned."

"Well, I suppose you would, really," said Beauclerc. "You've got a bump on your head. You had a knock."

"You must be a jolly good swimmer," said Frank.

"Yes, pretty fair," said Beauclerc carelessly.

Something of his old manner was returning now, but Frank was determined not to observe it. He sat up, Beauclerc still supporting him.

"Bob will be anxious about me," said Frank. "I shall have to get back as fast as I can. Am I far from the school?"

"A good six miles."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Longer than that by road," said Beauclerc. "And I suppose you couldn't paddle back, could you?"

"Not much good if I could," said Frank ruefully. "I suppose Bob's canoe is at the bottom of the creek."

Beauclerc laughed.

"Not at all. I brought it ashore after I'd landed you. There it lies."

Frank looked round. The canoe was out of the water.

"By Jove," said Frank, "you're awfully good, Beauclerc! You've learned to be more handy than I have out here."

"I've been out here a good many years," said Beauclerc quietly.

"You're not much older than I am," said Frank, looking at him.

"No."

Beauclerc hesitated a moment.

"Would you like me to paddle you back?" he asked.

"Could you?"

"Easily."

"I say, you're awfully good," said Frank gratefully. "If you've got the time to spare—"

Beauclerc shrugged his shoulders.

"I've plenty of time. I do a great deal of idling. There's little enough for me to do at the shack."

"But the clearing—"

"We don't work the land. Father hasn't taken up cultivation of any sort." He frowned a little. "I dare say you've heard about me!" he added bitterly. "Father's a remittance man."

"I—I know."

"You know what that is?"

"Yes."

"We live on an allowance my father gets from his elder brother in England," said Beauclerc, with a sarcastic curl of the lip. "We belong to a good family, and we're too aristocratic to work. Not much use wastrels of that kind coming to Canada, eh? But lots of them do, and lots of them go to the bad."

He shrugged his shoulders again. "But never mind all that. Lend me a hand with the canoe. It will have to be portaged to the other side of the rapids. Can't paddle uphill, you know."

"I suppose not," assented Frank.

The two boys picked up the birch-bark canoe between them, and carried it up the steep bank.

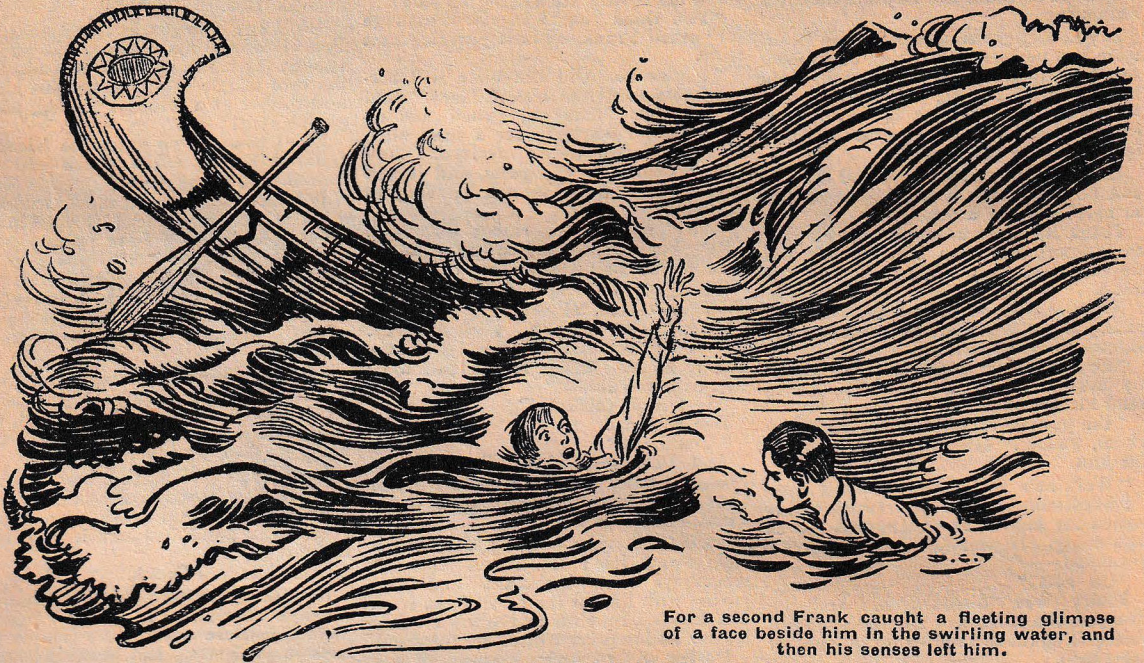
The "portage" was a long one, and the canoe had to be carried some distance before it could be launched above the rapids.

Beauclerc led the way, Frank trusting to his guidance. They lost sight of the creek two or three times as they went on. But Beauclerc evidently knew every foot of the way.

"Here we are!" he said at last. The canoe was set down, and slid out into the creek. Frank was glad enough to sit down. Beauclerc took the paddle, and the canoe glided up-stream. Frank watched him with interest. He paddled with great skill and untiring strength. The rough life of the backwoods had done much for Vere Beauclerc, so far as physical strength and endurance went. His face was set now in its usual expression of almost arrogant calm. Frank could easily understand how good-natured, happy-go-lucky Bob Lawless had no liking for the haughty, reserved boy. But Frank, though to some degree repelled by his manner, could not help feeling friendly towards the lonely lad. Vere Beauclerc had almost certainly saved his life, though he made nothing of it.

very last persons to get on in any way in the breezy West. Pride of birth was ludicrously out of place in the shadow of the mighty Rockies, where every man was valued for what he was, and not for what his ancestors might have been. He did not speak again, as Beauclerc paddled on untiringly. He was glad when the lumber school came in sight at last. There was a shout from the bank as the canoe came gliding up. "Here he is!" Bob Lawless fairly dragged Frank from the canoe, almost hugging him in his relief. "Frank! You duffer! I reckoned you were a goner! Thank goodness you've got back! Come on. You're late for school." He paused, and looked curiously at Vere Beauclerc, who had stepped from the canoe and made it fast. "What's happened, Frank?"

taken the slightest note of Bob's presence, even by so much as a look. Bob's good-natured face was flushed and his eyes were gleaming. "You say Beauclerc saved your life, Frank!" muttered Bob. "Yes. I should have gone under but for him." "Well, that was decent of him, I suppose. I won't pull a fellow's nose who did that for you," said Bob. "Let him clear!" "Bob!" muttered Frank. Beauclerc was turning away, but he turned back, his lip curling in the sarcastic smile Frank had learned to know already. "Pray don't let that stop you, dear boy," he said, with cool insolence. "My nose is at your service—if you can touch it!" Bob clenched his hands, and made a



For a second Frank caught a fleeting glimpse of a face beside him in the swirling water, and then his senses left him.

That was a debt Frank Richards was not likely to forget in a hurry.

The strange situation of the remittance man's son appealed to him, too. He could guess that shame at his father's degradation was part of Beauclerc's reason for wrapping himself up, as it were, in an armour of cold pride and disdain.

"Beauclerc!" said Frank at last, breaking the silence—only broken hitherto by the ripple of the paddle. Beauclerc looked at him.

"Excuse me," Frank coloured a little. "Why don't you come to our school? You could if you liked."

"I don't like." "I wish you'd come to Cedar Creek," said Frank. "You'd find the fellows right as rain. My Cousin Bob—"

"I've met your Cousin Bob," said Beauclerc. "You'll excuse me if I say I don't like him."

"Oh!" said Frank, taken aback. "And I shouldn't like the fellows at your school," said Beauclerc. "Do you?"

"Yes." "Tastes differ!" said Beauclerc. Frank was silent. He understood that the Beauclercs, father and son, were the

The New Boy at Cedar Creek.

VERE BEAUCLERC did not glance at Bob Lawless. He methodically made the canoe secure, apparently ignorant of the Canadian's presence. Bob's eyes were beginning to gleam.

"I came to grief in the rapids," said Frank hastily. "Beauclerc fished me out of the water, Bob. I should have been drowned."

"Oh, by gum!" ejaculated Bob. "He's paddled me back. Goodness knows when I should have got here if he hadn't. I say, Beauclerc, how are you going to get home?"

"Walk," said Beauclerc laconically. "It's a jolly long way!" "That's nothing!"

Beauclerc paused a moment, and then held out his hand to Frank Richards. "Good-bye!" he said.

"Good-bye!" said Frank, as he shook hands with him. "And thanks again!" "Not at all!"

Frank coloured with vexation as Beauclerc turned away. He had not

stridely towards him. Frank Richards hastily stepped between them.

"Bob, old chap! Hold on—"

"Look here—"

"Don't!" said Frank. "He saved my life, Bob!" Bob Lawless dropped his hands. "Oh, all right! Let him go! I don't want to row with him. You'd better come in, Frank. You're jolly late already."

He grasped Frank's arm and hurried him away to the schoolhouse. Vere Beauclerc stood looking after them for a few minutes, the sarcastic smile still upon his face and then turned and disappeared among the trees along the creek.

"That's a queer fellow, Bob!" said Frank, as they entered the schoolhouse. Bob grunted.

"Too queer for my taste. He's got the manners of a grizzly bear, if you want to know what I think of him! The son of a drunken waster, turning up his nose at everybody in the section!" growled Bob.

"He can't help his father!" "He can help being a silly snob, I suppose."

"Well, I suppose so," admitted Frank. "But—but I believe he isn't a bad sort, in the main, Bob. He ought to be at school here. He would get the rot knocked out of him in next to no time."

"Well, I'd help!" said Bob, his face relaxing into a grin. "He wouldn't be here a day without three or four fights on his hands, and I should be one of the first. Come on. You want a rub down before you go into school."

Ten minutes later the cousins entered the school-room.

Afternoon lessons were half over, and Miss Meadows gave them both a very severe glance.

But the schoolmistress was placated by Bob's explanation, and they took their places for the remainder of the lessons.

Frank Richards was generally one of Miss Meadows' best pupils. But this afternoon he could not help his thoughts wandering.

It was no light service that Vere Beauclerc had performed for him, and Frank was not likely to be ungrateful. He knew that Beauclerc, however good a swimmer he was, must have run considerable risk in plunging into the water for him below the rapids.

He had plenty of pluck, at all events; and he must have a good heart to run so much risk for a stranger.

Frank Richards would have been glad to welcome him as a schoolfellow, and he was wondering whether it could be done.

After school, when the cousins were riding home together, he broached the subject to Bob Lawless.

"Couldn't your pater chip in, Bob?" he asked. "Mr. Beauclerc ought to send his son to school, you know!"

"I'm getting rather tired of your new chum, Frank!" said Bob, quite roughly for him.

"Well, he's not a chum," said Frank. "I hardly know the chap. But it seems rotten for him to be wasting his life as he's doing. If your father spoke to Mr. Beauclerc—"

"Oh, rats!"

Frank was discouraged, and he dropped the subject. But Bob himself raised it again as they came in sight of the ranch.

"What are you bothering about that fellow Beauclerc for, Frank?" he asked.

"Well, I wish something could be done for him."

"He would feel like punching your head if he knew that you were suggesting doing something for him."

"I dare say he would!" admitted Frank. "All the same—"

"Still, I agree with you," said Bob unexpectedly. "His father's a regular wastrel. I don't believe he ever gives the kid a thought in any way. And the poor chap's got no mother." Bob knitted his brows. "Look here, Franky, we'll tackle dad about it after supper!"

"Right-ho!" said Frank, brightening up.

And after supper, in the ranch-house, when Rancher Lawless was enjoying his evening pipe, he was duly "tackled."

The rancher listened quietly, blowing out big clouds of smoke the while.

He nodded at last.

"I guess you're right," he said. "I'm afraid Mr. Beauclerc is a hopeless case. But I've thought about the boy several times. As a matter of fact, I've spoken to Beauclerc about it, and so have some others. It hasn't done much good. But I'll ride over in the morning on my way to the town."

THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

And with that Frank Richards had to be satisfied. Bob Lawless burst into a chuckle when they went to their room.

"You'll get your cheery Beauclerc as a schoolfellow," he remarked, "and you'll be fighting him the next day, and so shall I the day after."

"I shan't fight him," said Frank quietly. "And I hope you won't, Bob. Why not give him a chance? You've often called me a tenderfoot, but Beauclerc is a bigger greenhorn than I ever was, in some ways. He hasn't learned yet that class distinction doesn't count at the foot of the Rocky Mountains; his head's full of nonsense he learned in the old country. But, give him a chance, and he'll turn out right enough."

"Anything you like!" yawned Bob. "After all, he'll have trouble enough on his hands without me. If there's anything the chaps at Cedar Creek won't stand it's a silly ass putting on side!"

"You think your father will manage it?" asked Frank, without pursuing that topic.

"I guess so. Old Beauclerc will borrow some money of him, I fancy," said Bob coolly. "The old galoot will do anything for anybody for a loan when his remittance hasn't arrived. And young Beauclerc will guess, and it will make him wild, and he will be ready to eat you!"

"Oh!" said Frank, rather dismayed. "But—surely, Bob, he can't like the kind of life he's leading now?"

"Well, it will be better for him to come to school, of course," said Bob. "He will be happier, I should say. But he will guess that he owes it to you, and if he feels under an obligation he will hate you for it."

"I—I can't think so!"

Bob chuckled.

"You'll see."

And Bob went cheerfully to sleep, evidently quite indifferent as to whether the remittance man's son came to Cedar Creek School or not.

On the following morning Mr. Lawless rode away from the ranch with the schoolboys after breakfast, and they parted with him at the fork of the trail. Mr. Lawless rode on to the town, while his son and nephew trotted off to school.

During morning lessons Frank Richards could not help wondering how the rancher's visit to the remittance man's shack had prospered.

After dinner, in the school dining-room, Frank and Bob went down to the creek to try the canoe again, Frank having realised quite clearly that he was in need of more instruction from his Canadian cousin.

The canoe kept them busy till the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

"Lessons again!" yawned Bob. "No rest for the wicked! Make her rip!"

The canoe was rushed to the bank, and the two chums jumped ashore. The Cedar Creek fellows were going into the schoolhouse. Bob Lawless caught his cousin's arm suddenly.

"By gum! Look here, my son!"

"Beauclerc!" exclaimed Frank.

The remittance man's son was coming towards them. His handsome face was flushed, his dark eyes gleaming. There was a deep, suppressed anger and resentment in his look.

Frank Richards gave him a friendly nod, and Bob grinned faintly. Beauclerc was not looking friendly.

"You've joined the school?" asked Frank cordially.

Beauclerc's lips curled.

"Yes; my father has decided to send me to school. There is no choice about

my coming here, as there is no other school. Mr. Lawless visited him this morning, and I fancy I owe it to him. It is very kind of him to take an interest in me," Beauclerc's eyes gleamed. "It is odd that he should have taken the trouble to think about me at all."

His eyes gleamed at Frank, who understood the implied question. Frank flushed crimson. For the moment he fully shared Bob's dislike of the lad before him. After all, he had done a kind action after having received a service. Was he to be called over the coals for that?

"I think I am right," said Beauclerc, with a sneer. "It was you put it into Mr. Lawless' head to speak to my father?"

"Well, and why not?" demanded Frank hotly. "If I had been in your place I should have been glad—"

"So would any chap with any sense!" growled Bob.

"So I owe it to you, Frank Richards?" Beauclerc set his teeth. "It is not enough for me to be poor, dependent on my own people—I am to be sent hither and thither at a stranger's word, like a pariah dog?"

"I—I thought we might be friends," faltered Frank, taken aback and dismayed. "I thought—"

Beauclerc made a scornful gesture. "You were mistaken! I shall make no friends here. I have come against my will, and all I ask of you is to let me alone."

"Confound your cheek!" broke out Bob Lawless angrily. "You'll be let alone enough, I can assure you of that!"

"Please yourself, Beauclerc," said Frank Richards, his own anger rising. "I think you are a pig-headed fool, and it may do you good to be told so. That's plain English, at any rate!"

Beauclerc's eyes flashed, and he made a quick step towards Frank Richards. Before Frank could make a movement Beauclerc's hand had struck him upon the cheek.

"Oh!" gasped Frank.

He sprang forward, his eyes blazing, his fists clenched. In another second Vere Beauclerc would have lain on his back in the grass. But Frank Richards suddenly lowered his hands. Back into his mind came that scene of the previous day, when he had been sinking under the swirling waters, and a strong, brave hand had dragged him back from death. He drove his hands hard into his pockets.

"Frank!" shouted Bob, in angry indignation.

Frank looked at him quietly.

"He saved my life, Bob! I can't touch him! Come on!"

He walked on towards the school quietly, though his eyes were burning. Bob, with a black brow, went with him.

Vere Beauclerc looked after them, the angry glitter dying out of his eyes, the sullen resentment from his proud face.

There was repentance and shame now in the handsome face of the remittance man's son, if Frank Richards had looked back. But he did not look back. The school-bell had ceased to ring. Beauclerc, with an impatient exclamation, followed the two chums into the school-house.

THE END.

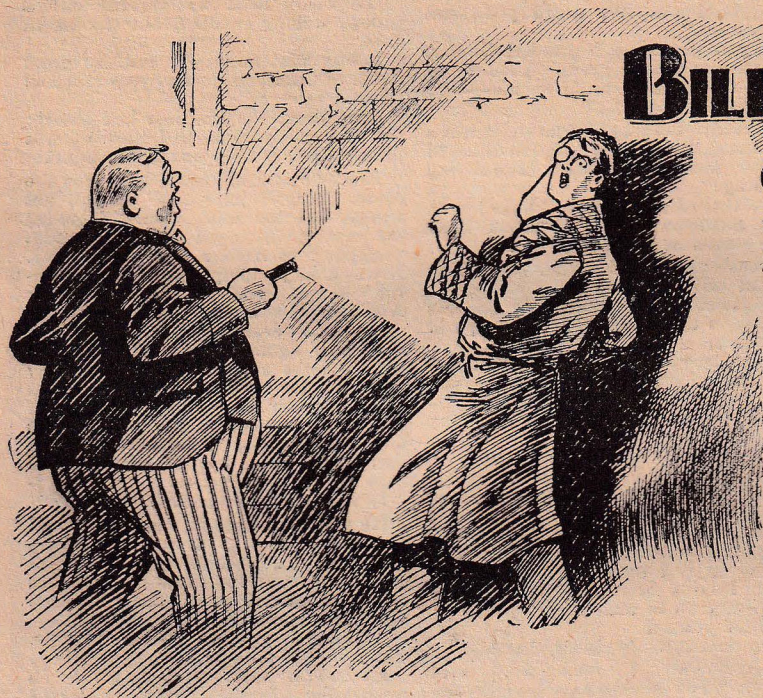
(You'll like next Tuesday's grand complete story of the backwoods school, "THE SNOB OF CEDAR CREEK!" To ensure reading it, chum, order your copy of the POPULAR as soon as possible.)

WHERE'S PILKINS, THE ESTATE AGENT
WHERE'S WALSINGHAM, THE BUTLER
HOW DOES "BUNTER COURT" KEEP GOING



AH! THAT'S—

BILLY BUNTER'S SECRET!



"Bai Jove! Can it be Buntah?"
asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.
Harry Wharton jumped up.
"It's Bunter! Sounds as if he's
choking!"
"Yurrrrrrrgggggggh!"
The horrid sound was going on
crescendo. If it proceeded from Billy
Bunter it certainly seemed to indicate
that the Owl of the Remove was in need
of first aid.

Wharton ran in at the french
windows. Bob Cherry and Nugent,
Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram
Singh, followed him.

Bunter was sprawling in a comfort-
able chair, with his head resting on a
soft cushion. He was fast asleep. And
his expression, as well as his mumbings
and grumbings, showed that he was in
the grip of a nightmare.

That was really not surprising, con-
sidering the dinner that Bunter had
disposed of. There had been ten
courses to the dinner, and Bunter had
made a solid meal of each.

The Famous Five gazed at the
sleeping beauty. Bunter was wriggling,
and his fat face made horrid contortions
to an accompaniment of groans, grunts,
snorts, and gurgles.

"Wake him before he suffocates!"
said Johnny Bull. "Here, I'll wake
the fat bouncer!"

Johnny Bull grasped Bunter by the
collar and shook him.

"Grooogh! Hoooh! Yurrrrgh!
Leggo! You villain, Pilkins—"

"My hat!"
"Yurrrggghh! You cheeky rotter,
Walsingham—"

"By Jove!"
"Grrrrrrrr! I won't bring you any
more grub, you ungrateful
rotters! Grooooooogh!"

"Great pip!"

Bunter was not awake yet.
Slumber's golden chain had
evidently bound him very
tight. Johnny Bull's shaking
was apparently forming a
part of his horrid dream,
and, from his grunting ejacu-

lations, it seemed that he was dreaming
that he was in the grasp of Mr. Pilkins,
the estate agent, and Walsingham, the
late butler of Combermere Lodge.
Though why Bunter should be dreaming
of those two individuals was a mystery
to the Famous Five. It would have
been more like Bunter to be dreaming
of his dinner.

"Yurrrgggh! Leggo! Springing on
a chap like a tiger! Ow! Wow! I'll
THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

By **FRANK RICHARDS**, The 100
per cent. **SCHOOL STORY** Writer.

Alarming!

"GURRRRRRR!"
"Bai Jove!"
"Yurrrggh!"
"What the thump—"

"Moooooooh!"
Harry Wharton & Co. were startled.
Those weird sounds, floating on the
calm, still air of the August evening,
were enough to make any fellow sit up
and take notice.

The tall windows of the vast drawing-
room at Combermere Lodge were
brightly lighted. Light streamed from
them upon the wide terrace
on which the windows
looked.

On the terrace, comfort-
ably ensconced in deck-chairs,
the chums of the Greyfriars
Remove were taking their
ease.

The Famous Five of Grey-
friars were in cheery spirits.

They had played cricket that day, and
had become pleasantly tired. A good
dinner had followed. The dinners at
Combermere Lodge, alias Bunter Court,
were always good.

After dinner the juniors retired to the
terrace for a chat in the cool air there
before bed. Billy Bunter did not accom-
pany them. Bunter was fast asleep in
a chair. He had dined not wisely, but
too well, and his eyes had closed behind
his big spectacles as if they were glued.
Only his snore, floating out of the open

french windows, reminded his guests
that he was still there.

Harry Wharton & Co. were feeling
very cheery and contented. D'Arcy, of
St. Jim's, their fellow-guest at Bunter
Court, was perhaps not quite so cheery.
Every now and then Arthur Augustus
D'Arcy passed his hand tenderly over
his noble head, feeling a big bruise
there. He owed that bruise to Billy
Bunter's wonderful powers as a bowler
in the cricket match that day. When
Billy Bunter was bowling, only the
batsman was safe!

Bunter's snore, floating out on the
summer air, had died away. But from
the great room strange, weird, and un-

"Nosey Parkers" Not Wanted at Bunter Court!

canny sounds were now proceeding—
sounds that interrupted the cheery chat
of the juniors and caused them to sit
up in their chairs and look round with
startled glances.

"Yurrrrrrrgggggggh! Gurrgggggggh!
Moooooooh!"

"What on earth is it?" asked Bob
Cherry. "Sounds like a dog with a
bone—but I suppose it can't be."

"Grooooooogh!"

jolly well leave you to starve! Ow! Grooogh!"

"Wake up!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Gurrrggggg!"

Shake! Shake! Shake!

Johnny Bull put his beef into it and administered a series of shakes that would have awakened Rip Van Winkle or Epimenides of old.

Bunter's little round eyes opened behind his big spectacles, and he blinked dazedly at the chums of the Remove.

"Grooogh!"

"Bunter—"

"Pilkins, you rotter—"

Crash!

"Oh!" roared Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter's fat fist came out with unexpected suddenness, and it landed on Johnny's nose with a terrific smite. Johnny Bull went over backwards, as if a cannon-ball had smitten him. A lacquer table with a coffee-tray on it was in Johnny's way, and it flew, and coffee cups crashed right and left as Johnny Bull sprawled on the floor.

Mysterious!

"OH!" roared Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter jumped up. The mists were clearing from his fat brain, and he realised that he was in the presence of the Greyfriars fellows, not of Pilkins, the estate agent, and Walsingham, the butler. He blinked rather dizzily at the juniors.

"I—I—I've been asleep!" he gasped. "Go hon!" said Bob Cherry, with sarcasm.

"I must have been dreaming," said Bunter. "I thought it was—ahem!—I mean, I didn't think—"

Johnny Bull scrambled up. There was a crimson smear on his nose, and there was fury in his face. He did not speak; he hurled himself at Bunter, and his comrades grabbed him and dragged him back, only just in time.

"Let go!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Hold on!"

"I'm going to smash him!"

"Hold on, you ass!"

"Look at my nose!"

"Bother your nose!" said Bob Cherry, holding the infuriated Johnny back by main force. "You can't punch your giddy host! Remember your manners, old man!"

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" yelled Bunter.

"All serene, fatty!"

"Look at my nose!" raved Johnny Bull.

"Well, you asked for it!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "I didn't know it was your silly nose. I thought it was Pilkins—"

"Why the thump should you want to punch Pilkins' nose, even if you thought it was Pilkins?" demanded Nugent.

"Because—I mean—I didn't—"

"What?"

"I mean, I didn't think it was Pilkins! That was what I really meant to say," stammered Bunter.

"Chuck it, Johnny, old man!" said Harry Wharton soothingly. "You woke Bunter up rather suddenly, you know, and he didn't know it was your nose he was punching."

"Look at it!" breathed Johnny Bull sulphurously.

"Better go and bathe it, old chap."

Johnny Bull nodded, and tramped

out of the room. He realised that it would not do to punch the fat junior, who was his host at Bunter Court. He simply yearned to punch him; but he sagely went to bathe his nose instead. There was no doubt that it needed bathing.

"All right now, fatty?" asked Nugent. "You were making a horrid row, you know. We heard you from the terrace."

"I was dreaming," grunted Bunter. "Those two beasts sprang on me—I mean, they didn't spring on me—"

"What two beasts?"

"Nobody—nothing! I mean, it was a nightmare," said Bunter hurriedly. "I—I—I say, you fellows, have I been saying anything?"

The Owl of the Remove blinked with deep suspicion at the Famous Five. They stared at him in return.

It was obvious that Bunter feared that he had talked in his sleep, and given away some deep secret that he was anxious to keep from the knowledge of his guests.

"You were gurgling and groaning," said Harry. "Chattering a lot of rot, too."

"Oh! Did—did I mention any names?"

"Yes—Pilkins and Walsingham."

"Look here, if I've said anything, you fellows, tell me what I said," exclaimed Bunter anxiously.

"What the dickens does it matter?"

"It does matter!" snapped Bunter.

"Blessed if I remember! Something about Pilkins and Walsingham, and bringing grub to somebody."

Bunter jumped.

"Oh, crumbs! Is—is—is that all?"

"That's all I remember," said Harry. "You seem to have been dreaming that Pilkins and Walsingham were in the house, and that they had sprung on you. You overdid it at dinner."

"Of course—that was it," said Bunter, relieved. "Just indigestion, of course. Nothing in it, you know."

"Of course not," said Harry blankly. "Pilkins and Walsingham are not here, and if they were, you wouldn't be scrapping with them, I suppose. What do you mean?"

"Nothing, old chap."

"Well, if you're all right, we'll get back to D'Arcy," said Wharton. "Better cut supper to-night, or you'll have it again."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Well?"

"Did I say anything about the wine-cellers?"

"The wine-cellers?" ejaculated Wharton. "Not that I heard. I suppose you weren't dreaming about the wine-cellers!"

"Yes—I mean no! Of course not!" said Bunter. "Why should I be dreaming about wine-cellers? Ridiculous!"

Wharton and Nugent and Bob and Hurree Singh went back to the terrace.

"I'm going to bed!" called out Bunter. "I suppose you fellows will be going soon?"

"Yes. Good-night!"

"Good-night, old chap!"

Billy Bunter rolled away. He wanted to finish his nap; but apparently he would not trust himself to finish it in the chair. Obviously, he was afraid that he had let out some secret, though what that secret could possibly be was a perplexing puzzle to the chums of the Remove. But in the great four-poster bed in Lord Combermere's state bedroom, Bunter's secrets were safe—he could mumble and grumble as much as he liked without fear of being overheard.

At Dead of Night.

"WOTTEN!"

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy addressed that remark to space.

His weary head was turning on his pillow, wooing slumber, but wooing in vain.

It was past midnight, and the great house of Combermere was very still and silent.

Long since, the last door had closed; the last sleepy head had sunk upon a pillow. But D'Arcy was still wakeful.

The bump on his noble head was the cause. Billy Bunter had bowled, not wisely, but too well, when he landed the cricket-ball upon the aristocratic "napper" of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. It was a large bump, and it was a painful bump, and it kept Arthur Augustus wide awake.

He had dozed for a time, and awakened again. Then he had turned on the light and read his "Holiday Annual" for an hour or so. Then his tired eyes blinked, and he switched off the light and sought his pillow. But he sought slumber there in vain. If he dozed off for a few minutes he was sure to wake up again.

It was, as he remarked, rotten.

He was tired, and he was sleepy, and he could not sleep. That aching bump was sure to awaken him if he nodded off. He turned his tired head on the pillow again and again, and still sleep would not come.

"Wotten!" groaned the swell of St. Jim's. "Weally wotten, bai Jove! That howlin' ass Buntah ought to be pwhobited frow playin' cwicket! Bangin' a cwicket-ball on a fellow's nappah, bai Jove! Oh deah!"

Arthur Augustus sat up in bed.

Moonlight glimmered in at the windows. It was a beautiful summer's night. Arthur Augustus thought of the moonlit terrace, and wondered whether a stroll there would help to banish his restlessness. But the house was locked up. And D'Arcy was a considerate fellow; he did not want to disturb anybody. But sitting in bed, sleepless and restless, was a bore, and he was fed-up.

He turned out of bed, and slipped on a dressing-gown over his beautiful silk pyjamas, and put his elegant feet into a pair of soft slippers. Then he went to his door.

Outside there was a wide corridor, with a large window at one end, through which the moonlight streamed. The other end of the corridor gave upon the great landing below where lay the staircase in deep darkness. Arthur Augustus paced along the corridor, finding relief in motion, and hoping to make himself sleepy by constant movement.

Up and down the corridor he went, soundless in his soft slippers, occasionally running his hand tenderly over the bruise on his head. As he was Billy Bunter's guest, he did not like to think hard things of Bunter; but he would really have liked to tell the Owl of the Remove what he thought of him as a cricketer. It was too bad to be pacing a lonely corridor like this towards one in the morning, simply because Billy Bunter fancied that he could bowl.

A sudden sound in the silent house caught his ear, and he stopped.

The sound thrilled him for a moment. For, soft and stealthy as it was, it was unmistakably a footstep; and a footstep in the house at that hour was

startling. The thought of burglars came into Gussy's mind at once.

A fat figure, fully dressed emerged into dim view.

It was Bunter.

D'Arcy had a glimpse of his face, with the moonlight glinting on the Owl's big spectacles. He noted, too, that Bunter had a bag in his hand.

Without glancing in D'Arcy's direction, the Owl of the Remove glided stealthily on towards the stairs.

In the dim moonlight from the high windows he would probably not have seen D'Arcy had he looked in his direction; he was too short-sighted for that. But his absolute unconsciousness that there was a fellow standing in the cross-passage seemed to D'Arcy to indicate that Bunter was, without doubt, fast asleep as he walked.

Indeed, any casual observer might well have supposed the same. Had Bunter been, like D'Arcy himself, taking a stroll from sleeplessness, he would hardly have been carrying a bag in his hand and stealing along swiftly like a fellow with a fixed destination.

If he was not sleep-walking, obviously he was making a secret expedition with something in the bag—which was so improbable that D'Arcy naturally did not think of it at all.

"Pooah old Buntah!" murmured D'Arcy.

He made a step towards the dim figure in the distance, and then stopped.

His first idea was to wake Bunter and get him back to his bed-room. But he recollected in time that it is said to be dangerous to awaken a sleepwalker; liable to cause a severe shock to the nervous system of the unhappy victim of somnambulism.

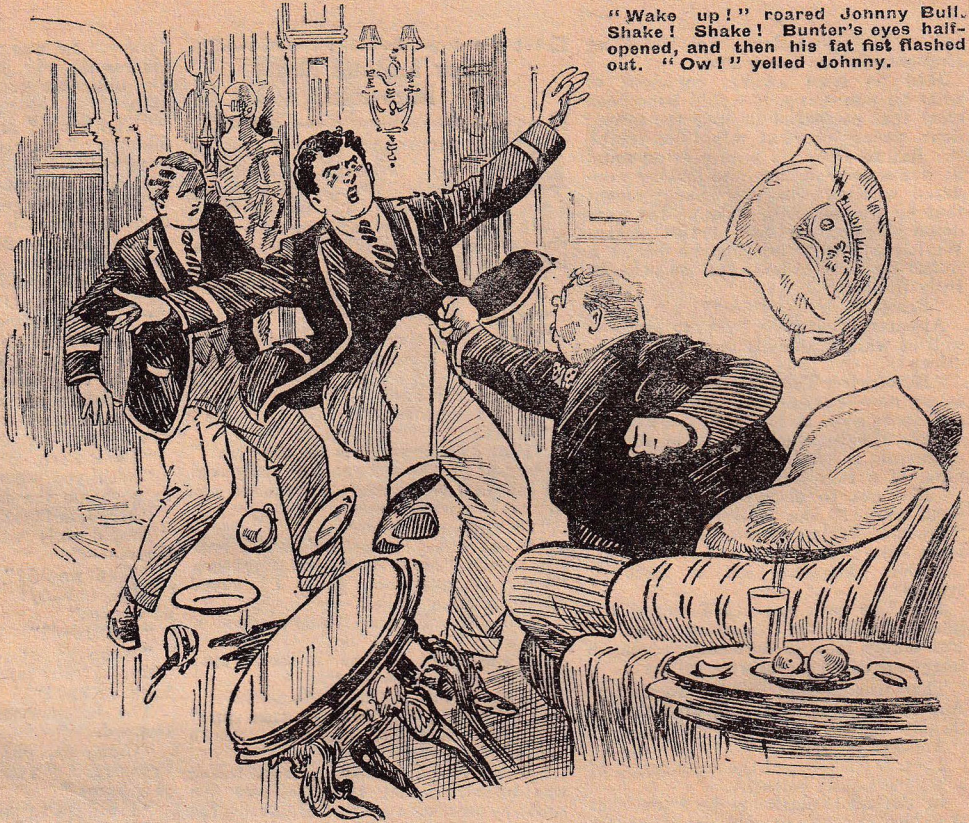
So Arthur Augustus stopped quite suddenly.

"Bai Jove!" murmured Arthur Augustus in distress. "Pooah old Buntah! I must not startle him—might have a feahful effect on the pooah fellow's nerves! But I can't let him wip! If he wakes up suddenly and finds himself wandewin' downstairs he will feel howwid!"

Arthur Augustus trod softly on Bunter's trail.

In his soft slippers he made no sound, and he was very careful indeed to make no noise that could alarm Bunter.

His intention was to keep an eye on the somnambulist, and see that he came to no harm. If Bunter showed a sign of falling, he would rush on and catch him at the risk of waking him suddenly. But he had read that sleep-walkers have a wonderful sureness of foot; often, indeed, walking where in waking hours they could not walk. And as he watched the dim figure flitting ahead, he was soon assured that Bunter was in no danger of falling. So all



"Wake up!" roared Jonny Bull. Shake! Shake! Bunter's eyes half-opened, and then his fat fist flashed out. "Ow!" yelled Johnny.

there was for D'Arcy to do was to keep a careful eye on him, and render any assistance that might be needed—especially if Bunter woke up suddenly before wandering back to his bed. His feelings, in such a case, finding himself downstairs alone in the dark would be horrid—and then a friendly hand and a friendly voice would be invaluable to him.

But for D'Arcy's fixed conviction that Bunter was walking in his sleep, he would perhaps have doubted whether the fat junior was acting quite like a somnambulist.

He went down the staircase with a sure step, and paused in the great hall of Combermere.

Then he stopped, and seemed to be blinking round him, like a fellow who was wide awake and afraid of ghosts.

D'Arcy watched him over the banisters.

Bunter moved again in a few moments, and disappeared into the gloom of a passage leading past the butler's room.

D'Arcy hurried down the stairs.

Combermere Lodge was an immense building, and the St. Jim's junior did not want to lose Bunter in the mazes of the great house.

A glimmer of light struck his eyes.

The somnambulist—if such he was—had turned on a pocket electric torch, D'Arcy was quite startled for a moment. But he realised that sleep-walkers are very likely to act just as if they are broad awake. It did not even yet dawn upon him that Bunter was not a sleep-walker at all.

The Owl of the Remove stopped at a vaulted doorway, which D'Arcy knew to be the opening of the wine-cellar.

There he fumbled in a pocket and produced a key.

Arthur Augustus breathed hard.

It was the key of the wine-cellar which Bunter always carried about

with him, for reasons utterly inexplicable to his guests. He had lost it once, and D'Arcy, finding it, had naturally handed it to the butler—a circumstance which had disturbed Bunter greatly. Gussy could not even guess why. Now, obviously, it was in Bunter's possession again, for he was unlocking the door with it.

The oak door was pushed open, and Bunter stepped through, and vanished. D'Arcy hurried on to the doorway.

He could hear the footsteps of the fat junior descending the winding stair to the cellars. Bunter's footsteps were less stealthy now; he was taking less care, now that he was far from the sleeping quarters of the house. The gleam of the torch vanished beyond the bend below.

D'Arcy paused a few moments, and then began to descend the steps.

He was quite alarmed for Bunter now. Arthur Augustus debated in his mind whether he had better take the Owl of Greyfriars by the arm and lead him gently back to bed, at the risk of awakening him, lest worse should befall.

Softly, silently, the St. Jim's junior descended the oaken staircase, and the gleam of the electric torch was visible again.

Bunter was standing at the bottom of the stairs, close to an oak door that shut off the staircase from the cellars.

He had slipped the key into the lock, and stood with his fat hand on it, as if hesitating to turn.

There was a faint click and the electric torch was shut off. All was darkness—thick darkness—and the Owl of the Remove vanished from the gaze of the junior a few steps above him.

D'Arcy stopped, vaguely alarmed.

The lower door was apparently opened by the same key as the upper door; but Bunter, who had not hesita-

THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

ted at the upper door, was hesitating strangely at the lower one.

Had he been awake, conscious of what he was doing, it would have been clear that he feared to open the second door, uneasy of what might lie behind it. But to D'Arcy's unsuspecting mind he was a sleep-walker, and D'Arcy wondered whether this long pause meant that he was about to waken. He wondered whether he had better speak. While he was wondering he heard a muttering voice below; the fat voice of Billy Bunter.

"Beasts!"

Apparently Bunter was talking, as well as walking, in his sleep—if he was asleep!

"Rotters! They ought to be fast asleep now—but suppose they spring on a chap as soon as he opens the door?"

This was so much Greek to Arthur Augustus D'Arcy; merely the mumbling of a fellow in a nightmare.

"I've got to chance it—I can't let them starve!" the muttering went on. "Beasts! Trying to bite the hand that feeds them! Rotters!"

Arthur Augustus felt a wave of sympathy.

The bag was explained now; the somnambulist was dreaming that he was taking food to somebody whom he imagined to be in the wine-cellar:

That was how it seemed to Arthur Augustus. It was, indeed, all he could think.

Another pause.

Then D'Arcy heard the faint sound of a key cautiously turned.

In the dense darkness he knew that the lower door opened—he heard a crash as Bunter's bag was hurled in.

Slam!

The door slammed again almost instantly. But quick as it was, a sound escaped from the cellar—the sound of a human voice calling out something indistinctly.

Arthur Augustus almost fell down the stairs.

There was somebody in the wine-cellar! Somebody was there, and whoever it was, was locked in! Bunter had already turned the key in the lock again, and D'Arcy heard it withdrawn.

As he stood in blank amazement and consternation, he heard a fat chuckle float up from below.

"He, he, he! Neat! He, he, he!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Faintly, for the oak was thick, there came a sound of hammering from the other side of the door.

Arthur Augustus leaned on the wall, almost overcome. Clearly into his mind at last it came, that there was somebody in the wine-cellar—a prisoner who was locked in by Billy Bunter! Bunter was not a somnambulist—he was wide awake! He was not dreaming—he was taking food at that silent hour in the dead of night to the prisoner of the wine-cellar!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy understood it now; but the discovery was so amazing, so utterly overwhelming, that he leaned weakly on the staircase wall, almost doubting the evidence of his own senses.

There was a footstep. Bunter was coming up. The gleam of the electric torch was seen again, Bunter dim behind it.

The light flashed on the pale, startled face of Arthur Augustus D'Arcy on the staircase, and Billy Bunter stopped dead, with a startled gasp.

"Who—what—"

"Buntah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Oh crikey!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

Arthur Augustus Makes Discoveries.

BILLY BUNTER stood transfixed on the wine-cellar staircase, his little round eyes fairly bulging behind his spectacles.

He stared at Arthur Augustus as if the swell of St. Jim's, in his natty dressing-gown, had been some grisly spectre.

"Buntah!" gasped D'Arcy again.

"You!" stammered Bunter.

"Yaas! What—"

"You! You cheeky ass, what are you doing here?" gasped Bunter. "Spying on a chap!"

D'Arcy crimsoned.

"You fat wottah!"

"What?"

"How dare you accuse me of spyin'?"

exclaimed Arthur Augustus furiously. "I followed you because I supposed you to be sleep-walkin'—"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"I was afraid somethin' might happen to you!" went on Arthur Augustus. "I was alarmed about you! I believed you were sleep-walkin'—"

"Oh! So—so I was!" gasped Bunter.

"Eh?"

"It's all right. I was—in fact, I am; I'm fast asleep now—"

"What!" yelled Arthur Augustus.

"I—I mean, I—I've just woke up!" said Bunter hastily. "I—I say, where am I?"

D'Arcy stared at him. Lying, which was Bunter's usual resource, was his resource now, as a matter of habit. He did not realise that it was, so to speak, a chicken that would no longer fight.

"Where am I?" repeated Bunter.

"You uttah ass!" shouted Arthur Augustus. "Do you think I am goin' to believe you now?"

"Oh, really, D'Arcy—"

"I fancied you were sleep-walkin', but it was nothin' of the kind. There is somebody shut up in that cellah, and you were takin' him food."

Bunter jumped.

"Nothing of the kind, old chap! There's nobody there! I haven't pitched a bag of grub in—"

"You uttah duffah, I heard it dwop!"

"I—I mean—"

"There is somebody there!" said Arthur Augustus. "If you are in your wight senses, Buntah, what does it mean?"

"There's nobody there—"

"Bai Jove! I can heah him ham-mewin' on the door, whoever he is!" Bunter jumped again.

"Are you deaf, Buntah?" hooted Arthur Augustus. "I suppose you can heah it as well as I?"

"Oh! Oh, that!" gasped Bunter.

"That—that's the wind!"

"The wind?" stammered D'Arcy.

"Yes, old chap. It—it's very windy in—in these cellahs, you know. I—I'm going to have it seen to," stammered Bunter.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his eyeglass a little more tightly into his eye and stared at Bunter. In the glimmer of the electric torch Bunter's fat face looked startled, dismayed, but it certainly did not look insane. Bunter was not out of his fat senses, as the swell of St. Jim's had feared. But, that theory being dismissed, there seemed no explanation whatever available to the amazing state of affairs.

But one thing was quite certain. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy meant to know. Whoever it was that was locked up in the wine-cellar was going to be released now that Arthur Augustus knew of his imprisonment. If Bunter was not

"potty," he was acting in a recklessly lawless manner, that was certain, and his unknown victim was entitled to help.

"That's all," said Bunter, more confidently. "Merely the wind, old chap. Frightfully windy in these cellahs! Let's get back to bed, shall we?"

"I refuse to go back to bed, Buntah, until this mattah is settled."

"But it's settled now, old chap!" urged Bunter.

"It is not settled, Buntah!"

"Oh, really, D'Arcy—"

"There is someone in that cellah, Buntah, twyin' to get out. I refuse to be a partay to such pwoceedin's. I wegwet vewy much that I came heah as your guest; but now I am heah I refuse to be accessory to illegal pwoceedin's. Open that door at once!"

"Look here, D'Arcy—"

"Will you open that door, Buntah, or give me the key?"

"No fear!" said Bunter promptly. "They'd jolly well spring on me like tigers—"

"Who would?"

"Oh, nobody! There's nobody there, of course."

"Bai Jove!"

"Nobody at all," said Bunter. "Merely your fancy, D'Arcy! Let's get back to bed!"

The hammering on the door had stopped.

"Come on, old fellow," said Bunter urgently. "You're losing your sleep, you know."

"I refuse to stir a step, Buntah!"

"Look here, Gussy—"

"Kindly do not call me Gussy, Buntah. I do not wegard you as a friend."

"Let me jolly well pass—and be blowed to you!" exclaimed Bunter angrily.

"I refuse to allow you to pass, Buntah, until you have unlocked that door," said Arthur Augustus quietly.

"If you want me to give you a lickin', D'Arcy—"

"You are vewy welcome to twy, Buntah!"

"I—I mean, of course, I wouldn't lick an old pal like you, Gussy. Let's get back to bed, and I—I'll explain tomorrow."

"I refuse to do anythin' of the kind while there is a man locked up in those cellahs!"

"Look here, is this what you call proper behaviour in a guest?" demanded Bunter. "Do you always meddle like this when you're on a visit? I don't think much of St. Jim's manners if you do."

D'Arcy crimsoned.

The swell of St. Jim's rather prided himself upon his polished and unexceptionable manners, and he was touched on his weakest spot. But he did not budge.

"I shall not remain your guest, Buntah, atah to-night," he said. "And I am bound to interfere heah. I cannot leave a person locked up in the cellahs. That is quite imposs. If you are in your wight mind you are committin' a cwime in impwisonin' him there."

Billy Bunter started and blinked indignantly at the swell of St. Jim's.

"Well, I like that!" he exclaimed. "I suppose a fellow has a right to keep a meddling ass from interfering with him?"

"Not in that way, Buntah, whoever he is. Who is in the cellah?"

"Nobody—nobody at all!"

"You uttah ass!" roared Arthur Augustus, losing patience. "If you keep on tellin' me sillay lies I will punch your sillay nose, Buntah!"

"Oh, really, D'Arcy! The—the fact is—"

"Give me that key!" exclaimed Arthur Augustus. "I will welease the man myself!"

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter.

"If you wufuse, Buntah, I feel bound to take it fwom you," said the St. Jim's junior.

"I—I say, hold on! I—I'll explain!" gasped Bunter. "The—the fact is—the actual fact—is—is—that—that it isn't safe to open that door. They'd spring on you. I'm only thinking of you, old chap! Your safety, you know! They'd spring on you like—like tigers!"

"Wats!"

"Look here, I'll tell you the whole thing, Gussy!" said Bunter. "It's rather a—a painful story, but I'll tell you, because—because I can trust you, I'm sure. The fact—the actual fact is that—that my uncle—"

"Your uncle?"

"Yes, my uncle, he—he went suddenly mad while on a visit here, and I—I thought I'd better lock him up for a bit—see?"

"Oh, great Scott!"

Bunter blinked anxiously at the swell of St. Jim's. To his dismay he saw no sign in D'Arcy's face that that youth, unsuspecting as he was, swallowed that extraordinary explanation.

"You—you see now, D'Arcy?" asked Bunter. "I—I suppose you can take a fellow's word?"

"Bai Jove!"

"It—it's rather a painful story—painful family incident, and all that," said Bunter. "Keep it dark, of course. I rely on you to keep it dark. Now, let's get back to bed—shall we?"

"You fwabjous ass!" howled Arthur Augustus. "Do you think I believe a single word you have said?"

"Oh dear! Don't you?" gasped Bunter.

"Certainly not, you silly ass!"

"Well, look here, D'Arcy, if you can't take my word that there's nobody in the cellar—"

"Take your word that there's nobody in the cellah!" said Arthur Augustus quite dazedly.

"Yes, I think it's up to you to take my word, you being my guest," said Bunter, blinking at him. "I'm really rather offended, D'Arcy, at this—this distrust!"

"Oh, bai Jove! I weally begin to think that you are hardly accountable for your actions, Buntah. I might weally have guessed it, fwom the way you play cwicket. Give me that key at once!"

"If you don't believe me—"

"Give me the key, you fat duffah!"

"Look here, then, I'll—I'll tell you exactly what's up!" said Bunter desperately. "Mind, I rely on you to stand by me if I tell you. I've got to keep them locked in, or I shall be booted out of Bunter Court. They—they're—they're—"

"Well, who are they?" demanded Arthur Augustus.

"One of them's Pilkins, the estate agent, and the other's Walsingham, the butler!" said Bunter desperately. "Now, do you understand? If they get out I've got to clear, so I rely on you to keep it dark, old chap, as—as a pal, you know."

Caught Napping!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY stared blankly at Bunter. That fat youth blinked at him anxiously.

"Pilkins!" repeated D'Arcy. "Walsingham! Oh, my hat! Oh, bai Jove! Are you pottay, Buntah?"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Give me that key at once!"

"Look here, D'Arcy, do listen to a chap!" urged Bunter. "I'm taking you into my confidence, you know."

"I wufuse to be taken into your confidence, Buntah!" hooted Arthur Augustus.

"You see, it's a delicate matter," pursued Bunter. "That estate agent chap, Pilkins, is a distrustful beast. You'd hardly believe it, but I shouldn't have got hold of the house at all if he hadn't been knocked out in a motor accident and had to stay in a nursing home for a time. But for that, and pulling Walsingham's leg, I should never have got the place for the vacation at all. These house agents are a downy lot, you know."

"Bai Jove!"

Arthur Augustus gazed at Bunter speechless. Back into the St. Jim's junior's mind came the suspicions Harry Wharton & Co. had voiced. It was well known that the Bunter family was comparatively poor, and yet it was equally well known that the cost of Combermere Lodge was in the region of forty guineas a week. Added to that was the item of the servants' wages, and the stacks of food Bunter had seen fit to order for the consumption of his guests. That there was a catch in it Harry Wharton & Co. had been prepared to believe, knowing Bunter as they did. Yet even Wharton & Co. could not place their finger on it, so to speak. Here was Bunter as their host, complete with servants, footmen, cars. Certainly they had no reason to suspect that the fat Removite had played the host on a system of wholesale swindling; that the lodge was no more let to Bunter legally than it was to any of them; that the estate agent had been made a prisoner in the cellar when he had come along to eject Bunter, and that the local tradespeople had not been paid a penny for the foodstuffs they had supplied.

"Bai Jove!" gurgled Arthur Augustus, horrified. "You awful boundah, Bunter!"

Bunter grinned.

"It was a stroke of luck, getting Pilkins locked up in the wine-cellars the day he came here to see me. Pretty good strategy, too," said Bunter. "I wasn't standing any of his low impudence, you know. He refused to take my word that the money was all right—refused to let me the house in any circumstances! Fancy that, you know! Luckily, I got here and turned the key on him!"

Arthur Augustus gazed at him.

Obviously, the Owl of the Remove was extremely satisfied with his masterly strategy in dealing with the Combermere estate agent.

"As for Walsingham, the butler," resumed Bunter, "it's your fault that he's locked up along with Pilkins."

"My fault?" stammered D'Arcy.

"Yes, rather. You gave him the key of the wine cellars, and he went down and found Pilkins. What was a fellow to do?"

"If he hadn't left the key in the outside of the door when he went into the cellahs, it would have been all U P," said Bunter impressively, "and it would have been your fault."

"Weally, Buntah—"

"Luckily he did, and I nipped down behind him and locked him in along with Pilkins. It was a narrow escape, I can tell you."

"I weally begin to believe that you are not quite wight in the head, Buntah!" gasped Arthur Augustus.

"Oh, don't be an ass, you know! I think I've shown myself equal to the situation," said Bunter. "Precious few fellows could have handled it as I've done. Now you see how the matter stands, D'Arcy."

"Yaas, wathah!"

"You'll keep it dark, old chap?"

"Certainly not!" hooted D'Arcy.

"Now, look here, old fellow, you can't give me away. If those fellows got out, look at what would happen. They'd be in a frightful rage! They haven't the slightest feeling of gratitude—"

"Gwatitude!" said Arthur Augustus faintly.

"Well, I've been feeding them—taking a lot of risks, too," said Bunter. "Every time I've opened the door to chuck in a bag of grub they'd have got out if they could. They're simply destitute of anything like proper feelings. I've given them jolly good grub, too, at my own expense. I'm paying for it all—at least, I'm going to. That man Pilkins would think nothing—simply nothing—of fetching a bobby to turn me out of this house, Gussy. That's the kind of man he is!"

"Buntah!"

"As for Walsingham, he's as bad as Pilkins, or worse. As likely as not he thinks he won't get his wages now, and you know what servants are about their wages—greedy, you know. If he got out I shouldn't wonder if he actually had the cheek to lay his hands on me. His voice sounded like it, at least. What menservants are coming to in these days I really don't know. It's a time for gentlemen to stand by one another, Gussy. I'm sure you see that!"

"I do not wegard you as a gentleman, Buntah!"

"Oh, really, D'Arcy—"

"Fwom what I can see, you are a bilkin' wottah!"

"Oh, draw it mild!"

"Your only excuse is that you are such a sillay idiot that you weally do not know what you are doin'."

"Well, I like that—from an ass like you!" said Bunter warmly. "Of all the howling asses, in fact—"

"I shall leave this house the first thing in the mornin', Buntah. I shall feel bound to tell your Gweyfwars schoolfellows the facts, so that they can also withdraw. But, first of all, I am goin' to welease those two persons whom you have shut up in the wine cellahs. I will not allow you to delay one minute longah. For your own sake, if for no othah weason, they must be weleased as quickly as possible. Give me the key."

"But I've explained—"

"You uttah ass! Give me the key. I twust, Buntah, that you will not dwive me to take it fwom you by force."

Billy Bunter blinked savagely at the swell of St. Jim's.

(Continued on page 18.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

BY ORDER OF THE SHERIFF!



**HOT FROM
THE PEN
OF
RALPH
REDWAY.**

The New Sheriff!

SHERIFF!

The Rio Kid grinned. Strange enough was that title to the ears of the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande.

He was not used to it yet. Every time a man in Plug Hat addressed him as sheriff, it tickled the Kid's sense of humour.

For the Kid had ridden into Plug Hat to get away from sheriffs and all their works, and to ride clear of Jim Hall and the Texas Rangers. There was a reward of a thousand dollars on the head of the Rio Kid, and plenty of galoots in Texas who were keen and eager to rake it in.

The Kid wondered, at times, what Sheriff Lick, of San Juan, or Jim Hall, of the Rangers, would have thought had they heard of the new sheriff of Sassafras County, and known his real name.

The Kid guessed that they would have sat up and taken notice, could they have known that Sheriff Brown of Plug Hat was that celebrated outlaw and fire-bug, the Rio Kid.

But that was the Kid's own secret. No man in Plug Hat knew or suspected, and Cactus Carter and his bunch, who were against the new sheriff, tooth and nail, never dreamed of that think in his armour.

"Sheriff!" repeated Colorado Bill. The Kid could not help grinning, and Colorado grinned, too. To his

eyes the Kid was "Texas Brown," the boy cowpuncher. And undoubtedly Texas Brown was very boyish-looking for a sheriff, especially the sheriff of so wild and lawless a cow-town as Plug Hat.

"Say, you ain't used to it yet!" grinned Colorado.

"I sure ain't!" assented the Kid. "It's a cinch all the same," said the big cowman. "You been elected sheriff, Mister Brown, and you was backed up by all the guys in this section who stand for law and order."

"You've said it!" assented the Kid. "And I'll say you're the man for the job," said Colorado. "There wasn't

establish the reign of order in Plug Hat. But the Kid knew that their hope was a doubtful one, and that most of his backers fully expected him to be shot up before he had been sheriff long.

The Kid was standing in the doorway of the lumber shack that was the sheriff's office at Plug Hat. The Kid had found the shack untenanted and ready for him. His predecessors in office were in the camp cemetery.

From the doorway of his office the new sheriff looked out over the sunny, dusty plaza. Outside the many saloons of Plug Hat horses were hitched to the rails and posts.

That was a common enough sight in any cow-town in Texas; but it was new in Plug Hat. For only a few days ago no man outside Cactus Carter's bunch could have left his cayuse unguarded without having the animal lifted. Horses were stolen in broad daylight in the street of Plug Hat. And for any guy who

The Rio Kid, Outlaw and Sheriff,

Tackles his Job with Great Vim!

another guy in Sassafras County wanted it. Sheriffs die too quick in this locality. I sure figured that you would be shot up before the election was over; but you ain't shot up yet."

The Kid chuckled. The Kid was quite aware why all the substantial citizens of Plug Hat had stood for him as sheriff. He was quicker on the draw than any other guy in the section. He was the only man who cared, or dared, to make a stand against Cactus Carter, and the rest of the lawless element. They hoped that he would pull through the hectic time that lay before him, and

raised forcible objections, there was accommodation in the cemetery. But the Kid had changed all that already. For the first time since Plug Hat had had a local habitation and a name, a galoot could call his horseflesh his own. The new sheriff had announced that any guy caught horse-stealing would be strung up on the nearest cottonwood. And as he was ready to back up the new regime with his gun, horse-stealing had died a sudden death in the town. And that alone had made the new sheriff widely popular, except among the horse-stealing fraternity.

There were plenty of rough-necks in

Plug Hat who had sworn deep vengeance against the new sheriff over their bootleg whisky in the Red Flare saloon. But the threats had not been carried out, so far.

"You reckon you're going to make the grade, sheriff?" asked Colorado Bill.

"I'm sure going all out to do that very thing," answered the Kid. "This hyer is a new job to me, but I guess I can make good."

"They've sent for Two-gun Stone," said Colorado abruptly.

He watched the Kid's face curiously as he spoke.

Two-gun Stone was a name well known on the border. The Kid had heard of Two-gun Stone the gunman.

"Sho!" said the Kid.

"They were talking about it in the Red Flare last night," said Colorado. "Cactus Carter is laid up with his arm in a sling. And his bunch don't seem to be honing for trouble with our new sheriff. But Stone will be in town this evening."

The Kid smiled.

"I guess I've heard a whole lot about that guy," he said. "He's shot up more men than he's got fingers and toes, and he's greased lightning on the draw. And Cactus has sent for him?"

The Kid shook his head.

"I guess a galoot of that heft ain't wanted in Plug Hat," he said. "This hyer burg is going to be kept in order now I'm sheriff, feller. We don't want rough-necks from all parts of Texas locating here. Two-gun Stone won't be allowed to locate in Plug Hat."

Colorado grinned.

"He's coming, sheriff, and he's coming a-shooting," he said. "It will be up to you."

The Kid nodded.

"I guess I got a word to say about that," he remarked.

And with a nod to Colorado the Kid walked across the plaza to the Red Flare saloon, the headquarters of Cactus Carter and his bunch.

The Sheriff Gives Order!

THE sheriff!

It was a murmur from the crowd in the Red Flare, as the Rio Kid walked coolly in at the door.

The Red Flare was the roughest dive in Plug Hat, and the crowd that haunted it, the roughest and toughest crowd in any part of Texas. Early as the hour was there was already a large crowd in the saloon, gathered about the bar where Mexican Dave, the greasy proprietor, dispensed bootleg liquor. Poker players sat at little tables, and at the upper end of the long room was a faro layout, surrounded by gamblers. Cactus Carter presided over the faro table; but another man was dealing the cards, one of Cactus' arms being in a sling. The gunman had not yet recovered from his shooting match with the Kid.

Near the gunman stood his inseparable associates, Red Harris, Yellow Dick, and Sandy Tutt. All of them looked round as the murmur announced that the new sheriff had entered.

Dark looks were cast at the Kid from all sides.

There were a score of men, at least,

in the saloon, who longed to draw a gun on the sheriff; the Kid had entered a hornet's nest, in walking into the Red Flare.

The Kid glanced over the crowd, and walked up to the bar. Mexican Dave eyed him evilly and uneasily.

The Kid's manner was cool and unconcerned. From his cheery smile, no one would have guessed that he was the best-hated man there, and that he was in the midst of deadly foes.

He gave the saloon-keeper a nod.

"I guess I've dropped in to chew the rag with you a piece, Dave!" he remarked casually.

"You are welcome, senior!" said the Mexican. "What will you take?"

"I guess I ain't troubling the fire-water, feller," said the Kid. "You've heard that I'm sheriff now, I reckon?"

"Si senior."

"And I guess you know that a faro lay-out is agin the law of this hyer State of Texas?" went on the Kid.

The saloon-keeper stared at him blankly.

"You're wise to that!" said the Kid amiably. "Now, feller, I want you to know that this hyer town of Plug Hat is going to stand for the law, now that I'm sheriff. That game stops from now on."

"The faro—stops!" ejaculated the saloon-keeper.

"Jest that!" said the Kid. "I guess this is the only town in Texas where it's still going on; and it's stopping right now. You get me?"

Mexican Dave was silent.

His black eyes glinted at the sheriff of Plug Hat. His dusky hand made a convulsive movement towards the gun that was hidden, ready to his grasp, under the bar.

But he did not touch the gun.

"You don't seem to have a lot to say," remarked the Kid cheerfully. "But you get my meanin'?"

"Si, senior!" gasped the Mexican.

"Chew on it," said the Kid. "I shall drop into the shebang later in the evening; and if the faro game is still going on, this saloon will be closed, by order, and you will be booted out of town. That's the lot, for you."

The Kid turned from the bar, and walked towards the faro table. He left a murmuring crowd behind him.

He stopped at the faro table, and met the glittering eyes of Cactus Carter. He gave the gambler a cheery nod.

"Evenin', Carter!" he said amiably.

"I guess you heard what I said to the greaser yonder. This game stops from now on. I'm sure going to make Plug Hat the cleanest town in Texas." He glanced up at the clock that was dimly visible over the bar through the fumes of smoke. "I'm droppin' in here again at nine o'clock. If this gambling game is going on then, this shebang closes for keeps."

"Mebbe you'll find somebody here to talk to you about that!" said Cactus Carter.

"I get you!" assented the Kid.

"There's talk that you've sent for Two-gun Stone, the gunman. You better tell that guy that he won't be allowed to locate in this town."

"Who's going to stop him?" asked Cactus.

"The sheriff—that's me," said the Kid. "We got plenty of rough-necks in Plug Hat, and we sure don't want any more. You put Mister Stone wise that if he shows up in Plug Hat, he will be ridden out of town on a rail. Put him wise in time, and it may save him from getting hurt."

"Search me!" said Cactus Carter.

"I mean business," said the Kid. "I'll say this town of Plug Hat is going to be an example to all Texas afore I'm through with it."

And the Kid strolled away to the door.

Careless as his look was, the Kid was warily on his guard; but no gun was drawn as he strolled slowly through the crowded saloon. He walked out of the doorway into the sunlit street.

"By the great horned toad!" said Red Harris, when he was gone. "I guess this hyer is the limit, Cactus! I guess—"

"The durned, dog-goned jay!" muttered Sandy Tutt. "I guess I came mighty near pulling a gun on him."

Cactus' lip curled in a sneer.

"There ain't a guy here durst draw a gun on that galoot," he answered. "But I guess Two-gun will fix him."

He turned to the gaming-table again. "Make your game, gents."

The faro game was resumed. As the evening advanced, the crowd in the Red Flare saloon thickened. There was an incessant clinking of glasses, and buzzing of voices. The crowd was thick round the faro lay-out; and Cactus Carter, with a cold, expressionless face, superintended the dealing of the cards, and the raking-in of the stakes. But Cactus was thinking little of the game—which, if the new sheriff kept his word, was to be the last game of faro played in the cow-town. He was thinking of the gun-play that was scheduled for that evening, and of "Texas Brown" rolling on the floor of the Red Flare, riddled with bullets.

The Two-Gun Man!

POP SHORT, landlord of the Plug Hat Hotel, eyed the Rio Kid curiously, as he sat at the trestle table eating his supper. The Kid was the only guest, at present, in the lumber hotel; but that was not the reason why Mr. Short favoured him with such particular attention. Pop, like all the rest of the cow-town, had heard that the "bunch" had sent for Two-gun Stone, the famous "killer," and he wanted to know how the new sheriff was taking it.

Since the news had leaked out that Stone was coming, almost every eye in Plug Hat had watched the Kid keenly, watching for a sign of doubt or hesitation, anxious to see whether there was a streak of "yellow" in the new sheriff.

For Two-gun Stone was famed far and wide; his accuracy with his firearms, his swiftness in the use of them, his cold-hearted ruthlessness, were talked of in hushed tones in every cow-town from the Rio Grande and the Pecos to the border of Kansas. Stone was a desperado of the first water, who notched his guns for every man he killed; and he was known to have sixteen notches on the butts of his six-guns. There were few parts of Texas where Two-gun Stone could have walked a free man; but in wild cow camps like Plug Hat, he walked like a master; and even desperate gunmen like Cactus Carter regarded him with awed respect.

And that this handsome boy puncher, deft as he was with his guns, could stand against the terror of the cow country, nobody believed, and few ventured even to hope. And Pop Short's fat heart smote him a little, for it had

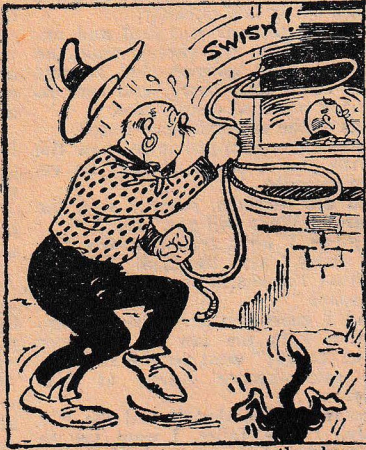
(Continued on page 16.)

MONTAGUE BAGGS

The SWELL SHERIFF



SEE ME ROPE IN MR. MONTAGUE BAGGS, THE SHERIFF!



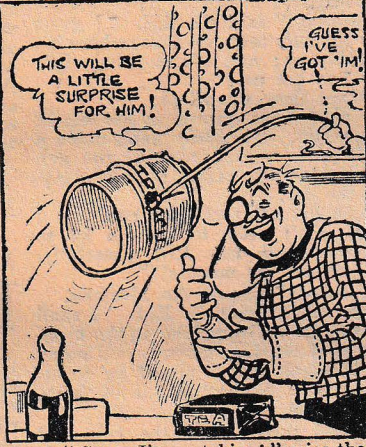
SWISH!

1. "See me rope in Mr. Montague Baggs, the sheriff!" cries the bad lad with the clothes line, while Monty was taking a look-see at his food stores.

2. Swish! Away goes the lasso through the open window straight for Monty's thatch-case. But our sheriff is not so easily roped in. He's wise to the bad lad.



AH! AH! I'LL FIX THIS UP!!

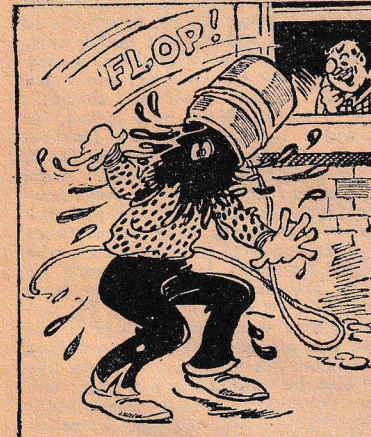


THIS WILL BE A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR HIM!

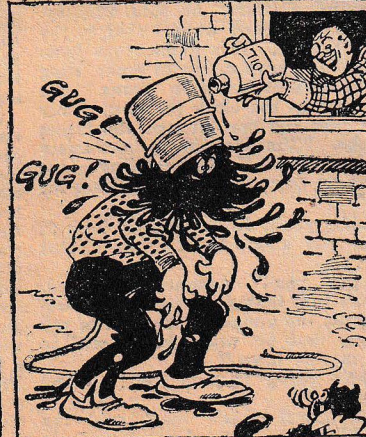
GUESS I'VE GOT 'IM!

3. "Ah! Ah! I'll fix this up!" laughs Monty, slipping the lasso over a useful-sized jar of treacle. Trust old Monty to have a wheeze up his sleeve.

4. "Guess I've got him!" cries the bad lad. Ha, ha! He's in for a large size in shocks and too much treacle. "This will be a little surprise for him!" grins Monty.



FLOP!

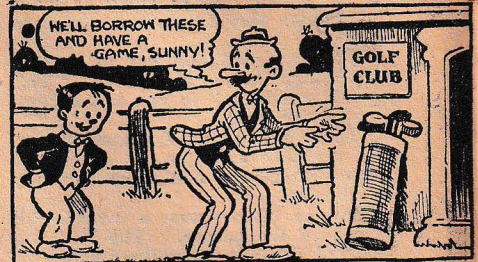


GUG! GUG!

5. Swooooosh! Flop! Ha, ha, ha! That's done the trick a treat-ho. Doesn't that bad lad look a sight? He'll give treacle—and Monty—a wide berth after this! THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

6. "Gug! Gug! Where am I?" splutters the treacle one. "Allow me to pour a little oil on your troubles to soothe them!" chuckles Monty. Oh, dear! Ain't our sheriff a scream?

SUNNY BO



WE'LL BORROW THESE AND HAVE A GAME, SUNNY!

GOLF CLUB

1. Pop was smitten with the golf fever one bright morn. His handicap's 99 9-9ths and he's thinking of entering for the Closed Championship.



GEE! I'VE SOON FOUND IT!

3. Round a bunker scoots Sunny after the wee white ball. "Gee! I've found it!" he cries. But he's mistaken. That ball's tee'd to travel.

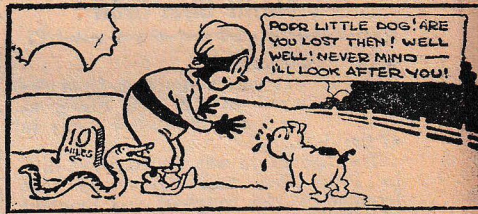


SO THAT'S YOUR GAME!

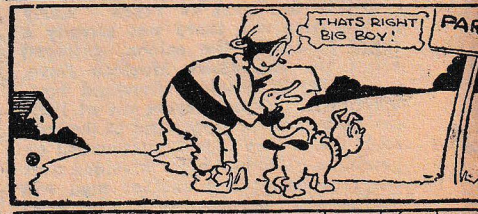
OOH!

5. "So that's your game!" shouts Plus-four Percy. And he gives Pop a nasty tap on the boko. Sunny scents trouble, so he skeddaddles.

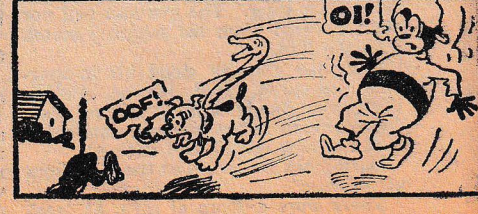
MORE FUN WITH ALLI



POOR LITTLE DOG! ARE YOU LOST THEN? I'LL WELL! NEVER MIND — I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU!



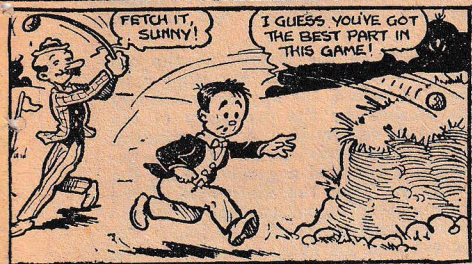
THAT'S RIGHT BIG BOY!



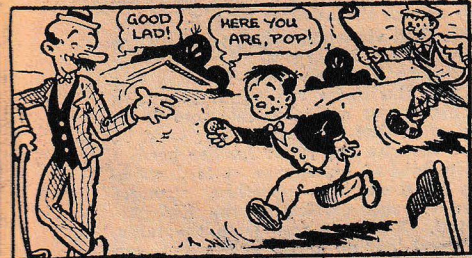
OI!

DOOF!

BOY AND HIS POP



2. Fore! Pop's off! "Fetch it, Sunny!" yells Pop. But Sunny doesn't like his part. "Give me table football," he groans. "Scooler!"

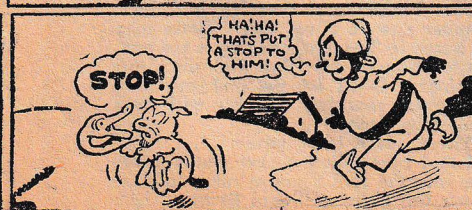
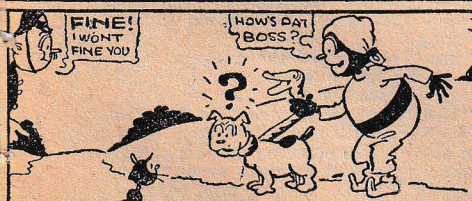


4. It travels all right—back to Pop. "Good lad!" says Pop. But he'll change his tune in a second. The owner of that ball's on the warpath.



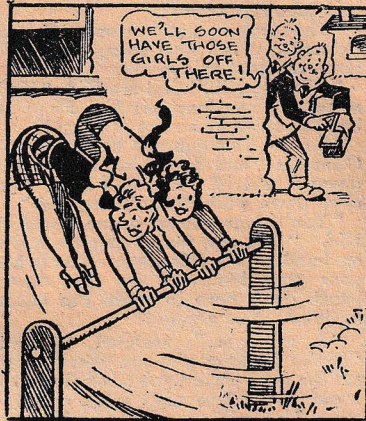
6. Now Pop's on the warpath. "Grr! Come down from there!" shouts Pop. But Sunny's not having any. He's fed-up with being a caddie!

HOOPLA AND SNAKEY!

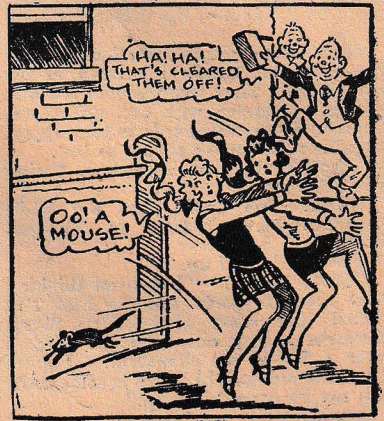


JERRY JINKS AND THE FLAPPER TWINS AT FUNNYCUTTS SCHOOL

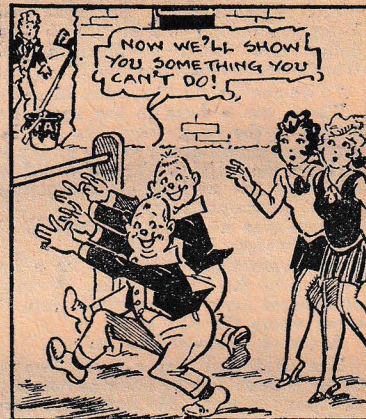
TAR and TA!



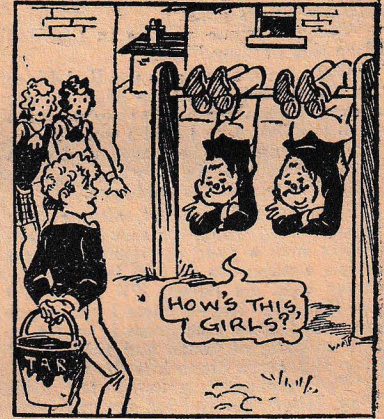
1. The Flapper Twins were doing their daily dozen when our two rascals came on the scene. "We'll soon have those girls off there!" says Fatty, opening a mousetrap.



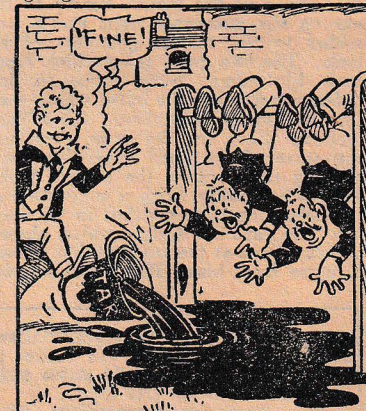
2. And he was right. Our damsels got the wind up properly when they spotted that mouse. "Ha, ha!" laughs Fatty and Porker. "That's cleared them off!"



3. Now the trouble-makers are going to do their stuff and show off. "Here's something you can't do!" they boast. But Jerry's spotted these goings-on.



4. "How's this, girls?" Our rascals look pleased with themselves now, but they won't in a minute. There's a black outlook for them behind Jerry's back.



5. "Fine!" laughs Jerry. Swoosh! That tar's done the bad lads in the eye. "Ow! Yow! Help! How we gonna get down?" That'll teach 'em to leave the Twins alone!



6. "That's one trick they didn't know!" grins Jerry, walking off with the Twins. Poor old Fatty and Porker—they're always putting their foot in it!

By Order of the Sheriff!

(Continued from page 13.)

been his stunt to get the Kid elected sheriff, and he had not foreseen this move on the part of the defeated rough-necks.

There were plenty of other men in the room, all keenly interested in the boy sheriff. They wondered to see him eating his supper with cool unconcern, apparently interested only in the supper. Pop Short broke the silence at last.

"Say, Texas," he remarked, "what you thinking?"

He had no doubt that the Kid's thoughts were running on Two-gun Stone.

The Kid looked up.

"Me?" he said. "I was jest thinking that these flapjacks are the best I've tasted for some time, Mr. Short. Better'n a guy can cook for himself over a fire in the chaparral. I guess that Chinese cook of yours is some cook. I'll say he earns his keep."

"Look here, you durned bonehead, ain't you thinking about Two-gun Stone?" demanded Mr. Short.

"Jest at present, nope," said the Kid. "Naturally, feller, I'm thinking of my supper, when I'm eating my supper—specially as it's good."

"Two-gun Stone will be in the Red Flare this evening."

"Well, I ain't going to the Red Flare till nine o'clock," said the Kid. "I got to drop in then to see that they've closed down the faro, like I said I would."

"You'll go all the same, if Stone's there?" persisted Mr. Short.

The Kid raised his eyebrows.

"Boy," said Mr. Short, after a long pause, during which the new sheriff ate frijoles with a good appetite, "I guess there's nothing to it. If it was only Carter and his bunch, I'll say you'd pull through. But—I guess I got to put you wise. Your best guess is to get on that mustang of yours and ride out of Plug Hat afore Stone hits the town."

"You reckon?" grinned the Kid.

"Say, feller, are you fed up with your new sheriff already?"

"Not in your lifetime," said Mr. Short. "Why, ain't the town a new place since you been sheriff? There ain't been a hoss stole in the place; and Cactus' bunch ain't shot up a single guy. Plug Hat men don't hardly know the town; and a guy can hitch his hoss anywhere he likes, and find him there agin when he wants him. But I guessed that Cactus never would take it lying down—and now he's got Two-gun Stone to come here and handle you—and I guess the old times is coming back agin!"

And Pop Short shook his bald head sadly.

"That guy Stone surely does seem to have got a whole lot of guys scared stiff!" remarked the Kid. "But don't you worry, Mr. Short—that guy ain't locating in this town. I ain't allowing it."

"Then you ain't hitting the trail?" asked Pop Short.

The Kid laughed.

"Jever hear of a sheriff hitting the trail because a gunman was coming to town?" he asked. "That ain't in the picture at all, feller."

The Kid glanced round at Colorado Bill, who was smoking a Mexican cigar, sitting on the end of the trestle table. Colorado's rugged, bearded face was

thoughtful and gloomy. Since the Kid had been sheriff, he had picked out a dozen likely men as deputies and sworn them in; and Colorado was the chief of the "posse."

"Say, Colorado," drawled the Kid, "you want to call the posse together and be on hand at the Red Flare at nine sharp. That dive is closing down if the faro lay-out ain't stopped like I told Mexican Dave."

"The game ain't stopped," said Colorado. "It's sure going on jest the same as usual this minute."

"That does it!" said the Kid. "We're going to close down the Red Flare and boot Mexican Dave out of town."

"I guess Two-gun will be there," said Colorado, "and there ain't no two ways about it, sheriff. The Red Flare won't close down while Stone is around."

"You'll leave Stone to me," said the Kid. "You and the other guys will be on hand to see fair play. You'll keep your guns handy to see that Cactus' bunch don't horn in while I'm talking to Stone. You get me?"

"I get you," assented Colorado. "We're backing you up, sheriff, right till the cows come home; but it ain't no secret that there ain't nary a guy in Plug Hat will stand up to Two-gun. But if you're going to tackle that pizen polecat, I reckon all Plug Hat will be on hand to see fair play. We'll sure see that you get an even break, sheriff."

"What more would any galoot want?" said the Kid. "Say, here comes Mesquite, looking as if he'd lost a Texas dollar and found a Mexican cent. What's the rookus, Mesquite?"

"Two-gun's come!" gasped Mesquite.

There was a buzz in the room, and a rush to the door. Only the Rio Kid remained seated at the table, plying his fork on the frijoles. The Kid did not see why the arrival of the gunman should interrupt his supper.

There was a clatter of hoofs in the rugged street.

The trampling horse came to a halt in front of the lumber hotel. A couple of minutes later a man strode into the room where the Kid sat.

A crowd followed him in.

The Kid had never seen Two-gun Stone before; but he knew at once that this was the man. He was a slim man, with a face as hard as if carved in granite, and eyes like flint. One cheek

was deeply marked where a bullet had scored in one of the gunman's innumerable affrays. The scar extended from the corner of the mouth nearly to the ear on the gunman's right cheek, and added to the savage griminess of his look. The two guns, from which Stone took his name, were slung in low holsters, revealing the butts, where were the notches that numbered the killer's victims. Save for the grim, overbearing stare of the hard eyes, there was nothing truculent in the killer's looks.

He walked softly, with a suggestion of the crouching of a panther in his manner. He gave the Kid a careless glance, and sat down at the trestle table a short distance from him. Pop Short hurried

to place before the newcomer the best supper that the Plug Hat Hotel afforded.

There was deep silence in the room. The new sheriff of Plug Hat and the killer who had been brought in to deal with him sat within six feet of each other.

The Kid, to the wonder of the on-lookers, went on with his supper as calmly as before, his appetite evidently undiminished by the proximity of the iron-faced desperado. A few minutes later Red Harris came in and exchanged a nod and a greeting with the newcomer. Then the flinty eyes of the gunman roved round and rested on the Rio Kid with a penetrating look. All eyes were on his face, and all saw the contemptuous smile that dawned there. Stone had learned from Red Harris who the Kid was, and his look showed that he did not think a whole lot of the new sheriff of Sassafras county.

The Kid ate beans calmly; but he was wary to his finger-tips. If the killer wanted to hurry matters, the Kid was ready. But Stone was apparently keen on his supper after his ride into town, and after that one penetrating look, he gave the new sheriff no further heed.

He finished his supper at last, washing it down with something stronger than the soft drink that the Kid preferred. When he rose from the table, he stood looking across at the Kid, and the hush in the eating-room of the Plug Hat Hotel was breathless. Only the Kid seemed unaware of the general palpitating excitement.

"I guess you're the guy they call Texas Brown in this burg?" he said.

"You've got it," assented the Kid.

"You allow you're sheriff of Plug Hat?"

"Sure."

"Harris here lets on that you're going to stop the faro game at the Red Flare?"

The Kid nodded.

"That's what I aim to do," he replied.

"You figure that you'll get by with it?" said the gunman contemptuously.

"Quien sabe, as the Greasers say," answered the Kid. "Who knows, feller? All I know is that I'm going to do my little best, like I'm bound to, bein' sheriff and standin' for law and order."

"I guess Cactus Carter can see to all the law and order that's wanted in this burg," said Two-gun Stone. "I reckon I'm in cahoots with that guy, and I've come here to see him through."

"So I hear!" said the Kid amiably. "But it don't cut any ice, Mr. Stone. I'd hate to put you to a lot of trouble, and I ain't no objection to you bedding down in Plug Hat for the night, seeing you've ridden a long trail to-day. But I want you to hit the horizon in the morning."

"Say!" ejaculated the gunman, staring at the boy puncher as if he could hardly believe his ears.

"Don't I make it plain?" asked the Kid. "Well, I'll make it plainer. Now I'm sheriff, I'm cleaning up this camp. I aim to make it as clean as any cow-town in Texas. Killers ain't wanted here. Promiscuous shooting is a back number now in Plug Hat. There may be burgs in Texas where they want you, Mister Stone; but Plug Hat ain't one of them. Don't let me find you here to-morrow morning, or you will hear something drop."

There was a tense pause.

"Red here tells me that you're hornin' into the Red Flare at nine, to close down the shebang," said Stone at last.

"Red's sure well-informed," said the

LOOK OUT for our representative at the seaside resort you are visiting; he is giving away splendid prizes and thousands of dandy free gifts.

Also, numerous competitions will be held for which attractive prizes will be given. Very large quantities of small gifts will be distributed to readers who are seen making a prominent display of **The POPULAR**.

Kid, with a nod. "That's jest what I aim to do!"

Stone laughed.

"I'm moseying along to the Red Flare now," he said. "It's half an hour to nine. That gives you time to saddle up and git."

"Lots of time, if I wanted," said the Kid.

"It's your best guess," said Stone. "If you horn into the Red Flare to-night, Mister Kid Sheriff, I shall reckon you've come a-shootin', and act accordin'. You got that?"

"I got it!" assented the Kid.

With another contemptuous look, the gunman turned and walked out, with Red Harris grinning at his side. There

And the Kid strolled out on the wooden piazza, humming the tune of a Mexican fandango. Pop Short drew a deep breath.

Face to Face!

THE Red Flare Saloon was crowded.

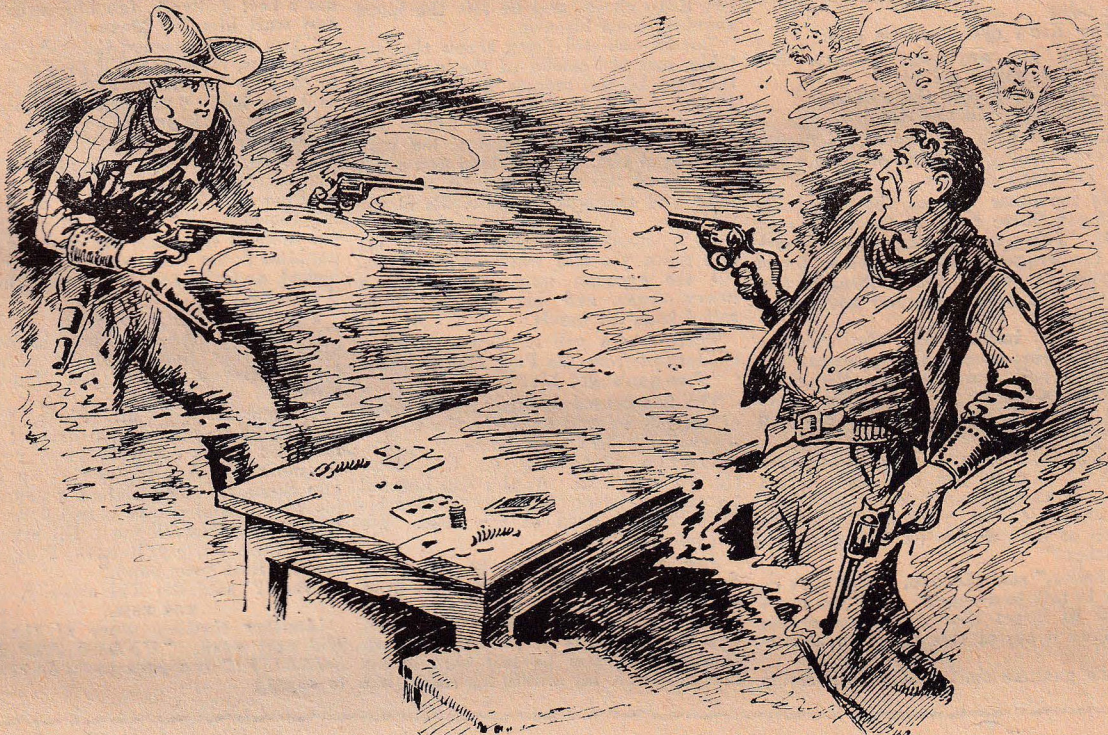
Mexican Dave was accustomed to seeing his "dive" pretty full in the evening; but on this especial evening the crowd was a record. All the other dives on the plaza were deserted.

doubted whether the boy puncher would arrive. If the sheriff stepped into the Red Flare that evening, it was death either to him or to Two-gun Stone. And the Killer's reputation was deadly. Even among the new sheriff's backers there were doubts whether he would stand the test; and scarcely a doubt that, if he stood it, he would fall in the deadly contest.

The excitement was at fever-heat as the hand of the clock over the bar indicated nine.

"I guess the sheriff's taking water!" murmured Red Harris. "I surely guess he ain't coming in, Cactus!"

Cactus Carter's eyes turned to the door for the twentieth time.



The gunman, staggering under a rain of lead, was firing, too, but with disordered aim, at the new sheriff.

was silence till they were gone; and then Pop Short spoke.

"Mister Texas Brown, you sure did talk to that bulldozer like a Dutch uncle, but I sure want to see you get on your cayuse and ride. I'll tell the world, I'd hate to see you shot all to pieces by that bulldozer!"

"Mister Pop Short," answered the Kid, "you're sure talking out of the back of your head. Ain't I sheriff of this county? And ain't it my duty to stand for law and order? I ain't a-looking for trouble with any guy. But I'm shooting that bulldozer out of town, and I'm closing down the Red Flare. I've started cleaning up this camp, and I allow I'm going through with it!"

"Then I guess," said Mr. Short, "that you can rely on me, as a friend, to see you buried decent. I'll say that."

"I'm sure powerful obliged!" said the Kid, laughing. "But I ain't jumping at the offer. Colorado, you geek, get the boys together, and hump along to the Red Flare. You'll be wanted for closing down that dive, after I'm through with Two-gun Stone!"

Cactus Carter sat at the faro table, superintending the gambling game as usual. The faro lay-out was crowded; but all the players constantly glanced at the open doorway. By the table stood Two-gun Stone, his iron-hard face indifferent in expression, his low-slung guns well to the fore. The greasy Mexican saloon-keeper behind the bar was grinning. The election of the new sheriff promised to be a heavy blow to Mexican Dave—if he was allowed to carry on. But Mexican Dave calculated that the career of the new sheriff would be even more brief than that of his predecessor.

Almost all Plug Hat had crowded into the Red Flare, and, spacious as the saloon was, the crowd jostled one another at every turn. Among the crowd were Colorado Bill and Mesquite, and the other members of the new sheriff's posse.

They were there to see that Texas Brown had an even break when he faced the killer. And they were ready—and more than ready—to deal with Cactus Carter's bunch, if the rough-necks chipped in. But some of them

There was a sudden buzz.

Into the open doorway of the saloon stepped a handsome figure in goatskin and Stetson. The Kid was sheriff, but he still wore his cowpuncher's garb.

"He's come!" breathed Colorado.

The Rio Kid stepped into the saloon.

He smiled faintly as he felt himself the cynosure of every eye in the crowded dive.

Two-gun Stone breathed hard.

"I guess he wants it!" he said.

The Kid strolled to the bar. The crowd made way for him. He gave Mexican Dave a nod, and gestured with his hand towards the crowded faro table.

"That game ain't closed down, feller," said the Kid.

"No, senor," grinned the Mexican.

"You got your orders!" said the sheriff of Plug Hat. "This dive closes down for good to-night, and you quit town!"

He walked away towards the faro table, the crowd still clearing for him.

THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

Thick as the crowd was, they contrived to leave plenty of room round the Kid. Room would be wanted when the lead began to fly; and there was no doubt that it would be flying soon.

The Kid reached the faro table. He stopped; and though he did not look directly at Two-gun Stone on the other side of the table, he was watching him. Behind Stone, as behind the Kid, the space was clear.

"Cactus Carter," said the Kid softly, "I'm here to tell you that this game closes down right now."

"You figure it does?" grinned the gambler.

"Sure! By order of the sheriff!" said the Kid quietly. "Sheriff's orders go in this hyer burg, now this infant is sheriff. Shut this game down!"

"Say!" drawled Two-gun Stone across the table.

The Kid's eyes fixed on him.

"You got anything to say, Mr. Stone?" he asked politely.

"Jest a few," said the gunman.

"Spill it!" said the Kid.

He stood with the tips of his fingers barely touching the butts of the guns in the low-slung holsters.

On the other side of the faro table Two-gun Stone stood in the same attitude. There was a silence as of death in the crowded saloon, broken for a moment or two by the shuffling of feet as the lane behind the two adversaries widened.

At any instant now the shooting might begin; each of the opponents was waiting and watching for the other to make a motion to draw. Their eyes met across the faro table that gleamed with spread cards and piled stakes.

"I got this to say," drawled the gunman. "I gave you a chance to get on your cayuse and ride for your life. I reckon it was your best guess to jump at that chance while you had it, puncher!"

"Feller," said the Kid, "that ain't no way to talk to a sheriff. And you don't want to forget that you've got orders to beat it out of this cow-town at sun-up!"

The gunman smiled—a wolfish smile.

The Kid was watching his eyes, and the murderous gleam that intensified in them was all the warning he needed.

He knew that the gunman was about to draw, and his own hands closed on the walnut butts of his guns.

Like a flash, Two-gun Stone whipped the guns from his belt, his movement so swift that the eye could not have followed it. He was firing a fraction of a second later.

But the Kid's guns were out as swiftly, and they roared together from his hips.

A bullet struck the killer in the chest and another in the shoulder even as he pulled trigger. Fast as he was, the Rio Kid had beaten him to the draw by a split second.

Two-gun Stone staggered.

There was a streak of crimson on the Kid's cheek, and he felt the blood running down his arm.

But he was still firing across the faro table, and the smoke of the guns and the roar of the reports filled the Red Flare.

The gunman, staggering under the rain of lead, was firing, too, but with disordered aim, and the lead flew right and left of the puncher across the faro table and smashed on the walls of the saloon.

In a cloud of smoke, his face set and grim, the Kid was still shooting—till the gunman went down with a heavy crash, and his smoking guns rolled from his hands.

There was a yell of almost delirious excitement from the Plug Hat crowd.

"Two-gun's got his!"

The Kid ceased to fire. In the space of seconds he had fired six times, and every bullet had gone home.

Two-gun Stone lay on the floor, riddled with lead. As the Kid lowered his guns, the blood ran down under his sleeve and dripped on the floor. He did not heed it.

Two-gun Stone, tiger to the last, made a fierce effort to rise—to grasp at one of the guns that had fallen from his hands. But he fell back again. The guns, notched to record the death of sixteen victims he had shot in his savage career, lay within his reach, but

his hands could not touch them. He fell back, and did not stir again.

"By the great horned toad!" roared Colorado Bill. "The sheriff has got by with it! Two-gun's got his!"

Cactus Carter leaped to his feet. His right arm was in a sling, but with his left hand he grasped at a gun. The Kid's Colt lifted.

"Forget it, Cactus!" smiled the Kid.

And the gambler hurriedly withdrew his grasp from the gun. He stood trembling with rage.

The Kid glanced round on the buzzing crowd.

"Gents," he said, "this dive is closing down right now, and it don't open agin. I guess you want to beat it quiet and peaceable. Colorado, you take that Greaser from behind the bar and boot him into the street. And if he don't beat it lively, fan him with lead and start him for Mexico!"

"You bet!" grinned Colorado Bill.

"Cactus, old-timer, I'll give you time to pick up your cards and your chips," said the Kid. "But you want to get a move on; get to it. You don't want to waste your sheriff's time!"

The crowd poured out of the Red Flare. The most truculent rough-neck in Plug Hat did not dream of disputing the orders of the sheriff now! In ten minutes the place was deserted; the naphtha lights were out; the door was locked, and the key in the possession of the sheriff.

The Kid walked away to the Plug Hat Hotel, where Pop Short bandaged his arm. Mr. Short made no secret of his surprise at seeing the Kid still alive.

"I guess," said Mr. Short, "that you've got me beat to a frazzle. I sure reckoned I was going to plant you in the morning. And you've shot up Two-gun Stone that had sixteen notches on his guns. And you've closed down the Red Flare. Search me! I'll say that after this, sir, you'll have Plug Hat feeding from your hand."

"Sure!" said the Kid cheerily.

THE END.

(Another thrilling story of the Rio Kid next week. "UNDER THE KID SHERIFF!" is a yarn you'll be certain to enjoy.)

BILLY BUNTER'S SECRET!

(Continued from page 11.)

Apparently his explanations had had no effect whatever upon that youth. Inexplicable as it was to Bunter, Arthur Augustus could not see that he was in the right all along the line.

It was clear enough to Bunter. Bunter's amazing intellect moved in mysterious ways its wonders to perform.

But Arthur Augustus plainly took a different view. Argument was wasted on him. Bunter realised that.

A cunning gleam came into his little round eyes behind his spectacles.

Arthur Augustus was prepared to handle the Owl of the Remove, to get possession of the key. Evidently it was a case for strategy—more of Billy Bunter's masterly strategy.

"I think this is rather unfeeling, D'Arcy," said Bunter, shaking his head. "I've asked you here, and given you a good time, and never told you what I thought of you. After that, you turn on me like this. I've given

up expecting gratitude of anybody, but really, this is rather thick. If you insist, though—"

"I do insist, Buntah."

"Here goes, then!"

Bunter turned back to the door of the wine cellars.

D'Arcy followed him.

The Owl of the Remove laid the electric torch on the bottom stair. It glimmered on the oak door as Bunter put the key into the keyhole.

"Suppose they jump at me? They're capable of it."

"Fathead!"

"Well, you jolly well go in first!" said Bunter. "You can talk to them, see, while I nip off."

Bunter turned the key softly and silently. Arthur Augustus stood ready to step into the cellar.

The door opened.

All was darkness beyond; but a sound of breathing could be heard. Mr. Pilkins and Walsingham had apparently settled down again on the rugs Bunter had kindly furnished them with, and turned off the electric light to sleep. But they were not sleeping, for a sound of stirring was heard as the door opened.

Bunter breathed hard.

He pushed the door open, leaving the key in the lock.

The next moment Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, greatly to his surprise, received a violent shove in the small of the back.

The swell of St. Jim's, taken quite by surprise, staggered forward into the cellar, falling on his hands and knees.

"Bai Jove! What—"

Click!

Billy Bunter jerked the key out of the door, grabbed up the electric torch, and fled up the stairs.

He closed the upper door and locked it, slipped the key into his pocket, and crept away up the big staircase.

In the morning one of Bunter's guests would be missing. Nobody—at least, so Bunter hoped—would be likely to guess what had become of him.

Five minutes later Billy Bunter was snoring peacefully, sleeping the sleep of the just!

THE END.

(Once more Billy Bunter has saved himself by the skin of his teeth. But there'll come a reckoning soon. You can only be sure of reading "BUNTER'S BOLT!" by ordering your POPULAR now!)

THE SCHOOLBOY DESPERADO!



The Boy from
Texas makes
things Hum
at Rookwood.

By
OWEN CONQUEST.

The Head's Nephew!

"SOMETHING'S got to be did!" said Jimmy Silver. Jimmy Silver spoke determinedly.

Lovell and Raby and Newcome nodded their heads emphatically. All the Fistical Four, in fact, were looking very determined.

They were gathered near the end study in the junior passage on the Classical side. The end study was their study. The door was partly ajar, and from the opening a strong scent of tobacco came to their noses.

It was not the smoke of a cigarette. There were certain "giddy goats" at Rookwood who smoked cigarettes—in strict privacy, of course. But the scent that came from the end study was not that of a cigarette; it was the powerful, pungent smell of a strong and very rank cigar.

If the Head of Rookwood had known that a junior in the Fourth Form smoked cigars he would have been in danger of an apoplectic fit. And if he had known that the smoker was his own nephew—well, in that case, his feelings could not possibly be imagined.

Jimmy Silver & Co. had been smoked out of their own study.

It was an extraordinary situation—simply extraordinary. That it had to come to an end the Fistical Four were fully agreed. As Jimmy Silver had remarked, something had got to be "did," and the sooner it was "did," the better.

Gunter of the Fourth was an amazing new boy.

There had been keen competition between Classicals and Moderns over the Head's nephew. Each side had wanted to bag him. The choice had been left to the new boy himself, and Classicals and Moderns had been very keen about securing him—before they knew him.

When they knew him they were equally keen to have nothing to do with him.

Jimmy Silver had succeeded in bagging him. Gunter was a Classical, and he shared the end study with the Fistical Four. After they had bagged him he began to dawn upon them, so to speak. He came from a Western State of America, where his parents lived; and the Classical chums discovered that in the wild and woolly regions of Texas he had learned manners and customs that were extraordinary.

The chums of the Fourth felt that they had themselves to blame, and they nobly tried to be patient with Gunter. But patience was not a virtue for which they were greatly distinguished. Their whole stock ran out in a remarkably short space of time.

Talking to the new boy was no use. He only grinned and chuckled. He was evidently satisfied with himself and with his remarkable gifts. The end study reeked with stale tobacco. If a prefect had put his nose into it he could not have failed to make the discovery. That meant trouble—perhaps for every fellow in the study. But Gunter did not care.

Perhaps he relied upon his relationship to the Head for safety; perhaps he was simply reckless. Anyway, he did not care.

Naturally, the Fistical Four were soon fed-up. They had bagged Gunter—and repented it. Desperate diseases—as Lovell remarked, with Shakespeare for his authority—required desperate remedies. Hence the present determined looks of the Fistical Four.

"We're not going to let him turn our study into a tap-room!" growled Raby.

"We're not," said Jimmy.

"Hallo, here he comes!"

Gunter came strolling along the passage. He walked with a swagger, his hands in his pockets. He had a stock-whip under his arm—one of the souvenirs of his former life which he had brought from Texas with him. It

was a heavy and dangerous whip, and the new boy had been seen to perform many tricks with it. With a flick of the whip, he could lift a cap from a fellow's head at a dozen feet distance, without touching the head in the cap. He grinned at the crowd of Classical juniors, apparently quite unmoved by their looks of angry dislike.

He sauntered out into the quadrangle, and the buzz of angry discussion continued after he was gone.

The Fistical Four went into their study, and Jimmy Silver opened the window, and waved a paper to clear off the smoke. He was thus engaged when Bulkeley of the Sixth looked in.

The captain of Rookwood was frowning.

"Who's been smoking here?" he demanded.

"Smoking!" repeated Jimmy Silver.

"Yes. The place reeks with it!"

The Fistical Four were silent. Bulkeley scanned their faces angrily, and then his expression changed.

"The new kid, I suppose?" he said.

"Ahem!"

Bulkeley stared at them for a moment, and then turned away. The Fistical Four grinned a little. Bulkeley was in an awkward position. He felt that he could not deal drastically with the Head's nephew; and yet he could not be guilty of favouritism. The juniors wondered what he would do.

"Where is Gunter now?" demanded the captain of Rookwood, looking back from the passage.

"In the quad, I think."

Bulkeley strode away. Jimmy Silver & Co. strolled after him. They were curious to see how the head prefect would deal with the remarkable new boy.

"Bulkeley doesn't like to report him, as he's the Head's nephew," murmured Lovell.

Bulkeley strode out into the quadrangle. There was the sound of a loud, sharp crack under the old beeches. It was Gunter's stock-whip which rang

out like the sound of a pistol-shot when he cracked it.

"My word!" gasped Raby. "Look!"

"Smythe! My hat!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

Adolphus Smythe, the dandy of the Shell, had encountered the new boy under the beeches. The look on Smythe's face was, as Lovell observed, worth a guinea a box. Gunter was amusing himself with the dandy of the Shell, and Adolphus was clearly in a blue funk.

"Keep that whip away, you young ruffian!" yelled Adolphus. "By gad, I—I'll—"

Crack, crack, crack!

The long lash of the whip cracked round Adolphus' slim legs without touching them, and Smythe of the Shell hopped and danced in his frantic efforts to keep clear of the thong.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gunter, whose spirits were as exuberant as usual. "Ha, ha! Dance, you beggar, dance!"

"Help!" shrieked Adolphus.

Crack, crack, crack!

Smythe of the Shell made a wild rush to escape. The lash curled round his waist, and he was jerked off his feet. He came down with a bump on the ground, yelling. His handsome topper flew away. The junior from Texas disengaged his whip with a twist of his wrist, and caught the flying topper with the lash, and tossed it through the air. It did not improve the topper.

Smythe sat up, roaring.

"Yow-ow! Help! He's mad! Yow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gunter.

Bulkeley strode upon the scene with an angry brow.

"Give me that whip, you young rascal!"

Gunter stared at him.

"I guess that's my whip!" he replied.

"If you don't hand it to me at once, I'll give you the licking of your life!" shouted Bulkeley.

Gunter hesitated a moment, and then handed over the stock-whip.

"Get up, Smythe! You're not hurt!" growled Bulkeley.

"Yow! I am hurt!" roared Smythe. "And look at my hat!"

"Hang your hat! Gunter, you've got to understand that you can't play these tricks here!" said the captain of Rookwood. "If there's any more of it, you'll find yourself in trouble. I find that you've been smoking."

"Correct!"

"Don't you know that it's not allowed here?"

"Yep!"

"And you smoke all the same—what!"

"I guess so. I'm used to it."

"You'll stop it!" said Bulkeley savagely. "I'll let you off this time as you're a new boy. But if there's any more of it, I'll take you into my study, and lick you till you howl. Understand that?"

Bulkeley strode away, taking the whip with him. Gunter stared after him very unpleasantly. Then he glared at Jimmy Silver & Co.

"You kinder reckon that I'm going to chuck it now, I guess?" he said, with a sneer.

"You'd better," said Jimmy Silver.

"Well, you'll see!" growled Gunter.

The chums of the Fourth did see. When they came into the end study to tea, the room was reeking with smoke again. Bulkeley's warning had evidently been without effect. The Head's nephew was going on his own way, re-

gardless of the captain of the school, and regardless of his exasperated study-mates.

The Midnight Raid.

"I RECKON I could handle them." Jimmy Silver & Co. sniffed and glared at Gunter. The Classical Four were talking in the Common-room the next day, and the subject of their discussion was the cheek of the Modern juniors. They agreed that it was time Tommy Dodd & Co. of the Modern side were given the kybosh.

Gunter chipped into the conversation cheerfully. That was his way. Icy looks had no effect whatever on the youth from Texas.

That he was regarded with dislike and disgust by nearly every junior at Rookwood Modern as well as Classical, did not affect Gunter in the least. The exuberance of his spirits had suffered no diminution.

"I reckon I could make the galoots sing small," he went on. "You pilgrims ain't up to it. I had a row with those jays the day I came here, and they didn't get the best of it. I guess I'll show you how to do it."

"Conceited ass!" said Lovell, with a grunt. "Tommy Dodd would knock the stuffing out of you!"

Gunter grinned.

"I reckon I'll make them sing small!" he said.

"We'll believe that when we see you do it," said Jimmy Silver disdainfully. "It's a go, then? You'll see it done?"

To which the Classical Four replied with the truly classic monosyllable, "Rats!" and walked away.

But Gunter's undertaking to "down" the Moderns was soon heard of, and discussed, and the juniors wondered how he was going to do it. It was heard of on the Modern side, too, and Tommy Dodd & Co. grinned over it. They were prepared to make shavings of the transatlantic youth if he tackled them.

Gunter did not seem in a hurry to begin. Tommy Dodd and Tommy Cook and Tommy Doyle rather expected to see him that evening, after hearing of what he had undertaken to do. But he did not appear on the Modern side.

"All gas—Yankee gas!" said Tommy Dodd, when bed-time came. "Let him show his Wild Western nose over here, that's all! I'll increase the size of it for him, Head's nephew or no Head's nephew!"

But the nose of Gunter was not shown there, and the Modern juniors went to bed and forgot all about Gunter.

Tommy Dodd and the rest of the Modern Fourth were sleeping the sleep of the just when midnight tolled out from the clock-tower.

The twelve heavy strokes sounded dully through the summer night. They did not awaken anyone in the dormitory. But a few minutes later Tommy Dodd was awakened. He opened his eyes to a sudden light.

The electric light was on.

Tommy Dodd, in great astonishment, sat up in bed. He wondered what duffer had turned on the light, and he blinked round him sleepily.

Then he sat frozen.

A figure stood within the doorway, and Tommy Dodd gazed at it, dumb and horrified.

The figure was draped in a black coat, and the face was covered with a black

mask, through the eyeholes of which a pair of eyes gleamed and glittered.

From under the loose coat the intruder's right hand appeared, and in that hand was grasped a revolver.

There was no doubt about it. The light gleamed on the barrel of the weapon.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Tommy Dodd.

The figure was advancing towards the row of beds.

"Wake up!" came a deep, rumbling voice.

"Oh, crumbs!" came from Tommy Cook's bed.

"Howly Moses!" yelled Doyle.

"Who—who are you?" panted Tommy Dodd.

"Howly Moses! It's a burglar!"

"Help!"

"Silence!" hissed the masked visitor. And the revolver made a threatening motion. "Silence!"

All the Modern Fourth were wide awake now. They sat up in their beds shivering. Tommy Dodd & Co. were plucky enough, as they had often proved. But a midnight visit from a masked man, revolver in hand, was enough to shake any fellow's nerve.

And the revolver was raised to a level, and it seemed to every junior there that it was pointing specially at him.

"T-t-turn that another way, please," said Tommy Dodd faintly.

"Get out of bed!"

"Wha-at for?"

"I give you three seconds. Out you get!"

The trigger rose a little. The Modern Fourth turned out of bed with one accord, and with a speed they had never shown in turning out at rising-bell.

They stood shivering by their beds, their dilated eyes fastening in terror on the masked intruder.

"That's better!" growled the ruffian.

"Not a yelp, mind, or you get it in the neck! I'd wing you as soon as look at you!"

"Oh dear!" mumbled Doyle.

"I'm going to tie you up," growled the masked man, "and any kid who lifts a finger will get a bullet! Mind that!"

"B-b-but—"

"Hold your tongue!"

The masked ruffian advanced to Tommy Dodd. The chief of the Modern juniors looked desperate. But the sight of the revolver was too deadly, and the great Tommy Dodd did not care to tackle it.

The intruder drew a length of cord from his pocket with his left hand and jerked the end into a loop.

"Put your hands together!" he commanded.

Tommy Dodd hesitated.

"Do as he tells you, you gossoon!" whispered Doyle. "Don't be an ass!"

The muzzle of the revolver was thrust fairly against Tommy Dodd's chest. He gave a gasp and a shiver.

"I give you one second!" hissed the masked ruffian.

Tommy Dodd held out his hands. There was no help for it. The loop was placed over his wrists and drawn tight.

Cook was tiptoeing towards the door.

The masked man did not seem to observe him. Cook's idea was to get outside and shout for help. He found the door locked and the key gone.

The masked man swung round suddenly, and his revolver bore upon the junior fumbling with the door-handle.

"You've asked for it," he snarled, "now you're going to get it! Say your prayers!"

"Oh, m-my hat!" stuttered Cook

"Ow! Don't! I—I—I'll be as quiet as a lamb! Oh, jiminy!"

"Come here!" Tommy Cook, shaking in every limb under the grim revolver, approached. His wrists were looped together in the same way as Tommy Dodd's.

The masked ruffian had come well supplied with cord. One after another the Modern juniors were ordered to approach, and their wrists were tied. In ten minutes the whole of the Modern Fourth had their hands bound.

They blinked at one another in horror and dismay in the electric light. What was the ruffian going to do next?

The ruffian lost no time. He returned his revolver to his pocket, now that all the juniors had their hands secured, and

long cord to the leg of a bedstead, and then crossed to the door.

Was he going? What did it all mean? Tommy Dodd & Co. wondered whether they had to do with some lunatic.

They could not speak. They could hardly move. They could only gaze with dilated eyes at the masked intruder.

He turned at the door and burst into a chuckle.

"Ha, ha, ha! I guess you look a set of jays!"

Tommy Dodd jumped.

The masked man's hand went up, and he jerked off the mask. The face that was revealed in the electric light was the face of Gunter of the Fourth—the Head's nephew.

they endeavoured to make noise enough to attract someone to the dormitory. But they could scarcely move in their bonds, and their efforts were in vain. It was upon a cheerless and infuriated crowd that the first pale rays of the dawn looked in.

Something Like a Surprise.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. sat up in bed as the rising-bell clanged out. Gunter of the Fourth turned out with a chuckle.

"I guess I've done it," was his first remark.



"Keep that whip away!" yelled Adolphus Smythe. Crack! Crack! Crack! The long lash of the whip curled round the dandy's legs without touching them, and he hopped and danced in frantic efforts to avoid the thong.

took out a long cord from under his coat. He knotted it round the ankles of the group of juniors, tying the knots tightly, and in a few minutes the Modern Fourth were all secured together by their feet. Then he collected handkerchiefs and pillow-cases, and gagged them one after another.

The Modern Fourth submitted like lambs. They were helpless, and they had to submit.

They blinked at the masked man, whose eyes gleamed through the holes in his mask at them. They expected that his next proceedings would be to go through the pockets of their clothes. His object, so far as they could see, could only be robbery. But that he did not proceed to do. He tied the end of the

The boy from Texas chuckled and grinned.

"I guess you guys have been roped in. Ha, ha, ha! Good-night!"

He snapped off the light, and unlocked the door. The door closed behind him. Tommy Dodd & Co. were left wriggling in their bonds, spluttering with their gags. It was a jape of Gunter's. He had kept his word, after all. But he couldn't intend to leave them like that! Before morning they would be chilled and cramped—he couldn't mean that!

But he did.

Long the Modern juniors struggled with the cords, but they struggled in vain. They chewed at the gags, but they could make no impression upon them. Becoming quite reckless at last,

"Eh? You've done what?" asked Hooker.

"Dished the Moderns!"

"Oh, rats!" said Lovell.

"Hop along to their dormitory and see!" chuckled Gunter.

"Oh, bow-wow!" said Jimmy Silver.

And the Classical Fourth proceeded with their toilet, without heeding Gunter. Jimmy Silver & Co. were the first down, but they did not see any of the Modern Fourth in the quad. And during the next ten minutes after they were down none of the Moderns put in an appearance, which was remarkable, for the three Tommies were early risers.

"Where are the Modern bounders, I wonder?" Raby remarked.

"I guess you'll find 'em in their dorm," said Gunter. "Didn't I tell you I'd dish them? Well, I've done it!"

"No reason why they shouldn't come down if you have," said Jimmy Silver, with a stare.

Gunter chortled.

"I reckon they can't."

"Why can't they?"

"Because they're all tied up like turkeys! Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Gunter. Jimmy Silver looked at him, aghast.

"You—you've done that?"

"Sure."

"But—but they let you—" howled Lovell.

"I reckon they couldn't help it. I guess they couldn't argue with a revolver!" chuckled Gunter.

"A—a—a revolver!" stuttered Jimmy Silver.

"Yep!"

"Come on!" muttered Jimmy to his chums.

And the Fistical Four rushed into the House again, alarmed and anxious.

Gunter followed them, still chuckling. Evidently he regarded his night's work as a triumph. The Fistical Four sped along the passages to the Modern side, and rushed into Tommy Dodd's dormitory.

"Great Scott!"

The sight that met their gaze rooted the four Classics to the floor.

The Modern Fourth, bunched together, were seated on the floor, shivering with cold, in their pyjamas. They looked at the Classics, but they could not speak.

Not one of them had succeeded in getting rid of his gag. The new boy from Texas had done his work too thoroughly for that.

"My hat!" stuttered Lovell. "I say, cut them loose! They'll have a prefect after them if they're not down soon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gunter. "I guess I've dished them some!"

Jimmy Silver turned on him, his eyes blazing.

"You cad! You've left them tied like that all night! You rotter!"

"I guess— Yo-o-o-op!"

Jimmy Silver's fist shot out, and Gunter rolled on the floor, and his chuckle was changed into a roar of pain.

The four Classics rushed to the rescue. But as they began cutting the cords there was a heavy step in the passage, and Knowles of the Sixth strode in.

"Why aren't you young rascals down—" began the prefect harshly. Then he broke off as he caught sight of the Modern Fourth. "Why—why—What—"

Words failed him.

The Fistical Four cut loose the prisoners as fast as they could. There were moans and howls from the Moderns as they stretched their cramped limbs. Knowles gazed at them as if mesmerised.

"What's the meaning of this?" he gasped at last. "Who tied those fellows up?"

"Groogh!" came from Tommy Dodd.

His numbed limbs were capable of no other response.

"Is this one of your larks, Jimmy Silver?"

"No," said Jimmy shortly.

"Then who did it?"

"Grooogh!"

"Oh dear! Ow!"

"How long have you been tied up there, Dodd?" demanded Knowles.

"Groogh! Half the night!" mumbled Tommy Dodd.

"Half the night!" shouted Knowles, in amazement. "And who did it?"

"Grooogh!"

"Very well! You'll come with me to the Head, Silver—"

"It wasn't Silver!" said Tommy Dodd.

"It was that new cad!" shouted Leggett furiously. "He came in in the middle of the night, with a mask on, and we thought he was a burglar!"

"Shut up!" muttered Tommy Dodd.

Much as he had suffered at the hands of Gunter, Tommy Dodd would not have given him away if he could have helped it.

But it could hardly be helped, for Knowles certainly had to report the matter to the Head.

Even if Leggett had not spoken, the truth must have come out. But the sneak of the Fourth did not wait for it to come out.

"Gunter!" repeated Knowles.

"Yes."

Knowles looked very queer. It was Knowles' system to keep in the good graces of the Head, and he could hardly do that by reporting his nephew to him for such an outrage. Knowles supposed that the Head would hardly be pleased by such zeal on the part of a prefect.

"So it was you who did this, Gunter?" he snapped.

Gunter was nursing his nose, and looking daggers at Jimmy Silver.

"Yep!" he growled.

"You young rascal—"

"I reckon I said I'd dish the Modern galoots, and I reckon I've done it!" said Gunter.

"And all you fellows let one Classical junior tie you up like that?" exclaimed Knowles, in surprise and contempt.

Tommy Dodd flushed crimson.

"That cad knows why we let him do it!" he exclaimed.

"Ho had a pistol!" shrieked Leggett.

Knowles almost fell down.

"A-a-a what?" he stuttered.

"A revolver! He threatened to shoot us!" yelled Leggett. "I was afraid it would go off! And he had a mask on, and we thought he was a burglar! I'm going to tell the Head!"

"Gunter, have you firearms in your possession?" demanded Knowles.

"I guess so!"

"Hand it to me at once!"

"I reckon it's mine, and I'm keeping it!" said Gunter coolly. "You go and eat coke! You're only a Modern, and you can't order me!"

Knowles, gritting his teeth, strode at the junior from Texas. Gunter's hand whipped behind him.

"Hands off!"

Knowles staggered back. A levelled revolver was looking him in the face, with the young ruffian scowling behind it. The prefect seemed transfixed. His eyes almost started from his head as he gazed at Gunter.

"G-g-g-good heavens!" he gasped.

Then there was a sudden roar from Gunter. Jimmy Silver had made a leap at him, and he caught the junior's right arm and forced it down. The dangerous weapon pointed to the floor.

"Let up!" shrieked Gunter.

"Lend a hand!" shouted Silver.

Knowles sprang forward. He grasped the down-turned wrist and twisted it savagely till Gunter let go the weapon. Knowles almost panted with relief as he grasped the firearm and took it away.

"You young villain!" he said.

"You'll be sacked for this! Come with me to the Head at once! I'll take your pistol and show him!"

"I guess I'm not coming. Yow-ow!"

Knowles did not stand on ceremony, even with the Head's nephew. The fright he had had had enraged him. He grasped Gunter by the collar, digging his knuckles into the junior's neck. Gunter struggled fiercely, but he was swung away in the grasp of the powerful Sixth-Former.

With his boots clattering on the floor, he was dragged away to the Classical side, gasping and yelling, and into the august presence of Dr. Chisholm.

Gunter Goes Through It!

JIMMY SILVER & CO. wondered what was passing in the Head's study. So did Tommy Dodd and the Modern juniors.

That the Head must have noticed already that his nephew hadn't the

(Continued on page 23.)

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Crossing the Sea on Dry Land!



You've read, of course, of how Moses crossed the Red Sea on dry land—but do you know that Napoleon claimed to have done the same thing? And it is not such a miracle as it appears to be.

At that time there was no Suez Canal, and not far from the town of Suez, the Red Sea is only a mile wide. Owing to sand bars, the water is very shallow there, and the tide sometimes falls as much as seven feet. For nine months of the year a strong north-westerly wind blows, and this sometimes causes the tide to vary by as much as three feet.

So that, if the tide dropped ten feet, and that was the depth of the Red Sea at that

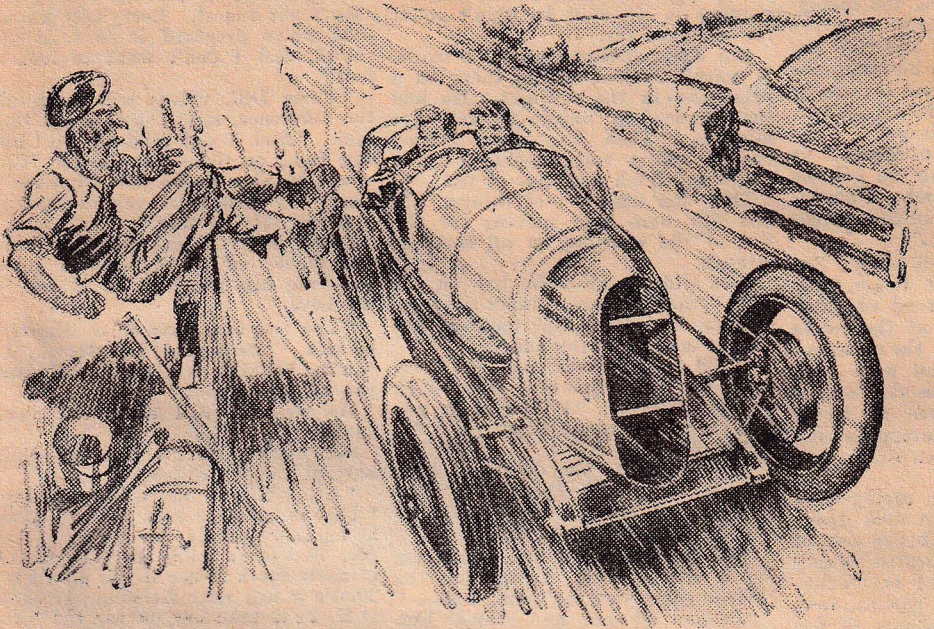
spot, it would be possible, at low tide, to cross the sea on dry land!

At the time that Moses crossed, and also at the time that Napoleon crossed, there was a strong prevailing wind. Therefore it was quite possible for them to walk across, although, when the tide changed, anyone who tried to follow them would be drowned by the rising tide.

Nowadays the channel has been dredged to a depth of thirty-five feet, to allow steamers coming from the Suez Canal to pass. So that it is no longer possible to repeat this feat.

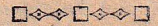
But, as you can see, it could be done, no matter how impossible it now seems to be!

THE HILL-CLIMB HEROES!



**ALFRED
EDGAR'S**

**GRIPPING
COMPLETE
MOTOR-
RACING
STORY.**



Saving the Situation!

LOOKS lovely, don't she?" Sid Manners cocked his head on one side, and a grin split the oily mask on his face as he eyed the powerful-looking Steven-Wills super-sports machine. He gave the gleaming radiator another rub, then stepped back. "Proper picture!" he grunted.

"She does look all right," agreed Jack King, as he glanced at the low-built car. "Wish we were going to have a run on it! We'd make——"

"Finished?" A hoarse voice boomed the word, and a fat man in a greasy suit of overalls rolled across the oil-streaked floor of the building. "Ah, that's the way to clean a car! You've made a good job of it, me lads. That ought to please the customer!"

Jack thrilled a little at the praise. He'd never thought that words like that from a growling-voiced, red-faced man like Foreman Wilkins would make him feel so pleased. But at the same time, he had never expected that his father would allow him to work in a motor factory.

Jack had been there just a week, and he worked as mate to Sid Manners—a lean-faced boy, who never seemed able to keep oil off his face. Jack himself was broad in the

shoulders, and very sinewy. He had straight-looking eyes, and a frank sort of manner which made the foreman and Sid like him.

The fierce, fast-looking sports machine stood at the side of a long building. Grimy windows made the place gloomy, but from the girdered roof a score of electric lights threw their yellow rays down on the misted air.

"Yes, a very nice job," Foreman Wilkins growled, and cheery little wrinkles showed at the corners of his eyes as he smiled at Jack. "If you go

"Including the new valves?" asked Brian quickly.

"Yes, sir, and they're what makes all the difference. She revs like an aero engine wi' them D.C. valves!"

He stepped to the car with the customer, while Jack and Sid drew aside.

"Proper sort, that chap," Sid commented below his breath. "He's just had new valves put in the engine—the same's what's going in the car for the hill-climb to-morrow. He's bucked about the way we've done his car, so look out for a tip."

For a minute or two the foreman and customer stood talking, then Brian slipped into the driving-seat.

"Give her a swing!" he called, and it was Jack who jumped to the starting-handle. He heaved on it, and the engine fired with a

roar. Brian backed the car from the shed, turned it to face towards the main road outside the works, then beckoned to Jack. "I'm going to Four Winds House, at Kelston—any idea how far it is?" he asked.

"Yes, about seventy miles," Jack answered.

"Thanks—and thanks for cleaning the car."

The super-sports Steven-Wills was roaring away, a fierce crackle in the note of its exhaust, bred of the new type valves.

Jack King, the "Skid Kid," has got a start in the motor game, and this week he and his pal, Sid Manners, make the dust fly with a vengeance!

on like this you'll be— Ah, mornin', Mr. Brian!"

He turned, and touched his cap, as a tall, fine-looking young man stepped quickly into the shed. He had a square jaw, a small moustache, and a pair of quick, keen, grey eyes.

"By Jove, is this my old bus?" he exclaimed, as he saw the car, then looked at the two boys and the cleaning-rags in their hands. "How's the engine running, Wilkins?"

"You won't know it, sir," said the foreman. "We've done everything you've specified——"

"Hi—both of y'r! Jump to it!"

Jack and Sid hastened towards the bawling foreman.

"You two have got to go round to the racing-shed. They want a couple o' boys to run errands."

They were out in the open before either of them spoke, and then Sid gasped:

"Got to work in the racing-shed! Gosh!"

His breath was bated as he spoke, because to get a job on the racing-staff was the one ambition of every mechanic in the works. The shed was a small, corrugated-iron building, the big door of which was invariably closed, and which bore in red letters: "Positively No Admittance."

"We've got to report to Moran," he went on. "He's helpin' to get the car ready for the hill-climb. I always said that old Ben'd get in the racing-shed before he was done."

Jack said nothing. He didn't like Ben Moran, the head tester, and Moran wasn't exactly fond of Jack. On his very first day at the works Jack had run up against the man, and the affair had concluded with Jack bringing off a miraculous skid with a testing chassis, a piece of clever driving which had thoroughly impressed Sid, who had been riding with him.

They arrived at the racing-shed, and Sid boldly slid the door open. Both stepped inside. To one side of the shed was a complicated-looking machine which Jack did not understand. Behind it was parked, in a row, the stream-lined shapes of five race-worn speedsters. In the middle of the floor was a single chassis four mechanics were working on, with Ben Moran helping them. Close by, watching them in a bored way, was a thin-faced man, who wore a monocle. The moment the door opened Moran whirled round.

"Hallo, Ben!" Sid greeted affably. "Wilkins sent us across to give you a 'and."

"These look like your two errand-boys, Turner," the man with the monocle drawled, and a man who was standing by the bench in a corner whirled round. It was the foreman in charge of the racing-shed.

"That's right, sir," he said quickly. "You two wait outside the door, and stop outside until you're told to come in!"

"Yes, go on! Hop it!" Ben Moran ripped at them. "Outside!" And he gestured towards them with the spanner that he held.

"All right, Ben," said Sid; and he led the way out again.

Jack followed more slowly. He hadn't quite got used to being ordered about, particularly by Moran. Sid hitched a couple of empty petrol-cans off a pile and set them down.

"Might as well make ourselves comfortable," he said. "Did you see the new hill-climber? Looked all right, didn't it? D'you know who that chap was—the one with the window in his eye?"

"No," said Jack.

"That was Mr. Sackville," said Sid.

THE POPULAR.—No. 602.

"He's our racing mechanic. He's goin' to drive the car for the Kelston Hill-climb. All right in there, wasn't it, eh? Wait until we're on the racin' staff! Fancy gettin' a car ready for a driver like Sackville! He's a marvel!"

Jack said nothing. He remembered the way that Ralph Sackville had referred to them as "errand-boys." He had come to the Steven-Wills Works with all sorts of great ideas of what was going to happen, but he was beginning to see that he didn't count for much so far.

But Jack cheered up after a while. It wasn't so bad sitting there on a petrol-can in the sunlight. He had the chance to enjoy it for five minutes. Then the door behind opened and a voice barked at him to go and fetch five cans of tea.

That was the start of things. He and Sid were kept moving for the rest of the morning on all sorts of errands.

Jack did pretty well, but on his last errand before dinner-time he brought back the wrong tool and was sent to get the right one.

"Told you off over that, the foreman did!" Sid grumbled, when Jack finally returned. "I thought he was goin' to bite your head off. He looked like—"

He checked as the door slid open with a clang and Foreman Turner suddenly appeared. Both stood up quickly as he addressed Jack.

"Go to the stores and ask them for a set of D.C. valves for the Kelston car. Sign for them, and—"

"Better let me go," came Ben Moran's rasping voice. "That fool'll make a muck of it. I'll get the valves. He's just as likely to bring some con rods or brake liners or somethin'."

"I can take a message if I'm given one," said Jack quickly.

"Shut up! Don't want any lip from you!" Moran snarled, and he half lifted his hand.

But he lowered it again when he saw the glitter that came into Jack's eyes, and strode on to the stores.

"I reckon you must ha' rubbed 'im up the wrong way somehow," observed Sid when Moran had gone and the door had closed behind the foreman. "I wouldn't get saucy to 'im if I were you."

Jack was going to make a quick reply, but the door opened once more, and Sackville came out with the foreman.

"Then I'll be here at eight in the morning," the racing crack said. "If the car's not fit for the climb, I'd sooner not run it. Everybody knows that we've prepared it to take the record, and I don't want to look a fool!"

"These D.C. valves will make all the difference, sir," the foreman told him. "And if you take her up Cliffside Bank on the way to Kelston Hill, you'll be able to see just what she's like. We shan't let you down, sir. You can rely on that."

Ralph Sackville granted something and moved off. The foreman stood watching him go, then he turned to the boys.

"You two can clear off to dinner," he said. "Be back at two o'clock. If you see Wilkins, tell him I shall want you all to-morrow."

He went in and shut the door again.

Sid caught Jack's arm as they hurried away to dinner.

"Hear that?" he asked eagerly. "They're goin' to take the car away at eight o'clock in the morning, and Mr. Sackville's going to drive it up Cliffside Bank to see if it's all right. That's a hill near Kelston. If she's O.K. he'll take her on for the hill-climb, an' we're goin' with 'em."

Kelston Hill-Climb was a big event in the Midlands. In effect it was simply a road up a hill. Speed machines roared up it, and the one that climbed it the fastest won the event. As the hill was on private property, the climb did not come under the Royal Automobile Club's ban against speed events on the public roads. The cars were divided into various classes, according to size, and the Steven-Wills' machine was entered for the racing-car class.

Although neither Jack nor Sid knew it, Sackville was out to break the record for the hill, and that's why he wanted to run the car up Cliffside Bank as a test. If he was satisfied with its performance, then he would take it on to Kelston and run in the competition.

On the following morning Jack and Sid turned up at the racing-shed at seven o'clock. They helped to lead the specially built car on to a lorry that was standing there. The car was a short, very low, and exceedingly fast-looking machine, and it made Jack's eyes shine even to see it.

On the stroke of eight the roar of a wide exhaust announced the arrival of Ralph Sackville on his own touring machine.

He spoke to the foreman, had a look at the car, saw that everything was ready, then mounted his tourer and roared off. The foreman took the wheel of the lorry, while the rest of the mechanics climbed into a second lorry, which was loaded with spare wheels, tools, and spare parts. Jack

Back to St. Frank's!

Great excitement . . . the rebuilding of St. Frank's completely finished . . . the famous old school now re-opened as of old . . . once more ringing to the shouts of all the famous schoolboys whose adventures and hilarious pranks have thrilled boys and girls the world over.

Yes, chums, once again St. Frank's resumes its former glory. Read all about the amusing adventures of Nipper and his cheery chums in the grand EXTRA-LONG complete yarn, by Edwy Searles Brooks, which appears in this week's

NELSON LEE

LIBRARY - - - - 2d.

Out on Wednesday, August 6th.

and Sid mounted the vehicle with them, and tucked themselves away in a corner on a pile of sacks.

The mechanics treated them as though they were not there during the ride; but for all that Jack liked the look of them. Moran was with them, but he was not the same type of fellow. These others were quiet-voiced, keen-looking chaps.

After a long run the lorry stopped on a rather narrow, quiet road. The racing car was run off the other vehicle and turned to face up the road. Sackville got into the machine

gether different!" the foreman explained.

Sackville looked at him quickly. The racing crack was no fool at his job, and he knew that the foreman didn't usually make mistakes.

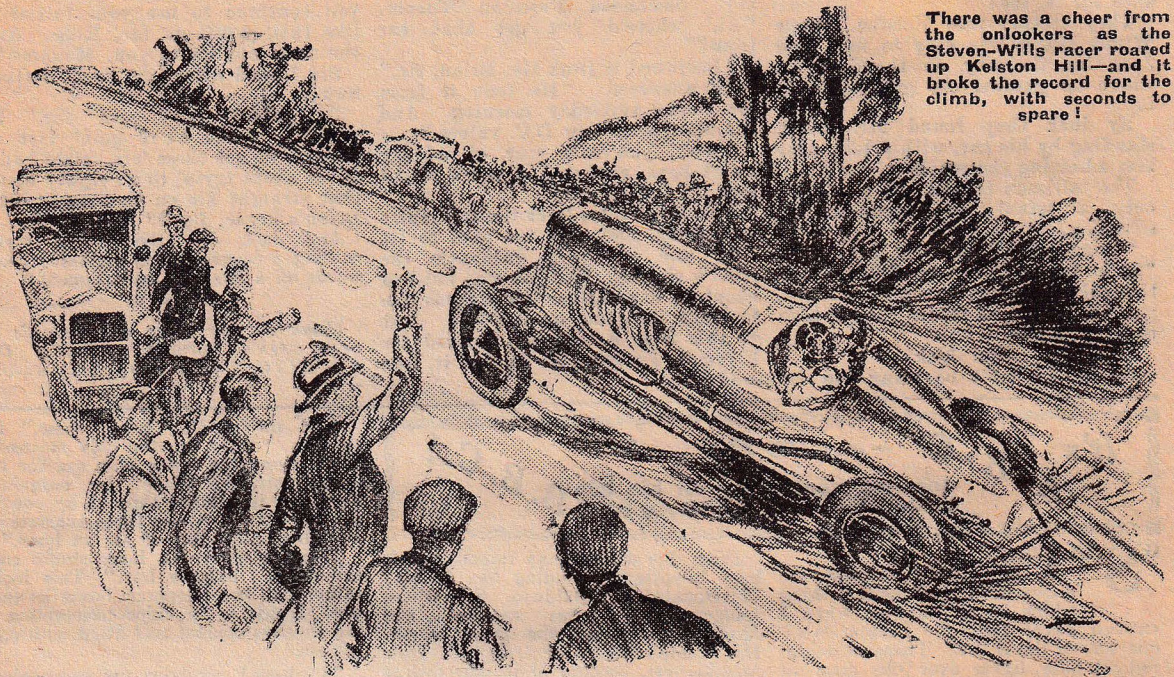
"I was counting on those valves," Sackville said. "Let's have a look at them. Have you got any spares here?"

The mechanics were coming back at a run now, and one of them got at the tools and drew out the spare valves in the set which had been drawn from the store for this car.

Half a minute later Moran went roaring away.

"He'll never do it!" said Sid, as they watched the machine roar out to the main road. "It's sixty-five miles to the works, an' he can't get there and back in under three hours, however he drives. It's just on half-past eleven now, and the hill-climb starts at one o'clock. Our class is due to go up at three. Old Ben's properly put his feet in it!"

Sid was right, and Jack worked it out for himself. It would take all of an hour to make the racing



There was a cheer from the onlookers as the Steven-Wills racer roared up Kelston Hill—and it broke the record for the climb, with seconds to spare!

and remained in it, with the engine warming up. At a word from Foreman Turner the four mechanics went off up the road, and Jack could just see where it started to climb the hill.

"They're goin' to keep the road clear while Mr. Sackville takes the machine up," Sid told Jack above the roar of the machine. "There he goes!"

With a sudden rush the car started away. The terrific crashing of the exhaust rang stunningly in their ears, then the car shot round a bend and vanished. They heard it roaring up the hill, finally droning away to silence. In less than a minute it came back.

Without a word Sackville turned the machine round on the road and went up the hill a second time. Jack noticed that the foreman was looking very worried. Presently the car returned. It stopped with brakes squealing in the drums, and Sackville climbed out. His face was dark as the foreman approached him. "No good!" he snapped. "She won't rev!"

"But—but—" began the foreman.

"It's no good butting—she's hopeless!" the racing crack barked. "There's absolutely no difference in the engine—D.C. valves or no D.C. valves!"

"But we had an engine on test with these valves, and she was alto-

Sackville took one of them and examined it, then, without any comment, he handed it to the foreman. The man looked at it, and his face was a little pale when he whirled round.

"Moran, did you fit these valves?" he asked.

"Yes," said the tester. "Drew 'em from the stores meself!"

"That's right," said the foreman grimly. "You stopped one of those boys going to get them—and you brought the wrong ones! These aren't D.C. valves at all!"

Moran gulped. The foreman turned to Sackville.

"I trusted the fitting to him, and this—"

Moran jumped forward.

"I'll drive back to the works and get the right set, sir!" he exclaimed quickly. "Lend me your car, and I'll meet you at Kelston. There'll be just time to do it!"

"We could go on to Kelston!" The foreman turned to the racing crack and spoke quickly. "If we took the engine down ready, we could drop the valves in and—"

"Might try it," Sackville drawled. "All right; take my car, Moran. But you'll have to answer for this later on!"

machine ready after Moran returned. Jack didn't know much about valves, but he thought he understood what this D.C. sort was. The valves were extremely light, and gave greater speed to an engine; that was why the sporting Mr. Brian had them fitted in his car. Jack knew that it was only because he happened to be a valued customer that Mr. Brian had— His thoughts snapped off, and he suddenly caught Sid's arm.

"Remember that chap with the super-sports car this morning—same engine as that?" he asked, and nodded to Sackville's car. "He told me that he was coming to Four Winds House, at Kelston, and he's got new D.C. valves! Suppose we could get them, instead of waiting for Moran? What about finding Mr. Brian and asking if we can?"

"If we can take 'em out of his engine? Gosh!"

"Half a jiffy!" Jack held him back. "Don't say anything. Let's do it on our own, because they might not like us butting in. I know the way to Kelston from here. Let's slip through the hedge and—"

They had done it while he was speaking. Under cover of the hedge they went on up Cliffside Bank Hill until they were around the bend and

out of sight; then they regained the road. Once they thought they heard the foreman shouting for them, but they didn't wait to see.

It was three miles to Kelston, and they ran most of the way. Between sprints they made sure from what they knew that Brian's engine was just the same as the one in Sackville's car, except that it wasn't so highly tuned.

"Glad we didn't say anything before we bunked," Sid puffed. "Old Turner won't half be pleased with us if it comes off. I bet he lets us work a bit more often round the racing-shed for it, too!"

They trotted into Kelston. Four Winds House was easy to find, and Jack led the way up the drive to where he guessed the garage would be.

By luck they found Mr. Brian standing by his car, with a lady near him admiring the machine.

The tall man turned. It took Jack only a minute to explain the situation.

"What you want," said Mr. Brian, "is to take my car to Kelston, use the valves in your racing machine, put 'em back, and return the car here to me. Is that it?"

"Yes, sir," said Jack.

"Well, I shan't be using the car

until to-morrow," Mr. Brian said slowly. "But I don't like the idea of—" He hesitated only a moment, then said: "All right, boys. You can take the machine, but don't smash it up for me!"

It was two miles from the town to Kelston Hill. One mile of the distance was along a broad, straight road. With Jack at the wheel, Mr. Brian's car touched seventy-two miles an hour, and they arrived at the paddock below the hill just as the two lorries got there with the racing machine.

"Where the deuce have you been to?" demanded Foreman Turner. "An' where'd you get that car from?"

"Borrowed it from Mr. Brian, sir," Jack answered. "He took it from the works yesterday morning. And it's fitted with new D.C. valves."

"Well, you're a pair of mighty smart boys, anyhow! I won't forget this!"

Fifteen minutes later the mechanics were busy, and only too glad to let Jack and Sid help dismantle the racer's engine. The job was finished about an hour before the car was due to make its effort on the hill. Just at this time a telegram arrived for Foreman Turner. He opened it, and read:

"Very sorry. Hit telegraph pole four miles from works.—MORAN."

"That finishes any chance Ben Moran ever had o' comin' on the racing staff!" said the foreman grimly.

The Steven-Wills racer broke the record for the hill—with seconds to spare!

Half an hour after it was all over the general manager of the Steven-Wills works—Mr. Lucas—came to where Jack and Sid were busy about putting the valves back in Mr. Brian's engine.

"I've heard all about what you two have done to-day," he said. "If you continue to use your initiative like this, you'll go far, King. And the same applies to you, Manners."

Sid looked after him as he walked away.

"I dunno about goin' far," he growled, "but we're goin' fast as soon as we get these 'ere valves back. What about tryin' to do eighty along that straight bit on the way to Mr. Brian's house, Bob?"

And Jack did, the terrific speed causing a country yokel to topple backwards off a fence in astonishment!

THE END.

(Look out for more speed thrills in next week's POPULAR. "NECK OR NOTHING!" is a story you mustn't miss.)

It's A-B-C -- to the --
Join our contributor on his trip behind the scenes at Savoy Hill! B. B. C.!

"SILENCE!"

A big notice, bearing the above word, was the first thing which caught my eye when I entered Savoy Hill, the London headquarters of the B.B.C. There were also red-and-blue lights over the door of each studio, and notices informing me that there was no admission while red or blue lights were on, because then the particular studios were being used for actual broadcasting, and, of course, the B.B.C. didn't want me, or any other unauthorised person, popping their head round the door and saying "Cheerio!" to whoever was inside. Hence the warning notice!

As for the studios that were out of commission when I made my tour—well, I have never penetrated into such tombs of silence. The silence was oppressive. It got up and hit me in the face as I crossed the threshold. I asked a question of the technical expert with me, and my voice sounded thin and dead, because the heavy draperies and padded walls successfully eliminated all echoes and resonance. The reason for this deadness is purely a matter of acoustics, I was told; but, speaking roughly, it is a big factor in giving clearer transmission.

I saw the small studio from which the News Bulletins are broadcast. I saw a big studio where symphony concerts, vaudeville, and other items needing plenty of room are sent across the ether. I saw the two-storied studio, 22½ ft. high, which is one of the very latest type, and which is used for broadcasting military band performances. I saw the redecorated and renovated No. 3 studio, the oldest in the building, which, in the early days, was drab and stuffy, and measured only 8 ft. 8 in. in height.

From this studio many famous people have broadcast, including Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mr. Baldwin, Sir Oliver Lodge, the famous scientist, and Madame Tetravini, the great singer. But complaints were received from broadcasters, because of its low ceiling and drab appearance. So the ceiling was lifted, the walls redecorated, with furniture to match, and now one gazes into the most cheery-looking apartment imaginable.

THE COLOURED LIGHTS.

Each studio contains a clear-faced clock with a seconds hand, and also three electric bulbs; one red, one blue, one green. When the red one glows it tells the performer that he is "on" and can commence his turn. If the blue is alight it means that the studio is being held in reserve, and may be utilised at any moment, maybe for filling in between two turns with piano-forte music. If the green is glowing it means that this particular studio is one of a chain that are being employed simultaneously.

For instance, in the case of a play being broadcast, it is not always possible to crowd the whole performance into one studio, so a number are used, and come into action automatically as the radio producer switches from one to the other.

I was told that the largest studio at Savoy Hill measures 25 ft. by 44 ft., and is 17 ft. high, and the smallest 14 ft. by 11 ft., and 10 ft. 10 ins. high.

THE "BALANCE BOX."

"What are those gratings for?" I asked my companion, pointing to lattice-covered oblong openings near the floor and ceiling.

"All the studios have those," he replied. "They are the only means of ventilation; the lower ones are for incoming air, the higher for outgoing. Fresh air is pumped through by powerful fans at the rate of three-quarters of a million cubic feet of air an hour."

Then we entered a large studio containing a "balance box." This looks rather like two telephone boxes let into one. Inside is an object resembling a big wireless cabinet and fitted with earphones.

"In here," explains my companion, "sits the balance engineer. He is the fellow who controls the sounds which come from a performance during rehearsal. Suppose an orchestra is rehearsing a piece of music. The result is picked up by the microphone, sent to the control-room, and switched down to the balance engineer in this box, and he hears exactly the same result as a radio listener outside the building, were the performance really being broadcast."

"He finds, maybe, that the trombones are much too loud in proportion to the rest of the instruments. They are evidently too near the microphone, so he has them moved. Or perhaps the drums are drowning everything else, or the first violin is not strong enough. You see, it isn't just a matter of sticking an orchestra down in a studio higgledy-piggledy, and saying 'Off we go!' The correct balance between all instruments, none too loud, none too soft, has to be obtained, and is obtained by means of the balance box."

"In the same way, a singer with piano-forte accompaniment, has to be balanced. If the singer stands too far from the microphone it is all piano and a weak little voice in the background, like some foreign station cutting in upon Savoy Hill's wavelengths. If the singer is too near the voice may be too powerful for the microphone and cause the instrument to vibrate and give a harsh, grating result."

I passed out with the feeling that there is more in good broadcasting than meets the eye, or, rather the ear!

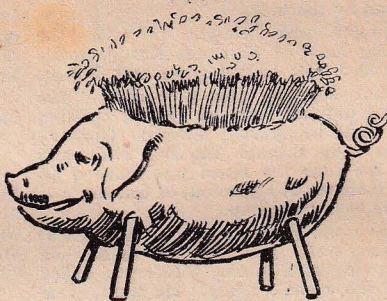
MY PAGE

By WILLY WANGLE,
the Schoolboy Wizard



Here's our youthful wiseacre to interest and amuse you again.

THE BRISTLY PIG.—Talking of hair, have you ever seen a pig growing a fine harvest of succulent green bristles? Of course, you haven't! But you can make a jolly fine representation of that phenomenon. Get a spud—a raw one—as large as possible. Nick it about with your knife, to make some sort of face at one end. Stick four matches in as legs, and push a wisp of worsted into the far end to make a tail. Then hollow-out the pig's back, and nearly fill the hole with damp rag or a bit of sponge. Sprinkle some mustard or cress seed thickly on the damp packing, and keep it damp. Stand your pig in the light, and in a few days, he'll have sprouted a grand lot of green "hair." When it gets too long, you can clip it—and eat the clippings. Empty out the old packing, and clean it, and sow some more seed and start the pig going all over again.

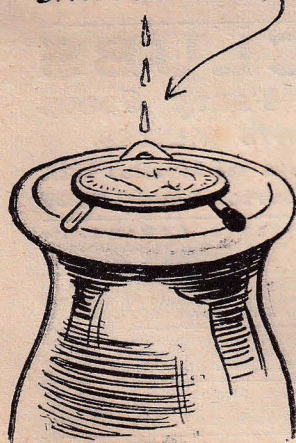


Can a pig grow green hair? Ah! See what our tame trickster has to say about it!

WHAT AM I?—I'll go up a drain down, but not down a drain up. What am I?
An umbrella. That's has 'em, every time!

COIN IN BOTTLE.—This is a natty match-trick which stumps ninety-nine fellows in every hundred. Get a bottle with a neck wide enough to allow a halfpenny to fall into it easily. Put the coin on one side for the moment. Get a match, bend it across the middle without completely breaking it asunder. Lay the bend across the mouth of the bottle, so that the bent middle rests on one side of the neck, with the two ends also resting on the neck—at the other side, of course! Now place the halfpenny flat on the match. The trick is to cause the coin to tumble into the bottle without either touching or jarring the coin, match, bottle, or table on which the lot stands. It is done by dropping a couple of spots of water on the bent middle of the match. The water makes the wood swell, and the two ends automatically open, allowing the coin to fall in.

SPOTS OF WATER
DROPPED HERE



One bottle, one match, and one coin wanted for this trick!

SPLENDID LACES.—You've heard of the tramp who knocked at the door and asked the old lady if she'd be so kind as to "Sew a shirt on to this 'ere button"? It must have been his brother who went to a cobbler friend of mine, last week, with an old pair of boots, and asked if they were worth mending. "Rather," declared the cobbler enthusiastically. "Why, the laces are in splendid condition!"

WOOF! WOOF! Not so smart, that youth, as the young feller-me-lad who was bothered whilst fishing by a fat-headed old gentleman who kept giving him tips. Not solid tips, the sort you can spend, but silly hints. At last the O.G. asked what bait the boy was using. "Bones!" was the astonishing reply. Then, anticipating the O.G.'s next fool question: "To catch dogfish, guv'nor!" Well, well, let him have his little joke, bless him!

THE WHISTLING KITE.—Got a kite? No? Then borrow one, for you'll need it for this mysterious trick. But it will be better to have one of your own, for you'll have to make two holes in it. An ordinary pear-shaped kite is best, and the two holes should be made one on either side of the long backbone, just below the cross stay. They should be the size of a halfpenny, and over each you paste a strip of thin rubber, not quite as wide as the holes. One end of each strip of thin rubber should be fastened to the cross-stay, the other end to the backbone, each passing across one of the holes. Fly the kite in the ordinary way, and the wind passing through the rubber-covered holes will make a weird whistling tune. I don't guarantee you can make it whistle Rule Britannia, but a whistling kite is certainly a big novelty. Isn't it, now?

WHAT A REACH!—Get your chums boasting about how high they can each stretch up. Then challenge any of them to stick a tack or a drawing pin in the ceiling without standing on a chair, the table, or anything else. In about half a minute, when they've lost their breath jumping, they'll be telling you to do it yourself. Get a four-inch-square piece of tissue paper, and a penny. Place the penny flat on the paper, in the centre. Stand the tack or drawing pin on its head in the middle of the penny, between the coin and the paper, pushing the business-end of the tack or drawing pin right through. Wrap the tissue paper tightly around the lot, twisting the paper that is over in a tail. Throw it up at the ceiling, point first. Put some beef behind it, and the tack will stick—driven in by the weight of the penny behind it. Only mind whose ceiling you try it on, for it may be necessary to leave the tack sticking up there!

THE MISSING LINK.—A fellow at school once developed a craze for shorthand. But his brain-pan was so jolly shallow he simply couldn't master any of the known systems. He invented one of his own. He only tried it once in school, for his reward was so painful. Here's his shorthand hash, as handed in at the end of a dictation lesson:

Llshlllwhrhrssndhnm.

He achieved that muddle by omitting one letter of the alphabet. See if you can read his shorthand, with the clue I have given.

The missing letter is "A," and the sentence he had made that hotch-potch of reads: "All shall call war a haras and a harm." You'd better lie down and take it quietly a bit, after that!

PROBING THE FUTURE.—Ever thought of setting up as an amateur fortune-teller? Whether the fellows you practise on believe your fortune-telling or not, it's fine fun. Start by getting a dozen pieces of plain card. Paste on to each a picture cut from a newspaper or magazine—a train, a ship, a tuck-box, an empty motor-car, a tramp, someone being run over or punched hard, and so on.

With your dozen cards complete, offer the pack to your victim to shuffle. Then you proceed to deal out five pictures downwards. The sixth you show to him. If the picture is that of a tramp, his fortune is going to be a hard-luck one. If it's a train, he is going on a journey—if a ship, a longer one. A tuck-box means he's going to strike lucky with a present, and an empty motor-car says for sure that wealth is coming his way. For telling what job he is going to take up you need another dozen cards, one with a picture of a toothbrush—indicating a dentist, another with a house on fire (fireman); a picture of an aeroplane means he will be an airman, a car full of people indicates he will be a chauffeur, and so on. Don't blame Willy Wangle if a disappointed client makes you a present of a thick ear!

TALKING OF WOODEN-HEADS, here's a kind of crossword puzzle, without the usual crossword picture. Guess what it is.

My first is in sit, but not in lie.
My second is in cake, but not in pie.
My third is in beat, but not in slap.
My fourth is in sleep, but not in nap.
My fifth is in well, but not in good.
My whole is an object made of wood.
The answer is—table. Yes, we're very smart to-day!

THE SCHOOLBOY DESPERADO!

(Continued from page 22.)

manners which stamp the caste of Vere de Vere, the juniors knew. Doubtless the doctor made every allowance for his early training on a ranch in a wild country.

But the news of the boy's true character could not fail to come as a shock to the Head. Now that it was out it was pretty certain to be all-out. The sack was what the juniors expected for him, and Classical and Modern agreed that that was the only thing that could meet the case. Keen as had been their rivalry for the Head's nephew before they knew him, both Classics and Moderns would have been glad to see him "booted" out of Rookwood.

There was a buzz of excitement in Rookwood that morning. The prefect's report to the Head was followed by a stern inquiry.

Gunter's belongings were searched, and there came to light, among other things, a box of cartridges, a bowie-knife, several packs of cards, several boxes of cigars, and a set of loaded dice.

The Head was simply aghast.

Some of the fellows who caught sight of him while he was superintending the search of Gunter's boxes and bags, declared that he looked as if he were on the verge of apoplexy.

Unusual as he had observed his nephew to be, the old gentleman had never dreamed that he had harboured a ruffian and a thorough blackguard within the classic walls of Rookwood. It was not only that he had cards—that was bad enough—but the cards were marked! It was not only that he had dice, but the dice were loaded. He was not only a gambler, but a cheat as well.

What the Head thought on the subject

he kept to himself. The school waited for the announcement that Gunter was going.

During morning lessons the Head's nephew did not appear in class. He was locked up in the punishment-room. When the fellows came out of the Form-rooms they rather expected to hear that Gunter was no longer at Rookwood.

But he was still there. And when the order went forth to assemble the school for a public flogging to be witnessed, the juniors crowded into Big Hall, wondering whether the flogging was to be followed by the sack.

Gunter was brought in with the strong hand of Sergeant Kettle on his shoulder. He looked sullen and defiant.

That flogging was a record. The Head did not run any risk of spoiling the child by sparing the rod. Gunter's yells rang through the Big Hall, and by the time the Head was finished all the defiance was gone out of Gunter, and he looked very limp.

Then the proceedings closed. It was not the sack. But after the school had been dismissed Jimmy Silver was called into the Head's study. He went, wondering.

He found Dr. Chisholm very grave.

"Silver," said the Head—and the troubled expression on his face went to Jimmy's heart—"as you know, I have become aware of the true character of my nephew, which I had never dreamed of suspecting before. I have thought of sending him back to his home. But I have taken into consideration the fact that he was brought up in a wild district in an unsettled country, where he has learned the extraordinary manners he has shown here. I have resolved to give him a chance to settle down here. Any recurrence of such conduct as he has been guilty of will lead to his expulsion from the school. But I hope that the lesson he has had will benefit him—I have endeavoured to make it a severe one."

Jimmy Silver suppressed a grin.

He thought that the Head had succeeded, too.

"He is in your study, Silver," resumed the Head, "and you are head boy in the Fourth Form. Silver, I wish you to use your influence to induce my nephew to conform to the manners of this school. I am sure that you can help him greatly if you wish."

"I—I—I'll try, sir!" stammered Jimmy, taken aback. It was the first time Jimmy Silver had ever been requested to play the part of bear-leader.

"Thank you, Silver. I rely upon you."

Jimmy Silver left the study, not knowing whether to be pleased at the high opinion the Head evidently entertained of him, or worried by the task that had been imposed upon him.

"Well?" said Lovell and Raby and Newcome together in the passage.

Jimmy explained.

"Oh, my hat!" said Lovell.

"We—we'll do our best," said Jimmy, looking doubtfully at his chums. "There may be some good in the chap, for all we know. And, anyway, there won't be any more cards or cigars or revolvers and things."

"We'll try," said the Co. heroically.

With good intentions in their breasts, the Fistical Four proceeded to the end study, where Gunter was groaning over his castigation. He glared at them as they came in.

"I say, Gunter, old chap—" began Jimmy Silver, with his kindest smile.

"Vamoose!"

"Eh?"

"Get out!"

"But—but I say—"

Gunter made a jump for the poker, and another jump for the Fistical Four. They executed a strategic retreat from the study just in time, and the door banged after them.

Gunter was evidently still Gunter!

(*"THE WORST BOY IN THE SCHOOL!" Who's this? Why, Gunter, the boy from Texas! Read all about him in next week's lively complete story of Rookwood School.*)

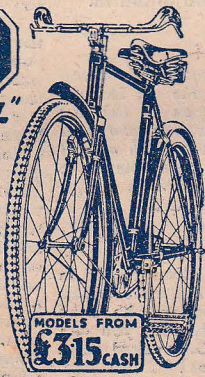
THE WORLD'S BEST CYCLE

26 DOWN The JUNO "ROYAL"

BROOKS SADDLE,
DUNLOP GORD TYRES,
RENOULD CHAIN,
14 DAYS' FREE TRIAL.

All British. Superb Quality. Guaranteed for ever. Direct from Factory to you. Packed and Carriage Paid. Wonderful easy terms to suit you. Chromium Plated Models if desired. Write for Free Art List.

JUNO CYCLE CO.
(Dept. U.2), 248, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.2.



300 STAMPS FOR 6d. (Abroad 1/-), including Airpost, Barbados, Old India, Nigeria, New South Wales, Gold Coast, etc.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, LYE, Stourbridge.

HEIGHT INCREASED

IN THIRTY DAYS. No apparatus, no medicine; ordinary habits retained. Complete Course 5/-. Full particulars and testimonials, stamp.

MELVIN A. STRONG, REDNAL, BIRMINGHAM.



STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.

XMAS CLUBS

Chocolates, Toys, Fancy Goods

SPARE TIME AGENTS WANTED.

Excellent Commission. Art Catalogue and Particulars FREE.
SAMUEL DRIVER, LTD., Burton Road, LEEDS

FREE PASSAGES TO ONTARIO, CANADA, for approved boy farm learners, age 15 to 19.
Apply:—ONTARIO GOVERNMENT, 346, STRAND, LONDON.

£2,000 WORTH OF GOOD, CHEAP PHOTO MATERIAL AND FILMS. 12 x 10 Enlargements, any photo or film, 8d. Samples Catalogue Free.—HACKETT'S, July Road, LIVERPOOL.

BE TALL Your Height increased in 14 days, or money back. Amazing Course, 5/-. Send STAMP NOW for Free Book.—STEBBING SYSTEM, 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2.

"AERO" FREE! 12 different Airmail Stamps and 40 different British Colonials. Just send 2d. postage for Approvals.—LISBURN & TOWNSEND, LIVERPOOL.

HANDSOME MEN ARE SLIGHTLY SUNBURNT. "SUNBRONZE" remarkably improves appearance. 1/6, 2/9. 6,000 Testimonials. (Booklet, stamp.)—Sunbronze Laboratories (Dept. A.7), Colwyn Bay, Wales. (Est. 1902.)

BLUSHING, SHYNESS.—For FREE particulars, simple home cure write Mr. HUGHES, 7, Southampton Row (Box 167), LONDON, W.C.1.

All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.