

The BOYS' FRIEND

"FRANK RICHARDS' SCHOOLDAYS!" "THE BOYS OF THE 'BOMBAY CASTLE'!" "TALES OF THE DORMITORY!"

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ONE PENNY.

[Week Ending January 19th, 1918.]

EXPULSED BY THE FORM!

A MAGNIFICENT NEW LONG COMPLETE TALE OF JIMMY SILVER & CO. AT ROOKWOOD SCHOOL

By OWEN CONQUEST.

The 1st Chapter.

The Fourth Form Mean Business.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Bootles. The master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood blinked round the Form-room over his spectacles.

Mr. Bootles was a minute late for his class that morning.

Naturally, he expected to find the Fourth there waiting for him.

But of all the Rookwood Fourth, Classical and Modern, there was only one member in the Form-room, and that was Mark Lattrey, the outcast of the school.

"Bless my soul!" went on Mr. Bootles, in great surprise. "Lattrey, where are your Form-fellows? What—what?"

He blinked inquiringly at Lattrey. "They haven't come in yet, sir," muttered Lattrey.

"Most extraordinary!" ejaculated Mr. Bootles. "Very extraordinary!"

Lattrey came forward towards the master.

There was a harassed look on his thin, sharp face.

"If you please, sir—" he began. "Well?"

"I—I think it's got something to do with me, sir."

Mr. Bootles raised his eyebrows. "With you, Lattrey?"

"Yes, sir."

"I really do not understand you," said Mr. Bootles testily. "Do you mean to say that the whole Form are staying away on your account? Don't talk nonsense, Lattrey!"

"There—there's something on, sir," muttered Lattrey. "The—fellow fellows want me to leave Rookwood!"

"Quite natural, under the circumstances!" snapped Mr. Bootles. "You can hardly expect the boys to feel otherwise, Lattrey, after your ruffianly action which resulted in depriving one of your schoolfellows of his sight."

"Dr. Chisholm allows me to stay," said Lattrey sullenly. "It isn't for the fellows to decide."

"Quite so—quite so."

"There's something on, sir, and it's on my account," said Lattrey. "I—I think I'm entitled to protection, sir."

Mr. Bootles fixed his eyes upon the cad of the Fourth with an expression in which contempt was very easily read.

Why the Head allowed Lattrey to remain at Rookwood was as much a puzzle to the Form-master as to the Form.

But Mr. Bootles' duty, of course, was to uphold the authority of the Head, and Dr. Chisholm had decided, for reasons best known to himself, to allow the cad of the Fourth to remain.

Any attempt on the part of the juniors to oppose the Head's decision was to be put down at once, in Mr. Bootles' opinion.

"You do not seem in need of protection at the moment, Lattrey,"

said Mr. Bootles coldly. "I understand that the prefects have instructions to see that you are not interfered with."

"Ye-es, sir; but I think—" "Really, Lattrey, if you could persuade your father to take you away from Rookwood, it would be a judicious course to pursue, under the circumstances."

Lattrey set his lips. "I don't want to go, sir," he said sullenly; "and my father wouldn't agree, anyway."

"You cannot be happy here, Lattrey, in the present state of affairs, subjected to the very justifiable contempt of your schoolfellows."

Lattrey made no answer to that. "However, I must see into this matter," said Mr. Bootles hastily. "Do you know where the juniors are at present, Lattrey?"

"I think in the Common-room, sir."

"Very well. You will remain here."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Bootles whisked out of the Form-room, somewhat excited and angry.

Lattrey sat down in his place, his face dark and clouded.

The black sheep of Rookwood was bent upon "sticking it out" at the school, in spite of the scorn and avoidance of all the other fellows.

He hoped in time to live down what had happened.

That was not likely, however. Mornington, of the Fourth, was blind, and it was Lattrey who had caused that terrible catastrophe.

It was a thing that the Rookwood fellows were not likely to forget or forgive.

Mr. Bootles whisked away towards the junior Common-room.

All the other Forms were at work, and the master of the Fourth was very irritated by this insubordination on the part of his own Form.

He threw open the door of the Common-room, and found himself in the presence of the Fourth.

The whole Form was there, Classical and Modern.

First lesson was taken with Mr. Bootles by both divisions of the Form. And in staying "out" this morning it was clear that Classics and Moderns were in agreement.

It was but seldom that the rivals of Rookwood found themselves in accord.

But in this case the accord was complete, and almost unanimous.

Jimmy Silver, the captain of the Fourth, was addressing the Form from a chair, when the door opened, and Tommy Dodd, the leader of the Modern side, was punctuating his remarks with "Hear, hear!" which was a sufficient proof in itself that the lion and the lamb had made it pax, so to speak.

Jimmy jumped down as the Form-master whisked in.

The buzz of voices died away.

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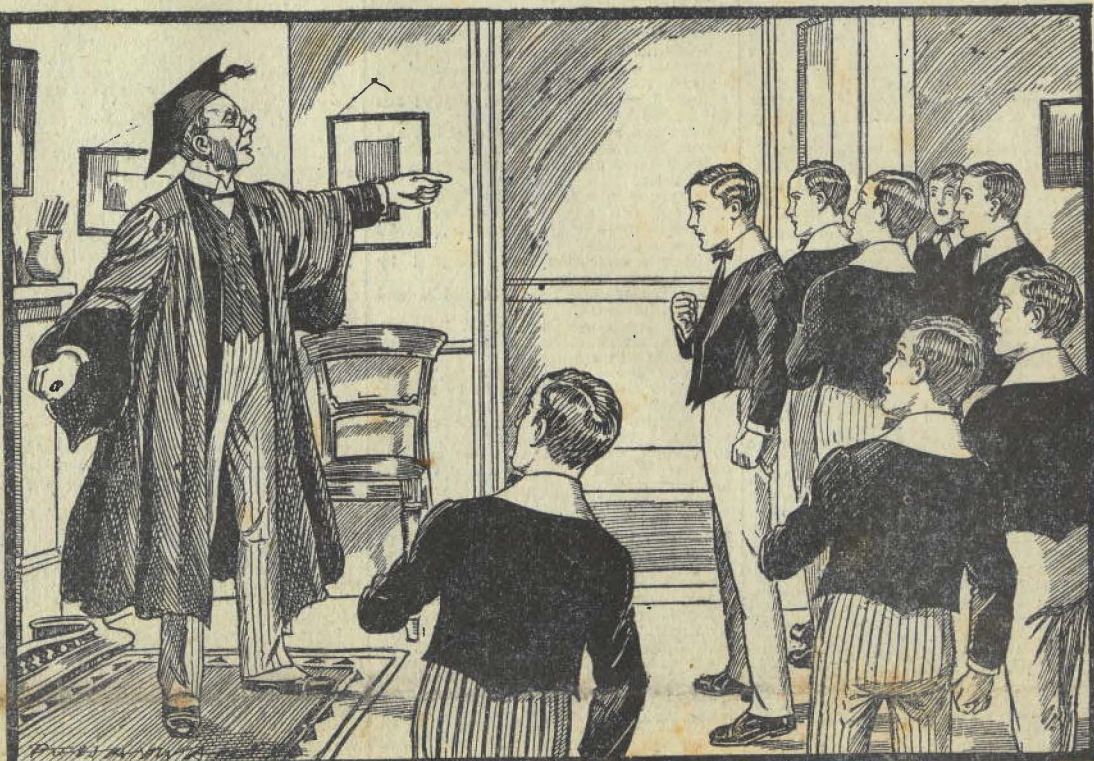
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DEFYING THE HEAD!

All the fellows realised that the situation was serious.

Tubby Muffin and Leggett backed out of sight behind the window-curtains.

Peele and Gower looked very uneasy, but most of the fellows faced the Form-master calmly.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "You—you are here! What—what?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"Why are you not in the Form-room?"

"We are staying out, sir."

"We are—we is!" murmured Arthur Edward Lovell under his breath.

"Bless my soul! Are you out of your senses, Silver?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles. "You have no permission to stay out this morning."

Jimmy Silver pointed to Mornington.

The blind junior was there, with Kit Erroll, his chum, by his side.

"You see Mornington, sir," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "You know what's happened to him. Lattrey ought to be sent to prison. At least, he ought to be turned out of Rookwood. We refuse to go in to lessons with Lattrey!"

"You—you refuse?" ejaculated Mr. Bootles, in amazement.

"Yes, sir!" chimed in Mornington. "I assure you, sir, that I don't intend to sit down in the same room with that cad again!"

"Mornington, your affliction excuses you. The other boys will at once go into the Form-room."

"We can't, sir!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Silver!"

"Not while Lattrey remains at Rookwood, sir!"

"Never!" said Conroy.

"No fear!"

"We're all in this, sir," said Erroll quietly. "The Head knows that Lattrey ought to be expelled. He's chosen to let him stay, but he can't compel us to associate with him."

"Do you venture to dictate to your headmaster?" exclaimed Mr. Bootles.

"In this—yes, sir!" said Jimmy Silver.

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Bootles was at a loss.

The juniors were looking grim, and it was clear that they did not intend to obey his order to proceed to the Form-room.

Exactly what Mr. Bootles was to do was not clear.

Certainly, he could not take the whole Form by the scruff of the neck and march them in.

"Once more, I order you into the Form-room!" he said, at last.

Silence. But the juniors did not stir.

"Otherwise, I shall call the Head himself to deal with you," said Mr. Bootles majestically. "This disrespect—"

"We mean no disrespect to you, sir," said Tommy Dodd. "We all respect you very much, sir."

"Hear, hear!"

"That is all very well, Dodd, but disobedience is disrespect," said Mr. Bootles. "You must go into the Form-room at once. Come, come; I understand your feelings towards Lattrey—I sympathise with them to some extent. But the Head's authority is unquestionable. Now, go into the Form-room at once, and I will overlook this occurrence."

There was no movement.

"I must, then, call the Head to deal with you," said Mr. Bootles.

He paused a moment or two, but there was no reply, and no movement. He left the Common-room somewhat agitated.

The Fourth-Formers looked at one another in grim silence.

They awaited the arrival of the Head.

The 2nd Chapter.

Unconquered.

"Now for it!" murmured Lovell. A heavy footstep was heard in the corridor.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

Jimmy was the prime mover in the

matter, though the other fellows were backing him up heartily.

Whether the juniors would face the Head, as they had faced the Form-master, remained to be seen.

It was not easy to think of disobeying the orders of the Head, in his stately presence.

There was a hush in the Common-room as the stately figure of the Head, with rustling gown, appeared in the open doorway.

Dr. Chisholm's face was hard and set.

His reasons for allowing Mark Lattrey to remain in the school were not known to the juniors.

They were not reasons he could have explained, even if he had considered it necessary to make explanations to the Lower School.

But he did not, in the least.

The Head was a great disciplinarian, and anything in the nature of questioning his authority was sure to arouse his ire, whatever motives the mutineers might have.

His look was thunderous as he gazed into the Common-room.

Some of the fellows evinced a disposition to get out of sight behind the others.

But the majority stood firm.

"So!" The Head's voice rumbled like distant thunder. "So it appears that this Form had taken it upon itself to disobey a Form-master's orders, and to question the authority of the headmaster of Rookwood!"

Silence.

"Go into your Form-room this instant!"

The Head made a commanding gesture.

There was a hasty movement among some of the fellows. But Jimmy Silver's voice rang out.

"Stand where you are!"

The movement ceased.

"Silver!" thundered the Head. "Are you instructing your Form-fellows to disobey me?"

"We have explained to Mr. Bootles, sir."

"Mr. Bootles has informed me of

(Continued on the next page.)



EXPULSED BY THE FORM!

(Continued from the previous page.)

your unexampled impertinence!" thundered the Head. "I decline to hear it repeated. You are plainly the ringleader in this mutiny, Silver. I order you into your Form-room! Disobey me, and you shall be taken to the station by a prefect within ten minutes, and sent back to your home!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Tommy Dodd.

Jimmy Silver's face was pale now. But he did not stir.

"Lattrey, sir—" he began. "I am not here to discuss Lattrey with you, Silver. I am here to see you return to your duty. If the Fourth Form does not obey me at once, you, Silver, will be immediately expelled, and every other member of the Form will be publicly flogged."

There was a gasp from Tubby Muffin. The fat Classical scuttled out from behind the window curtains, and started for the door.

Peele and Gower hurried after them. Lovell caught Jimmy Silver's arm anxiously.

"Come on, Jimmy!"

"We're staying out, Lovell."

"You're not going to be sacked, you fathead!"

"Look here—"

"Come on, ass!"

Lovell fairly dragged the captain of the Fourth to the door. The rest of the juniors followed.

Dr. Chisholm stood aside, frowning, as the juniors passed.

Not a fellow remained in the Common-room.

Jimmy Silver's face was white with anger as he went. But the Head's threat was too much.

Jimmy pictured his sudden return home early in the term—the dismay and amazement of his father and mother. It was too much.

After the first moment's resistance he went quietly along with Lovell.

With a stern face, the Head followed the juniors into the Fourth Form room.

Mr. Bootles was there, awaiting them. Mr. Bootles' kind face was very distressed.

He sympathised to a great extent with the rebels, and the whole incident was painful to him.

In grim and gloomy silence, the Fourth Form went to their places.

The Head surveyed them with a frowning brow.

"This Form will be detained for two hours this afternoon, as a punishment for insubordination!" he said. "If there is no recurrence of it, I shall allow the matter to drop there. But remember this—if the slightest disrespect or disobedience is shown to Mr. Bootles this morning, the delinquent will be punished with the greatest severity. I am ashamed of this Form!"

And with that Partisan shot, the Head swept out.

"Ahem—ahem!" murmured Mr. Bootles. The crushing of the revolt had been complete—so far!

But Jimmy Silver & Co. had yet another card to play—unknown either to the Head or the Form-master.

The "staying-out" had been only the first step.

That action had made it clear to the Head in what light the Fourth regarded his amazing leniency to Lattrey.

If he did not choose to do what the whole school expected of him, there were consequences to follow—already decided upon.

Mr. Bootles had no trouble with his class that morning, although he had quite expected it.

The juniors liked their Form-master, and had no desire to give him trouble.

They knew, too, that in his heart Mr. Bootles shared their feeling with regard to Lattrey.

The good little gentleman's only desire was to smooth over the matter, hoping that there would be no more of it.

But Lattrey, at least, knew that there would be more of it, and his face was clouded that morning.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon, but the sentence of detention had to be carried out.

When morning lessons were over, Mr. Bootles directed his class to return to the Form-room at the usual hour for afternoon classes.

The juniors left the Form-room quietly. Mark Lattrey looked round rather nervously, outside the Form-room. But the other fellows did not approach him, or speak to him.

They moved off at once to the junior Common-room.

The plan of campaign was to be discussed before dinner.

Erroll took Mornington out into the quadrangle, the blind junior walking with his arm in his chums.

But the rest of the Fourth turned up at the meeting.

Jimmy Silver mounted on a chair.

"We've taken the first step, you fellows," he said. "It hasn't been a success."

"Rotten failure!" remarked Townsend.

"Shut up, Towney!"

"We didn't know how it would turn out," continued Jimmy Silver, unheeding Townsend. "We wanted to make it

clear to the Head that we wouldn't stand Lattrey in the school at any price. It was his duty to kick Lattrey out, and he hasn't done it. He knows what we think now, and he's taken no notice."

"An' he won't!" said Peele.

"Now we've got to take the second step," said Jimmy Silver. "The Head won't expel Lattrey. But Lattrey's going to be expelled!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Gammer!" said Gower.

"Dry up, Gower!"

"Order!"

"If the Head won't expel him, the Fourth Form will do it," resumed Jimmy Silver. "We've decided on that, and we're going to carry it out."

"You'll get sacked," said Topham.

"I'm risking that!"

"I'm jolly well not goin' to risk it!"

"Yah! Funk!" bawled Lovell.

Townsend shrugged his shoulders.

"Funk or not, I'm not backin' up against the Head," he answered. "It's not good enough. Come on, Topsy; I'm fed up with this!"

Townsend and Topham cleared off, and two or three other fellows followed them.

The matter was getting too serious for their taste.

"Anybody who feels funky, had better clear out while he's got the chance," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "Once in, there's no drawing back."

Jimmy's invitation was accepted by several more fellows.

But the majority, both Classical and Modern, remained.

"Now the Bolos have gone, let's get on with the washing," remarked Raby, and there was a laugh.

"You know the programme," said Jimmy. "Lattrey is going to be sacked. He's entitled to an inquiry by the Head, and a just sentence—and he's getting neither. The Fourth Form are, therefore, going to take the matter in their own hands, and give him a fair chance, and sack him."

"Hear, hear!"

"He will be sentenced to expulsion by the Form, and sent away!" said Jimmy Silver firmly. "I know it's an unusual thing—"

"My hat! It is, rather!"

"But what else can we do? Are we going to stand that rascal here?"

"Never!"

"The Head refuses to do his duty, and we're going to do it for him. Lattrey will receive his sentence, and he will be taken away and put in the train for home."

"Great Scott!"

"There'll be trouble with the Head afterwards," said Tom Rawson.

"I know that!"

"And it will be jolly serious, bedad!" remarked Flynn.

"We shall have to face that together. We've got to stick to one another, of course. If one or more fellows get the sack, the others have got to leave the school with him, and see him through. If it comes to expelling nearly the whole of the Fourth Form, the Head will have to call a halt."

"Hear, hear!"

"Any fellow who funks it can get out while there's still time."

But there were no more defections. Jimmy Silver had the hearty support of the Fourth.

"Look here," said Tommy Dodd. "It's all very well about letting the funks off, but I don't see it. The Fourth ought to stand together as one man against the enemy. United we stand, divided we fall."

"That's so!"

"If it comes to a tussle, we want the Form all in it," continued Tommy; "and I vote for compelling the skinkers."

"Hear, hear!"

"It may not come to that," said Jimmy. "If the Head lets Lattrey go when we turn him out, well and good. We don't want trouble in the school. But one thing's dead certain—we don't stand that rascal Lattrey here any longer!"

"Hear, hear!"

Upon that point there was unanimity and grim resolve, and the meeting broke up in a mood of great determination.

Lattrey was to go, and if there was trouble with the Head afterwards, Jimmy Silver & Co. were prepared to face it.

The 3rd Chapter.

The Outcast!

Mr. Bootles was relieved to see his Form turn up for their detention at the appointed hour.

He had feared a repetition of the morning's outbreak, and the necessity for another intervention by the Head.

Mr. Bootles flattered himself that the trouble had blown over.

But the quietness of the Fourth was only the calm before the hurricane, if he could have guessed it.

The juniors went steadily through their detention task.

Lattrey was not detained with the rest; he was the only member of the Form who had not given offence that morning.

But the cad of the Fourth was not very cheerful that afternoon, though he had escaped detention.

He was "gated" by order of the Head, since his surreptitious visits to a certain disreputable inn had come to light.

His only resource was to "mooch" about the quadrangle, and smoke cigar-

ettes in his study, and wonder how long it would be before the affair blew over.

The other Forms were enjoying their usual half-holiday, and a football-match was going on, on the playing-fields, between Classical and Modern fags.

Lattrey, bored with cigarettes in his study, strolled down to the football-ground to look on.

Fag football was mostly kick and rush and roar, and the scene was quite lively.

Lattrey did not find it very interesting, however.

Algy Silver, Jimmy's cousin in the Third Form, was looking on, with his hands in his pockets and a frown on his brow.

Algy had made friends with Lattrey, though he had not spoken to him since the accident to Mornington, excepting to tell him to keep his distance.

But the "sport" of the Third looked so ill-tempered and discontented now, that Lattrey was encouraged to make advances again.

Even the company of a discontented fag was better than "mooching" about with his hands in his pockets.

Moreover, Algy Silver prided himself upon being "goey," and it was a keen enjoyment to Lattrey to encourage Jimmy Silver's cousin in breaking the rules of the school, and sinking deeper into blackguardism.

"Not playing, kid?" remarked Lattrey, joining the fag near the goalposts.

Algy Silver looked round sulkily.

It was on his lips to tell the outcast of Rookwood to sheer off, but he did not.

He was feeling lonely himself.

"Wegg won't play me in the Third," he said, with a sneer. "He says he won't play a goat who smokes! Silly fool!"

"Cheeky ass!" agreed Lattrey. "You've got good little Georgies in the Third, it seems, same as we have in the Fourth."

"I'm sick of Rookwood!" growled Algy. "Dull hole, after what I was used to at High Coombe. Rotten shame to send me here!"

"You have the great advantage of being under your Cousin Jimmy's eye, and brought up in the way you should go," suggested Lattrey.

"Oh, rats!"

"You don't enjoy that?"

"No, I don't!"

Lattrey smiled.

"Your form's detained," remarked Algy, looking at Lattrey rather curiously. "Was it because they won't stand you any longer? 'Erbert says so."

"'Erbert's a sneakin' little cad," said Lattrey.

"But was it?"

"Never mind. You don't get on with your Cousin Jimmy any better than I do," sneered Lattrey. "Are you keen on watchin' this game?"

"Bored to tears!"

"Come up to the study, then."

Algy hesitated.

He fully agreed with the rest of Rookwood in being "down" on the rascal of the school, and he did not want to have anything to do with Lattrey. But he was in a perverse mood, and he was angry and peevish.

He nodded at last.

"Banker?" he asked.

"Yes, if you like."

"All serene; I'm on."

"Trot along, then," said Lattrey cheerfully.

They moved off towards the school-house.

"Silver II!" bawled a fag. "Let that cad alone. He's in Coventry!"

"Go and eat coke!" was Algy's reply.

And he went into the House with Lattrey.

A few minutes later they were in Lattrey's study, and cards were on the table, and the two young rascals were smoking and playing.

That was Lattrey's honourable occupation while his Form-fellows were grinding through their detention task.

Lattrey was finding his afternoon enjoyable, after all.

In the present odium in which he was held he had been unable to indulge his favourite vice of gambling of late.

It was a pleasure to him to see the glimmer of the cards and to hear the chink of money once more.

It was not so much pleasure to the reckless fag of the Third, because Lattrey was winning his money.

But the more he lost, the more the fag was determined to win it all back—which exactly suited Lattrey's game.

The silence was broken suddenly by the tramp of many feet in the passage outside. Lattrey started.

The detention was over, and the Fourth Form were released.

They had evidently returned to their quarters.

Lattrey rose quickly from the table.

"Better lock the door!" he remarked.

Algy chuckled.

"Safer, perhaps," he agreed. "We don't want Cousin Jimmy lookin' in here just this minute."

Lattrey crossed quickly to the door.

He uttered a savage exclamation of anger as he found that the key was missing from the lock.

"By gad!"

"What's the row?" asked Algy, looking round from the table.

"Have you seen my key?"

"No; is it missin'?"

"Yes," said Lattrey between his teeth.

"My hat! Looks as if your pals meant to pay you a visit this afternoon, and didn't want you to lock them out," grinned Algy. "Somebody's taken it."

The same thought was in Lattrey's mind, and he was looking round hastily for some means of securing the door.

He seized a chair, and shoved it against the door, to jam the back under the handle.

But before he could do so, the handle was turned from without, and the door pushed open.

"He's in here!" It was Lovell's voice.

"Come on!"

Lattrey, alarmed now, jammed his foot

desperately against the door, while he strove to shove the chair into position under the handle.

"Hallo, he's holding the door!"

"Shove away!"

"Now, then, all together!"

"Help me, Algy!" breathed Lattrey.

The fag rose hesitatingly. But his help would not have been of much use, and there was no time for it.

Half a dozen fellows were shoving hard on the door outside, and Lattrey was pressed back.

He yielded at last, and the door flew violently open, and Jimmy Silver & Co. swarmed into the study.

The 4th Chapter.

In the Hands of the Philistines.

Lattrey jumped back, panting.

The Fistical Four were first in the study.

After them came the Colonial Co. and the three Tommies of the Modern side.

Lattrey cast a wild look towards the doorway.

But outside the juniors were swarming.

There was no escape for the outcast of Rookwood.

Algy Silver stood by the table, a cigarette still smoking between his fingers, quite at a loss.

Jimmy started as his eyes fell upon his cousin.

"You here, Algy!" he exclaimed.

The fag gave him a look of defiance.

"I can be here if I like, I suppose!" he retorted.

Jimmy suppressed the angry reply that rose to his lips.

He was not there for a dispute with his cousin.

"Get out!" he said briefly.

"I'll get out when I choose," said Algy independently.

In answer to that, Jimmy Silver strode towards him and grasped him by the shoulders.

Algy roared.

"Let go! Leggo, you rotter!"

"Stand clear, there, you fellows!" said Jimmy quietly.

"Right-ho!"

"Ha, ha!"

The crowd outside the door surged back.

With a swing of his strong arms, Jimmy Silver sent the sport of the Third whirling out.

Algy swept through the doorway, and collapsed on the floor.

Three or four boots impinged upon his person as he sprawled there, and helped him along the passage.

The fag disappeared with a howl.

Then the crowd closed up in the doorway again.

Lattrey would gladly have followed the fag, but there was no chance of that.

With clenched hands, and a bitter look on his face, the cad of the Fourth waited for what was to happen.

Jimmy Silver turned to him, his eyes gleaming.

"Come with us, Lattrey!"

"I won't!"

"Take his arms, Lovell and Newcome!"

"What-ho!"

Lattrey backed away, breathing hard.

"What do you want?" he muttered thickly. "What do you want with me, hang you? I'll yell, and bring Bulkeley here, as I did before."

"You won't yell this time," said Jimmy Silver grimly. "You'll have your mouth stopped fast enough if you do."

Raby picked up a duster and folded it, evidently for use as a gag, if wanted.

Lattrey, with Lovell and Newcome grasping his arms, was propelled towards the door.

In the passage he made a desperate attempt to shout for help.

But a hand was clapped over his mouth at once, and the intended shout died away in a gurgle.

"No, you don't!" remarked Conroy.

"Stick the duster in his mouth, Raby!"

"You bet!"

"Gurrrrrrr!" came from Lattrey, as the dusty duster was driven into his mouth, filling it, and effectually silencing him.

Van Ryn produced a whipcord, and whipped it round the duster, and knotted it behind Lattrey's head.

"That does it!" he remarked. "Now march!"

Lattrey's eyes were dilated now.

The measures that the

The meeting was unanimous. Of all the Fourth, Classical and Modern, not more than six or seven fellows were absent, and all present assented.

"Hands up against!" added Jimmy Silver.

Not a single hand was raised. "That settles it!" said Jimmy. "Lattrey, you are sentenced by the Fourth Form to be expelled in disgrace from Rookwood School!"

"Hear, hear!" shouted Lattrey. "The sentence will be carried out at once. You will pack your box, if you choose, and it can be sent after you."

"I shall pack nothing!"

"As you like. Will one of you fellows cut away and get Lattrey's coat and cap?"

"I'm your man!" said Lovell.

The door was unlocked, and Lovell quitted the box-room.

Lattrey stood breathing hard, looking savagely from face to face. In every face he read nothing but grim determination.

"You fools! You fools!" he muttered in a choking voice. "You can't even get me out of the school! You know you can't!"

Jimmy Silver did not trouble to answer. He waited for Lovell to return.

The early winter evening was falling, and the shadows were deepening in the room.

In a few minutes Arthur Edward Lovell came back into the box-room, with Lattrey's coat over his arm and the cap in his hand.

"There you are, Lattrey," said Jimmy quietly. "Put them on."

"I won't!"

"Put them on him, you fellows!"

Lattrey struck out savagely as he was seized. But he was held, and the coat was forced upon him, and the cap jammed on his head.

Then Lovell and Conroy retained hold of his arms.

Jimmy Silver looked at his watch.

"The last train from Coombe to Latcham leaves at six," he said. "That's the train Lattrey is to catch. From Latcham he can look after himself."

"I'm not going to Coombe!" hissed Lattrey.

"You are!"

Jimmy Silver opened the box-room window.

"Shove that duster over his jaws again, Lovell!"

"What-ho?"

Lattrey uttered one desperate shout, before the duster was jammed into his mouth.

The whipcord secured it in place again.

He stood silent, in the grasp of the juniors, his eyes burning.

Jimmy Silver took a strong knotted rope from a trunk, where it had evidently been placed in readiness.

He passed the rope round Lattrey, under the arms, and fastened it.

Lattrey understood then, and his teeth bit furiously into the duster.

Three or four pairs of hands swung him out of the window, in the gathering dusk, and he was lowered to the ground.

The Fistical Four followed him from the window. The rest of the Fourth left the box-room by the door.

The "expelled" junior was outside the house now, and it remained to get him to the station and started for home.

The 6th Chapter. No Interference.

"Come on!"

The Fistical Four gathered closely round Lattrey, and hurried him away in the gloom.

Lattrey could not resist, with an iron grasp upon both of his arms, and he could not call for help, with the duster choking all utterance.

With burning eyes, he tramped in the midst of the four Classics, as they led him by devious ways round the School House, taking care to keep out of sight from the windows.

Jimmy Silver & Co. reached the school wall, where it was darkly shadowed by the beeches, and there they found a crowd of the Fourth already arrived.

It was clear to Lattrey that all the proceedings had been cut and dried in advance.

Conroy, and Pons, and Van Ryn were "bunked" to the top of the wall, the trees screening them from the view of the quad, if anyone had been out of doors in the chill evening gloom and mist.

Jimmy tossed the rope up to them.

The three Colonials grasped it, and Lattrey was drawn up the old stone wall, and landed on the top.

He began to struggle there, but he was dropped outside the wall, and lowered into the shadowed road.

The three Colonials jumped down after him, and he was pinioned again, as he was making clutches at the gag in his mouth.

"No, you don't!" smiled Conroy.

And he replaced the gag securely.

The Fistical Four followed, and then the three Tommies.

The rest of the Fourth remained within walls.

There were ten juniors gathered in the road with Mark Lattrey—more than ample to look after him.

Lattrey, unable to resist, walked among the juniors, till the dim glimmer of the village lights came in sight at last.

Jimmy Silver looked at his watch by the light of a match.

"Plenty of time for the train!" he remarked.

"I say, we can't take the rotter into the station like this," remarked Tommy Dodd doubtfully.

Jimmy shook his head.

"No, we can't," he agreed. "But we're going to take him. You cut on and take Lattrey's ticket. Lovell—take it to Latcham—that will save any delay. We'll give you five minutes."

"Right-ho!"

Lovell vanished in the gloom, and the rest of the party waited.

A few minutes later there was a foot-step, and a sturdy figure loomed up from the direction of the village.

"Hallo, Lovell—my hat—it's Neville!"

Neville of the Sixth, a Classical prefect of Rookwood, stopped as he spotted the group of juniors in the dusk.

"Hallo, what are you kids doing out of gates?" he exclaimed. "It's past locking-up, I think."

Lattrey could not speak, but he made a sudden spring forward, to let Neville see him.

He was dragged back at once, but the prefect was suspicious now.

"What's that—who's that—ah! Lattrey! What the thunder is Lattrey's mouth tied up like that for?" demanded the prefect, in amazement. "Let him go at once!"

The juniors made no movement to obey.

"Do you hear me?" exclaimed Neville.

"Yes, we hear."

"Well, do as I tell you!"

"Can't be done."

"What?" shouted Neville.

"The fact is, we're turning Lattrey out of Rookwood, for what he did to Mornington," said Jimmy Silver, at last.

"Turning him out of Rookwood?" repeated Neville, hardly able to believe his ears. "Are you potty?"

"No; I think the Head must be potty to let him stay at Rookwood," answered Jimmy Silver. "We're not standing it. Sorry, Neville—no disrespect meant to you, but we can't let you interfere."

Neville of the Sixth was a good-natured fellow, but this was a little too much for the dignity of a prefect.

He made a grasp at Jimmy Silver.

"Back up!" shouted Jimmy. "Don't let that cad go, Raby!"

"I've got him!"

Neville, to his amazement, found himself tackled by eight sturdy juniors, and

The prefect had no chance against the odds.

Lovell came up breathlessly from the village.

"I've got the ticket," he announced. "All serene! My only chapeau, what's going on? Who's that?"

"Neville!" gasped Jimmy Silver breathlessly.

"Great pip!"

"Lemme go, you young scoundrels!" came in a gurgling voice from under the Colonial juniors.

"Neither time, dear boy," remarked Conroy.

"Can you chaps manage him?" asked Jimmy.

"You bet!"

"The Modern chaps will help you. Four of us are plenty to get Lattrey into his train."

"Right-ho! We'll lend a hand," said Tommy Dodd. "Make room for a chap to sit down, you fellows."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving the hapless Neville wriggling under the juniors, the Fistical Four hurried on to the village with Lattrey.

The 7th Chapter. The Last of Lattrey.

Jimmy Silver halted just outside Coombe.

The duster and whipcord were removed, and Lattrey panted for breath.

His eyes were glittering in the gloom.

"Do you think you'll get me to the train?" he hissed. "The moment we set foot in the High Street I'll yell for help!"

"I don't think you will," said Jimmy Silver quietly. "I've thought of all that, Lattrey. Hold him, you fellows, and smash him if he makes a sound."

"I've got my knuckles ready for his nose," said Lovell.

Jimmy Silver took out his pocket-knife and ripped the duster.

owing to the lighting restrictions. But about the railway-station there was a good deal of light.

A portly form loomed up in front of the juniors as they approached the station.

"Good-evening, Mr. Boggs!" said Jimmy Silver politely.

"Heavenin'!" said Police-constable Boggs. "Haccident—wot?"

His official eye blinked at Lattrey's bandaged face.

Lattrey made a furious effort to get his jaws loose. But Jimmy Silver had done his work too thoroughly for that.

"We're looking after him," said Jimmy Silver, without directly replying to the question. "Come on, you fellows! Cheer up, Lattrey! We'll be at the station in a minute or two now."

The last remark was judiciously uttered for the hearing of Mr. Boggs.

The Fistical Four marched on with their prisoner.

Lattrey threw his whole weight on Lovell and Raby, and they half carried him along. But Lovell gave his arm a twist as a hint to walk, and Lattrey decided to walk.

The party of juniors entered the station.

As the ticket for Lattrey was already taken, they proceeded directly to the platform.

The porter glanced at them curiously. But the man knew the Fistical Four well, and naturally made no demur about their assisting the bandaged junior to the platform.

Lattrey, his eyes burning with rage, found himself upon the platform with his conductors in the shadiest part of the station. There they waited.

Lattrey turned his eyes upon Jimmy Silver's face more than once with savage questioning. But he read no sign of relenting there.

It was borne in upon his mind that the

Arthur Edward Lovell jumped out, and Jimmy slammed the door. In the carriage, Lattrey staggered to his feet, tearing at the bandage over his jaws.

The train moved.

"Stand back there!"

With a shriek from the engine the train rolled out of the station.

The Fistical Four stood on the platform and watched it go.

The long line of windows curved down the line, and from one window a white, furious face looked and a savage fist was shaken.

Lattrey disappeared from the sight of the juniors as the train vanished down the line.

Jimmy Silver drew a deep breath.

"He's gone!" he said.

"Expelled!" grinned Lovell.

"And—and, my hat! What will the Head say?" murmured Newcome.

"Let him say what he likes!" said Jimmy Silver resolutely. "We've done what he ought to have done! If Lattrey comes back we'll turn him out again—with a flogging thrown in. Head or no Head, Lattrey don't stay at Rookwood!"

"Hear, hear!"

The Fistical Four left the station in a somewhat serious mood.

The excitement of their proceedings had debarked them from very much reflection so far. But now it was over, now that Mark Lattrey was gone, they realised that the matter was terribly serious.

They had realised it before, but not so clearly. Lattrey was gone. They had done their self-imposed duty, and now the consequences were to be faced.

But Jimmy Silver & Co. had the courage to face them.

They tramped back to the spot in the lane where they had left Neville in the hands of their comrades.

The Tommies and the Colonials were there, and Neville of the Sixth, standing on his feet now, was still in their grasp.

Neville's face was crimson with anger. The humiliation of being handled and held by juniors of the Fourth Form was a severe blow to the dignity of the prefect. But Jimmy Silver & Co. could not afford just then to be respecters of persons.

And as they were likely to have trouble with the Head, the wrath of a prefect was not much to face in addition.

"All serene!" said Jimmy.

Neville was released.

"You young rascals!" exclaimed the Sixth-Former, his voice trembling with anger. "You'll be flogged for this!"

"You needn't report us, Neville," suggested Jimmy Silver.

"What?"

"We were bound to turn Lattrey out. You can't deny that he ought to be sacked from Rookwood. We're sorry we handled you, but it couldn't be helped."

Neville looked hard at the captain of the Fourth.

"What have you done with Lattrey?" he asked.

"Put him in the train for Latcham."

"But—but there's no train back to-night!"

"I know that! He's sacked. He can go home."

"Sacked!" repeated Neville dazedly. "Sacked by juniors! My word! Have you any idea how the Head will look at this?"

"No," confessed Jimmy. "I suppose he will be in a wax. Can't be helped. We were bound to turn Lattrey out of Rookwood."

"You may be expelled yourself."

"If I am the whole Fourth Form will be expelled with me. We're all standing together in this."

"Modern and Classical, shoulder to shoulder," said Tommy Dodd emphatically.

"I won't report you for handling a prefect," said Neville slowly at last. "You'll get it bad enough from the Head, without me making it worse for you—though you don't deserve much at my hands, you cheeky young sweeps! Lattrey may get out at some station, and find his way back before bed-time—for your sakes I hope he will. Get back to Rookwood, and I'll say as little as I can about the matter, anyway."

"Thanks, Neville! You're a sport!"

"Oh, cut off!" growled the prefect.

Jimmy Silver & Co. willingly cut off.

The juniors ran all the way back to Rookwood, and found themselves just in time for call-over when they dropped in over the school wall.

Neville was not yet in when they appeared in Hall to answer to their names.

Mr. Bootles was taking roll-call, and there was no answer when he came to Lattrey's name.

"Lattrey!" repeated the Form-master. But no voice answered. "Adsum!"

Mr. Bootles marked Lattrey down as absent, frowning portentously. He little dreamed where the missing junior was.

A crowd of fellows gathered round Jimmy Silver & Co. as they came out of Hall.

"Well?" inquired a dozen voices. "Is he gone?"

"He's gone," said Jimmy Silver quietly.

"Good egg!" said Oswald. "But—but—My only hat! What a shindy there'll be when the Head knows!"

"Keep smiling!" said Jimmy Silver.

Whether the juniors could keep smiling or not, there was no help for it now.

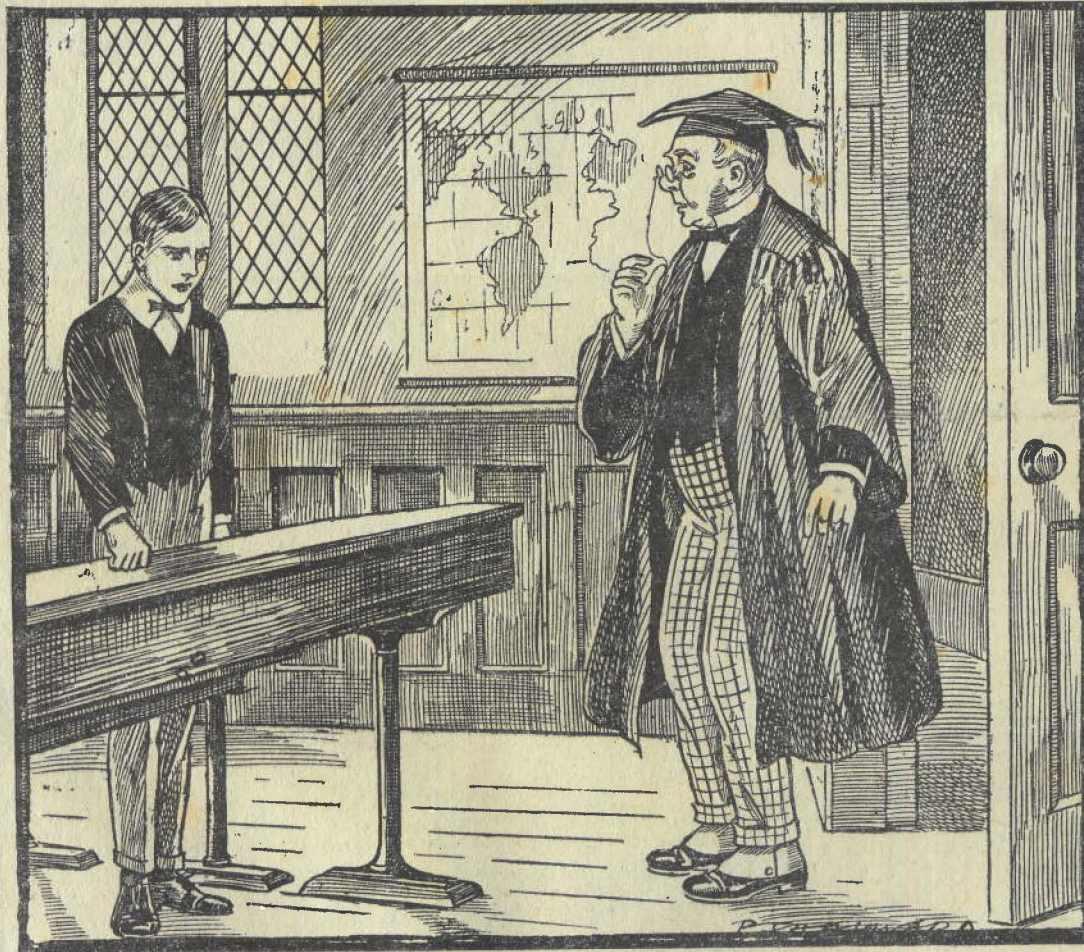
With all the resolution they could muster the Fourth Form of Rookwood waited for the bursting of the storm.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY.

"THE ROOKWOOD MUTINEERS!"
By OWEN CONQUEST.

DON'T MISS IT!



"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Bootles, in great surprise. "Where are your Form-fellows, Lattrey?"

"They haven't come in yet, sir," muttered Lattrey.

big stalwart fellow as he was, he had no chance against those odds.

"You cheeky young villains, let me go!" he shouted, struggling in the grasp of the Fourth-formers.

"Will you clear off, and let us alone?" demanded Jimmy Silver.

"No!" roared Neville.

"Then we shall have to handle you."

"You—you—oh, my hat!"

The angry prefect, still struggling, went down in the damp grass by the roadside.

Three or four of the juniors rolled over him.

"Pin him!" shouted Newcome.

"Sit on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Neville was speedily reduced to helplessness.

"Oh, you young rascals!" he gasped. "Make it pax!" grinned Conroy.

"I'll smash you!" roared Neville.

"You'll give us your word to let the matter drop; here, or we'll keep you pinned," said Jimmy Silver grimly. "Now then!"

"I—I'll smash you, you cheeky young villain!" gasped Neville.

"Then you'll be held here till we're done with Lattrey."

"Do you know you can be sacked for this?" panted the Sixth-Former.

"We're changing that!"

"Oh! I'll—I'll!"

Neville choked with wrath.

He was on his back in the grass, and the three Colonials were sitting on him, pinning him down by sheer weight.

"Open your jaws, Lattrey!"

"I won't!"

"Take his nose and chin, you chaps!"

"Yow-ow-groogh!"

Lattrey's jaws came open, with Lovell's grip on his nose and chin. He had no choice about that.

Jimmy Silver jammed the portion of the duster into his mouth, just filling it, and at a sign from him Lovell jammed Lattrey's jaws shut again.

Then Jimmy took Lattrey's handkerchief and his own, and tied them together round Lattrey's mouth, chin, and one side of his face in the manner of a bandage.

Lattrey's eyes glittered at him with helpless fury.

He could not open his mouth now, but the tied handkerchief looked only like a bandage, as if he had a very bad tooth-ache.

And the juniors, grasping his arms, would look only as if they were supporting the victim of an accident.

His rage was too great for words—if he could have spoken.

"I rather think that will pass muster," remarked Jimmy Silver, with satisfaction. "If anybody speaks to us, leave the talking to me."

"Right-ho!"

"Now come on!"

Jimmy Silver led the way into the village street, followed by Lovell and Raby, with Lattrey between them, tightly gripping his arms, Newcome bringing up the rear.

The village street was gloomy enough

juniors were in grim earnest. That he was to go—that the train was to bear him away from Rookwood by order of the Fourth Form.

And there was no return train that night at all events.

From Latcham he could proceed to his home if he liked, but he could not return to Rookwood until the morrow.

He almost choked with rage as he thought of it.

"Train's signalled!" said Raby at last.

"Here she comes!"

The train stopped in the station, and Jimmy Silver ran forward to secure an empty carriage if possible.

There were few passengers, and an empty carriage was easy enough to secure at Coombe.

Farther up the line it was likely to fill. Jimmy tore the door open, and beckoned to his comrades.

Lovell & Co. scuttled across the platform with Lattrey, giving the cad of the Fourth

TALES of the DORMITORY!

A Great New Series of Short Complete Tales, Told
By Juniors at Rookwood School.

This Week:-

"THE SIMPLETON!" By KIT ERROLL.

The 1st Chapter.

The New Boy Arrives.

"New kid coming!"

Teddy Dore made the announcement as he burst into Study No. 2 at Burlington School.

"No need to make a song about it," remarked Tony Delamere casually, looking up from the book he was reading.

"Hear, hear!" concurred Billy Hall, who was likewise engaged.

Teddy sniffed.

"That's just where you're wrong," he said. "We ought to make more than a song about it. The new kid's booked for this study!"

"Bosh!" exclaimed Tony quickly. "We can't have a new kid chucked on us. Besides, there're three of us already. The room won't hold any more comfortably."

"Not likely," agreed Billy Hall. "It's a case of us three and no more."

"That's what I told Wainwright," said Teddy. "But he's such a beastly unreasonable chap. He blinked over those blessed glasses of his, and told me that he'd come me for impertinence if I persisted in arguing the giddy point."

"The Prussian!" exclaimed Tony indignantly. "He must know we're rather particular who we have in here. Why, the new kid might turn out to be a beastly outsider, or some simple ass who'd be a perpetual nuisance!"

Teddy glanced at his wristlet watch.

"Time we got a move on," he said.

"What ever for?" asked Tony promptly.

"Can't play footer this afternoon. The ground's almost under water."

"We're not going to play footer, fat-head!" exclaimed Teddy curtly. "Teddy was no more keen on having the new fellow in Study No. 2 than the others were, and at that moment he was in a rather irritable mood. 'We're going to meet the new kid,' he added."

"We're going to stay by the fire," said Tony firmly.

"Wainwright's orders," said Teddy. "It's no good kicking up against the beaks, you know. Our dear Form-master says we've got to meet young Horace, and that's an end of it. Tumble up, we've only got ten minutes to walk to the station!"

"Oh, hang the new kid!" snorted Tony Delamere; but, all the same, he slipped on his cap and overcoat, and followed Teddy and Billy out of the study.

The three chums were in anything but cheerful moods just then.

The planting of the new boy in Study No. 2 was a source of great annoyance to them.

They looked upon themselves as the rightful and only occupants of Study No. 2, and felt that their rights were being unfairly infringed.

Teddy was the only one who was inclined to take a cheerful view of the matter.

"Don't look so pippish, you fellows," he said, as they approached the station. "It's quite likely the new kid'll turn out quite decent."

"Impossible!" cried Tony. "His very name gives him away. All Horaces are silly asses! I've got a cousin named Horace, and of all the silly idiots he takes the bun!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Teddy. "You can't judge a chap by his name. For instance, I once knew a chump named Tony, and—"

"Look here, Teddy, if you're referring to me," began Tony indignantly.

"Not at all," replied Teddy sublimely.

"But—Hullo! Here comes the giddy train!"

There was a sound of grinding brakes, and next moment the train drew into the station.

The three chums hurried through the booking-hall on to the platform.

The doors of the compartments were thrown open, and quite a dozen people stepped out.

Teddy gazed up and down for sight of the new fellow.

"There he is!" he exclaimed, pointing up the platform. "My hat! What's he dragging out of the carriage?"

"Looks like a wooden box," remarked Tony.

"Better come and give him a hand," said Teddy at once; and, breaking into a run, he made towards the compartment from which the new fellow was emerging.

But Teddy's assistance was not required. By the time he arrived on the spot the fellow in Etons had dragged the box on to the platform.

He looked round as Teddy approached, and the latter suddenly started back.

"My giddy aunt!" he exclaimed, as he gazed at the new boy. "Where the dickens did you escape—I beg your pardon," he said, recovering himself quickly. "You're Horace Jones, I presume?"

The new fellow nodded his head in answer. As he did so, Tony and Billy sniggered behind their hands.

They simply could not help grinning. The new fellow was the weirdest specimen of a schoolboy they had ever seen in their lives.

He had a round, podgy face, and he wore a pair of spectacles that seemed several sizes too large for him.

"What did I tell you?" said Tony, in an undertone, to his chums. "He's as big a fool as my cousin Horace!"

"Did you speak to me?" asked the new boy simply.

"Oh, yes!" said Tony promptly. "I was just saying how pleased we are to see you. We're jolly glad you're coming to Burlington! I'm sure the fellows will welcome you with open arms."

"I'm so glad," replied Horace meekly. "My Aunt Miriam will be very pleased to know that. Auntie told me that I might meet bullies at the school, but I'm sure she must have been mistaken. I suppose there are no bullies at Burlington?"

"Oh, no!" said Tony quickly. "They're all dear little Horaces—I mean, they're—"

"No, no!" said Horace at once. "I couldn't dream of allowing a porter to carry my box. My Aunt Miriam urged me not to allow the box out of my possession."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Teddy uproariously. "Brought the family heirlooms with you?"

"No," said Horace quietly. "They're books. My auntie told me to read as much as possible. I'm very fond of reading, you know. I read a whole book coming down in the train."

"Go on!" said Teddy, in mock surprise. "You don't say so?"

"I do," said Horace, beaming. "It was a lovely book, too! It was called 'Mother's Darling'; or, the Apple of Her Eye."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Teddy. "Some book that! A thrill in every line, I suppose? Regular blood and thunder, in fact."

"Oh, no!" said Horace. "You are under a mistaken impression. My auntie warned me never to read a blood-and-thunder book. She said they make little boys into criminals, and I do not wish to become a criminal."

Horace fumbled in his pocket, and brought to view a small, blue-covered book.

"You may read 'Mother's Darling' if you like," he said persuasively.

"Couldn't he did, old son," said Teddy, with a wave of the hand. "I'm sure I haven't got the intelligence to read such a book. We never tackle anything deep, you know."

"Perhaps you'd like to read it?" asked Horace, handing the book to Tony.

"No, thanks," said Tony quickly. "You read it again, Horace."

"But I've read it six times already," said Horace, with amazing simplicity.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the chums.

"You're simply wonderful, Horace," said Teddy benignly. "Now about this box of yours. Let's get the porter to bring it up to the school. Capper's a pretty careful chap, and he won't knock it about."

Horace nodded his head.

"I couldn't dream of it," he said mildly.

"Auntie would be so annoyed if she knew I had disobeyed her order. Surely I can get a cab?"

"Nothing doing," said Teddy blandly. "All the cabs have been taken off the rank owing to the war."

"How annoying," said Horace. "The inconveniences one has to suffer owing to this terrible war are innumerable. What-ever shall I do? Oh, I wonder whether you boys would mind helping me to carry my box?"

"Not at all," said Teddy. "But why not let the porter—"

"But think of my auntie," said the new fellow.

"Hang your blessed auntie!" growled Tony.

Horace looked at the chums in amazement.

"I wouldn't dare think of hanging my auntie," he said. "She is the best auntie I have ever had. I'm sure you would like my Aunt Miriam if you met her."

"Bound to," said Tony; and then he added in an undertone: "I don't think!"

"She gave me this lovely box full of books," went on Horace enthusiastically. "I shall have to read some of them to you when we are settled down at the school. I love reading aloud, and—"

"Time we got a move on," interrupted Teddy, growing weary. "Come on, Tony, old scout. You take one handle of the blessed box, and I'll take the other."

"No, no!" exclaimed Horace promptly. "I must take one handle. I promised auntie I wouldn't allow the box to leave my possession, and I wouldn't break my word for anything."

"Oh, all right," said Teddy resignedly. "But, for goodness' sake, buck up. We shall get back too late for tea if we're not careful!"

Teddy took charge of one end of the box, whilst Horace held the other. Then the four of them set out for Burlington.

Tony and Billy dragged behind, talking together.

The subject of their conversation was the new fellow, and, needless to say, the things they said about Horace were not of a complimentary nature.

The 2nd Chapter.

An Astounding Revelation.

About a week after the new fellow's arrival at the school, Teddy and his

chums entered the study for tea, and found Horace sitting by the fire, deeply engrossed in a book.

"Hullo, what are you reading now?" asked Tony.

"I'm still reading the same book," said Horace quietly.

"But you've already read it a thousand times," said Tony.

"No, Tony, you are wrong," said Horace. "This is the tenth time, and—"

"My giddy aunt!" laughed Tony. "You're the limit. Why the dickens don't you get a fresh book out of the box? You'll never get through that boxful if you keep on reading the same one."

"I've just discovered that I did not bring the key with me," explained Horace. "It is extremely unfortunate, but—"

"Soon find you a key," said Tony willingly. "I've got a bunch of them in my locker. We'll soon have the jolly box open!"

"Thank you so much, Tony," said Horace. "You are kindness itself, but I couldn't think of using another key. You see, my Aunt Miriam—"

"What the dickens has she got to do with it?"

"She would not approve of my using another key to open the box," explained Horace.

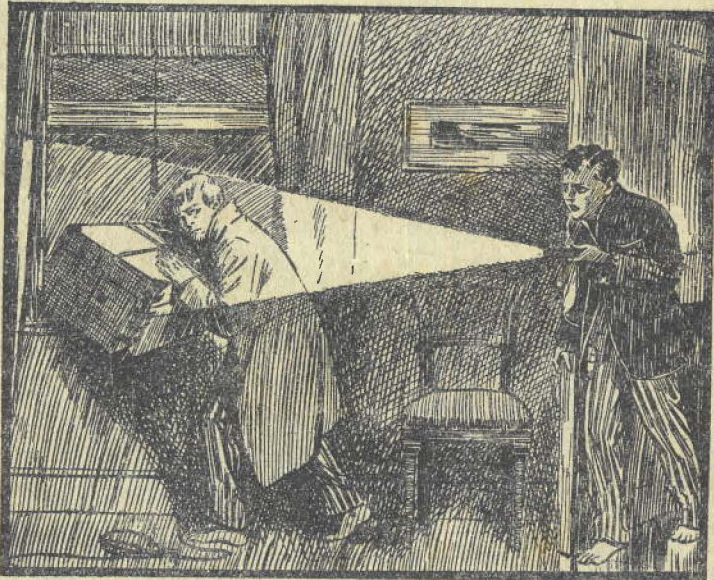
"Oh, rot! I'll get the key, and—"

"Please don't trouble," urged Horace. "You are a nice boy to offer, but it is impossible. I have written to auntie for the key, and I expect to receive it by my post now. Then I shall be able to open my box, and show you all my beautiful books."

"Anything you like," said Tony irritably. "You're the funniest kid I've ever met. But I suppose you can't help it. What about tea, Teddy?"

"I'm pretty peckish," said Teddy. "We'd better see about laying the table."

"Good biz!"



There, before the open window, stood Horace, the simpleton, and on the window-sill was the heavy box which was supposed to contain the new fellow's books.

The table was laid for tea, and the chums were half-way through the meal when the door of the study was suddenly opened, and in walked Fatty Green.

Fatty looked at the fare on the table, and sniffed.

"Nothing doing, Fatty," said Tony at once, knowing that Fatty was in quest of grub. "It's war-time, and we're on short rations."

"He, he, he!" giggled Fatty. "You can't kid me. I know you fellows. You hoard grub as much as anybody."

"Don't talk piffle!"

"It ain't piffle," snorted Fatty. "I bet you wouldn't like me to search this room!"

"Shouldn't object in the least, Fatty," said Teddy. "You're welcome to every bit of grub you can find in this study, bar that which is on the table."

"Oh, good!" said Fatty hopefully, and he started on his search.

The fat junior peered into the cupboard, but he drew blank.

He turned his attention to the corners of the room, then he made a close inspection of the bookcase, but still the result was the same.

At length Fatty's gaze fell on Horace's box, and his eyes twinkled.

He tried the lid, but it would not open.

"I'll trouble you for the key of this box, Dore," he said commandingly.

"Sorry," said Teddy, with a grin. "The box don't belong to me. It's Horace's property, and Horace has left the key at home."

"He, he, he!" giggled Fatty, feeling that at last he was on the track. "You can't pull the wool over my eyes. This box contains grub, and I'm going to have a share of it."

"Don't be such a crass idiot, Fatty," said Teddy. "They're books of Horace's in there."

"Bunkum!" snapped Fatty. "My name may be Green, but I'm not so green as you think I am. Come on, hand over that blessed key!"

"Can't be did!"

"I'll bust the lock!" declared Fatty resolutely, picking up the poker from the grate.

"You'll do nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Teddy, rising from his chair. "You'll put that poker back where you found it, and you'll clear out of this study, you young porpoise!"

Bang! Bang!

Down came the poker on the box, twice in quick succession, but the next moment, Teddy Dore took a firm grip on the fat junior, and hurled him out of the study.

Teddy closed and locked the door, and took his seat at the table once again.

"Thank you so much, my dear Dore," said Horace. "It was indeed most kind of you to prevent that fat boy from damaging my dear auntie's box."

"Don't mench," said Teddy.

At that moment there came a tap at the door.

"Surely it is not that wretched fat boy again?" asked Horace nervously.

Teddy stepped to the door, and, turning the key, pulled it open.

The figure of the school page stood in the doorway, holding a registered letter in his hand.

"Registered letter for Master Horace Jones," he said.

Horace was up from the table in a twinkling, and snatched at the envelope eagerly.

"Sign, please," said the page, handing a form to Horace.

Horace signed, and, slipping the letter into his pocket, he sat down at the table once again.

"Aren't you going to read the giddy letter?" asked Tony, in surprise.

"Not now," replied Horace, sipping a cup of tea. "I will read it presently. It is from my Auntie Miriam, and I always like to read her letters when I'm alone."

"Oh, all right," said Tony, and the subject was dropped.

Directly tea was over, and the table cleared, the three chums wended their way to the Common-room, where a meeting of the Burlington Dramatic Society was to be held.

Horace remained in the study, and after a while he drew the registered letter from his pocket, and commenced to read the note that it contained.

Quietly he made his way to his study, but as he entered the Fourth-Form passage he could plainly hear the sound of somebody moving in one of the studies.

He crept along on tiptoe, and gradually the sounds became more audible.

"What could they be?" he wondered.

Had another junior left the dormitory, or—

Teddy's further surmises were cut abruptly short, as he discovered that the sounds emanated from his own study.

He moved towards the door of Study No. 2, and, pushing open the door, he shone his torchlight into the room.

The sight that met his eyes caused him to stagger backwards, dumbfounded.

There, before the open window, stood Horace, the simpleton, and on the window-sill was the heavy box which was supposed to contain the new fellow's books.

Attached to the box was a strong rope, and Horace was preparing to lower the box to the ground.

"What the dickens—!" began Teddy, but the next instant he was sent flying by a deftly-aimed book.

Teddy had caught sight of the malevolent expression on the new fellow's face, and to say that he was astounded is to put it mildly.

He recovered himself quickly, and shone his torchlight once again towards the window.

The box had disappeared from view, and Horace was lowering it to the quad below.

"Horace!" muttered Teddy. "What-ever are you playing at?"

"Confound you!" exclaimed Horace, giving Teddy an evil glare. "Shut up, or—"

Horace was preparing to strike at Teddy with the poker, but next instant the latter had flung himself on the new boy and borne him to the floor.

Teddy really believed that Horace was mad, and for his own safety's sake he thought it best to hold the fellow down, and prevent him from committing violence.

The effect of Teddy's act was to compel Horace to release his hold of the rope. Next moment there was a deep thud from the quad below, and a low groan.

"Hang you!" exclaimed Horace, struggling hard. "Let me go, or, by thunder, I'll—"

"Help, help!" shouted Teddy.

"Let me go!"

"Help!"

Within a minute there was a sound of scuffling footsteps in the passage outside, and several Fourth-Formers and Mr. Wainwright, the Fourth-Form master, rushed into the study.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Wainwright. "What—what—"

"Lend a hand, sir," said Teddy. "Jones has gone mad—I'm sure he's mad. I came down here for some toothache mixture, and I—I found him lowering his box of books through the window. He tried to hit me with the poker, and—"

"Oh, dear, I'm sure he's mad!"

"Dear me!" muttered Mr. Wainwright, nonplussed. He took a firm grip on Horace. "Quiet, my dear boy!" he said. "You're quite safe in my charge. Hark! What is that?"

The sound of a deep groan came from the quad below.

"Sounds as though somebody's hurt down below," remarked Teddy. "Come on, Tony; let's go and investigate!"

The two chums darted off, and five minutes later they returned, carrying between them the unconscious form of a man.

They laid the man on the couch in the study. There was a bad wound at the side of his head, caused, no doubt, by the heavy box in its fall.

"It's no good, Horace," mumbled the injured man, "we're done; we're caught at last!"

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. Wainwright. "This is very extraordinary. Dore, please be good enough to fetch Mr. Miller and Mr. Hirst. You other boys had better return to your dormitory."

It was well past one o'clock when Teddy entered the dormitory, and then he was bombarded with questions.

"It's the biggest mystery I've ever struck," explained Teddy. "That chap Horace is not such a fool as he looks. He's the son of a blessed crackman."

"Oh, rot!" growled Tony.

"It's true, old son," said Teddy. "That box of his didn't hold books at all, but a lot of silver plate. His father—that chap we brought in from the quad—is a giddy crackman. He committed a big robbery, and, finding that the police were on his track, he hit upon the idea of sending his son Horace to the school, until things cooled down a bit."

"Pshaw!"

"His father came to the school tonight with the intention of taking the box away with him," went on Teddy. "Thank goodness, though, they're done in the eye, and the stuff is now locked up in the Head's safe. Wainwright's sent to the police to come and take Horace and his gunvor."

"Gammon!" said some of the juniors.

"Well, you wait until the morning," said Teddy.

And, true enough, next morning Teddy's statements were verified. Far from being the simpleton they thought he was, Horace was the scoundrelly son of a crackman; but, thanks to Teddy Dore, their latest scheme was neatly nipped in the bud, and the only reward they received were long terms of imprisonment in one of His Majesty's prisons.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY!

"IN A BULLY'S POWER!"

By JONES MINOR.

DON'T MISS IT!

THE BOYS OF THE "BOMBAY CASTLE"

A Magnificent New Serial, dealing with the
School Afloat, and introducing Cy Sprague,
Lal Tata, Chip, and Captain Handyman.

By DUNCAN STORM.

THE LEADING CHARACTERS IN THIS AMAZING STORY ARE:

CAPTAIN HANDYMAN, who is commander of the Bombay Castle.
CY SPRAGUE, the famous American detective.
LAL TATA, a fat, genial Hindu, who is a master on board the Bombay Castle.
TOM and **FRED MORTON**, **CHIP** **PRODGER**, **DICK DORRINGTON**, **PONGO WALKER**, and the **SKELETON**, high-spirited juniors, who belong to Dormitory No. 3 of the floating school.
BULLY FLASHMAN and **STOAT**, two bullying juniors, in Dormitory No. 1.

In last week's instalment the boys of Dormitory No. 3 went on shore at Naples in charge of Lal Tata and Mr. Parkins. At night Chip and one or two others journeyed to Vesuvius, and returned to the camp, to find Lal and Mr. Parkins bound hand and foot in their bed-room.

(Read on from here.)

An Unsuccessful Chase.

Chip stood for a moment agast at the sight which met his eyes in the small room—half bed-room, half kitchen—in which Lal Tata and Mr. Parkins had been berthed for the night.

Lal, looking like a huge striped snail in his gaudy pyjamas, was crawling round the tiled floor, trying to rub off the rush-bottomed chair to which he was lashed.

Mr. Parkins, lashed in a spreadeagle to the foot of his old-fashioned bedstead, with a pillowcase over his head, presented a grim and dreadful figure.

Both were making horrible mumbling noises through their gags.

Lal had managed to get half his gag out of his mouth. It was his own rubber sponge.

"Yom-yom-myow!" said Lal. "Quick, Chips!"

Chip, drawing his penknife, cut the cloth that held the gag, and pulled an extraordinary big sponge out of Lal's mouth.

Then he removed the pillowcase from Mr. Parkins' head and uncorked him.

Mr. Parkins was also gagged with a sponge—a bath sponge.

As soon as Lal was released from the cramping chair he sat on the tiled floor and groaned aloud.

"Those two scoundrels!" he exclaimed, panting. "They have stolen our clothing! They have appropriated our clobbers, and they have done guys!"

Mr. Parkins was hanging to his bed, looking white and faint.

"Most extraordinary affair!" was all he could gasp.

Chip rummaged in a portmanteau which the miscreants had rifled, and turned out a small flask, which Mr. Parkins carried in case of emergency.

It contained brandy, and Chip pressed it to Mr. Parkins' lips.

Mr. Parkins took a sip or two, and revived.

"What does it all mean?" demanded Chip.

"Those two sandbag men!" gasped Lal. "They entered and threatened us with pig-stick knives when we were asleep. They placed the points of their cutlery to our breastbones and gagged us. Then they bound us with bonds, smote us great kicks, and did bunks, disguised in our clothes!"

"One fellow had blacked-ahem!—browed his face to represent my esteemed colleague!" stammered Mr. Parkins. "The other rascal assumed my clothes!"

This explained it all.

The two figures the boys had seen travelling hastily down the road from the farm were their two prisoners, who, forcing their way out of the outhouse, in which they had been confined, had broken into the master's bed-room.

"But we took their knives away from them!" exclaimed Chip.

Lal looked almost sorrowfully at Chip. It was plain to him that both he and Chip were forgetting the lessons they had learned together in the Indian Secret Service.

"I should like to kick myself for exceedingly foolish person!" said Lal. "We should have made search on those bad men for secondary armaments. They had other knives hidden in their boots—real pebs off the beach! There was more under their hats than hairs. They know how many beans make six. We are lucky to have made escapes with our lives!"

Mr. Parkins nodded.

will take a small tonic of brandy to accelerate heart's actions. I feel very prostrate after having bath-sponge thrust into my mouths!"

"They can't have gone far, sir!" exclaimed Chip. "Let's go after them. They have taken all your clothes. What are you going to do without clothes?"

"Do not follow them!" urged Lal. "They are exceedingly perilsome fellows!"

But Chip was full of the idea of a man hunt in the night.

He bolted from the door, and, followed by his chums, rushed to the little outhouse in which the two prisoners had been confined.

The lock on the door had been cut right out, and the mystery of the darkened face of the man who had escaped in Lal's turban and clothes was explained.

The rascals had steeped the husks of the walnuts which the boys had given them in water, and had made a dark stain of walnut-juice.

A bit of rag stained with this mixture showed how one had stained his face down to the colour of Lal's dark countenance.

"Crumbs!" exclaimed Chip. "They are a fair pair of pebs, the real glassy alley, that's what they are! But hurry up, you chaps, or we'll miss the bus. To horse! To horse!"

The boys dashed into the camp.

"Ahoy!" yelled Chip, at the top of his voice. "Turn out, you sleepin' beauties! Show a leg!"

There was a buzz in the tents.

Towled heads were thrust out at the tent flaps.

"What's up?"

"What's all the row?"

"Where's the fire?"

Drowsy voices sounded from all over the camp.

"Buck up, you chaps!" cried Chip. "Bloodstained Harry and the Naples nut have got out of their hutch, an' stuck up Mr. Parkins an' Mr. Lal Tata for their clothes! They are off down the road, and we are going to recapture them!"

He ran towards the lines of tethered mules and donkeys, and started to cast off their halters from the long tethering-rope, which ran in between the trees.

Followed by Dick and Tom and the rest of the Glory Hole fellows, Chip leaped on the mule he had selected without waiting to saddle it.

The mule, resenting this rude awakening from his slumbers, gathered his heels together and lashed out with a mighty kick against the wall of a wooden shed, in which their muleteers and donkey-drivers had taken up their quarters for the night.

Ponk! Smash! Bang!

A dismal howl arose from the interior of the light shed, or chicken-house, as the sides flew into splinters, and the structure collapsed, like a pack of cards, under the mule's vicious kicks.

Then all of a sudden the mule changed his mind, and shot off like an arrow from a bow, doing his best to scrape Chip from his back.

He dashed through a small moonlit orchard of lemon-trees.

Chip clung tight to him as the branches whipped and swung and clobbered him with their juicy fruit, and showered their sweet-smelling blossoms on him.

The mule was the boss mule, and every other mule in the squad was trained to follow the jangling iron bell that was hung around his neck.

So, as soon as the rest of the mules heard the jangle of the bell there was a general stampede in chase of their leader.

Boys half-dressed, boys in pyjamas, boys barefoot, and boys with one sock, clung to the backs of the stampeding animals as they bolted through the lemon orchard.

They all managed to stick on, and soon the main body was thundering down the dusty road, most of the riders hardly knowing yet what had happened.

A white cloud of dust rolled up in the moonlight as the mules thundered along, snapping and kicking.

Soon they closed up on Chip, who with his heels kicked his mule, whom he called Tin Ribs, to make him travel.

A yell went up from the boys when, turning a bend in the dusty cartway, they saw, jogging along in the moonlight ahead of them, two figures which closely resembled Lal Tata and Mr. Parkins.

"Whack it up, boys!" yelled Chip. "There are the crooks! Those are the chaps who've took Parky's duds!"

There was a stiff slope in the road here, which followed one of the long-reaching spurs of Mount Vesuvius, and down this the mules thundered, like a cowboy chase in a Western movie film.

The miscreants heard them coming.

They saw the head of the shouting, cheering column, with the bobbing white figures.

They turned hastily from the road, and bolted across a wide field of beetroot.

"There they go!" yelled Dick. "Off the road, boys! It's us for the open country!"

The two figures were running hard now, making straight across a hundred-acre field of sugar-beet.

It was easier to shout about getting off the road than to accomplish this feat, for the hedges that enclosed the field were of thick, prickly cactus.

At last Chip found a thin patch, and drove Tin Ribs at it.

He got a jab in the leg from a spike of cactus, whilst Tin Ribs squealed and kicked as a point of the bitter aloes jabbed him in the stomach.

The rest of the mules followed like a lot of sheep as Tin Ribs, squealing and kicking, raced across the beet-field, Chip sticking to him, breathless and helpless as a limpet.

It was Tin Ribs who was doing the chasing now.

With his bell jangling like a muffin-bell, he tore on after the running miscreants.

"We've got 'em now, boys!" shouted Chip, as the three swept on across the beet-field close behind the two running figures.

It was wonderful how closely the two rascals resembled Mr. Parkins and Lal in that borrowed rig, though Mr. Parkins and Lal would never have been able to streak across that rough beet-field at such a scamper.

But all of a sudden the two figures disappeared as though they had been mysteriously swallowed up by the earth.

"Now, where on earth have they—?"

The words were cut short in Chip's mouth.

Tin Ribs had come suddenly to a full stop, with his ungainly legs stretched out like the legs of a camp-stool.

the plain in a gully twenty feet wide and a hundred feet deep.

This huge volcanic split in the earth was barely visible in the field.

Its sides were as straight as the wall of a house, and it extended right and left for miles.

Chip could not help giving a bit of a shudder as he peered down into the dark crevasse.

If Tin Ribs had carried on for another second the three of them would have been hurled down and smashed on the rough lava a hundred feet below.

"Crumbs!" he exclaimed. "Old Tin Ribs put on the brakes just in time!"

Then he turned to Tin Ribs, who, with a reproachful eye, was looking at him as he sat on the ground.

"Tin Ribs, my Arab steed," said Chip, "I beg your pardon. I take it all back. You are not a tricky old bounder, but a highly sagacious animal, and I'm proud to know you. Here! Help yourself to a sugar-beet. There's millions of 'em, and nobody will miss one or two. You'll find 'em all milky, and we'll change the bad 'uns!"

Tin Ribs seemed to understand, for he stood there in the moonlight and cropped at the juicy beets.

Then Chip, lying on his stomach at the edge of the precipice, stared down into the chasm.

"Now, where have those two Ico Creamos gone to?" he muttered. "I'll bet they haven't broken their necks down there!"

He soon got his answer.

Down in the black depths of the cavern there sounded a mocking laugh, and he could hear the scuffling of feet in the darkness over the rough stones.

"Good-bye, you Inglis boys!" called a mocking voice from the darkness. "You t'ink yourselves too 'ot stuff. But you are not so 'ot as Antonio Mafizzi and Glulo Malaspara. You take-a care-a, or you get-a knife-a in your back-a before you get out-a Naples!"

Chip was nonplussed.

The two desperadoes had managed to climb down the wall of the gorge, and were now out of reach.

"Inshee! Begone! Fade away, you banana-faced coons!" he cried. "Hump yourselves, or you'll be too late to pinch the mornin' milk!"

This fine sarcasm was lost on the two desperadoes, who went scuffling away across country in the depths of the crevasse.

Then the boys slowly and stiffly climbed on to their mules, and gathered their scattered followers.

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Pongo's Peril.

The sun was well up when they rolled out of their tents in the morning.

"Wow!" exclaimed Dick, rubbing his eyes. "I feel like a kippered herring. My neck is full of sand. What are we going to do about a wash?"

Chip ran his fingers through his hair, which was stiff with the grey dust of the road, churned up during their mad chase of the night before.

"Bartolemo! Isidoro! Roderigo! Beppo!" he yelled.

Half a dozen of the muleteers and dishwashers, with whom Chip was a great favourite, came rushing up.

"What you wanta, Mista Chips?" demanded Bartolemo.

"Acqua, old sport—acqua—water!"

"Drinkee water?" asked Bartolemo.

"No washee water!" replied Chip. "Wanta washee!"

Bartolemo looked surprised. He could not understand this great desire for washing-water.

But he ran off to the well behind the farm, and soon returned with half a pint of water carefully balanced in a small bowl.

"Ecco, signor!" he said. "Be'old your baths!"

Chip squinted into the bowl as he stripped off his pyjamas.

"I didn't ask for a liqueur of water, Bart," he said. "We want to wash!"

"More watta?" asked Bartolemo, in wonderment.

"Gallons more!" replied Chip. "Bring it in pails! We want to wash—all over!"

"Corpo di Bacco!" exclaimed Bartolemo, rolling his eyes in horror. "The morning wind is cold. The signori will die of infirmity of the chest. It is bad for the lungs to wash all over. Only once a year do I wash all over!"

Chip grinned.

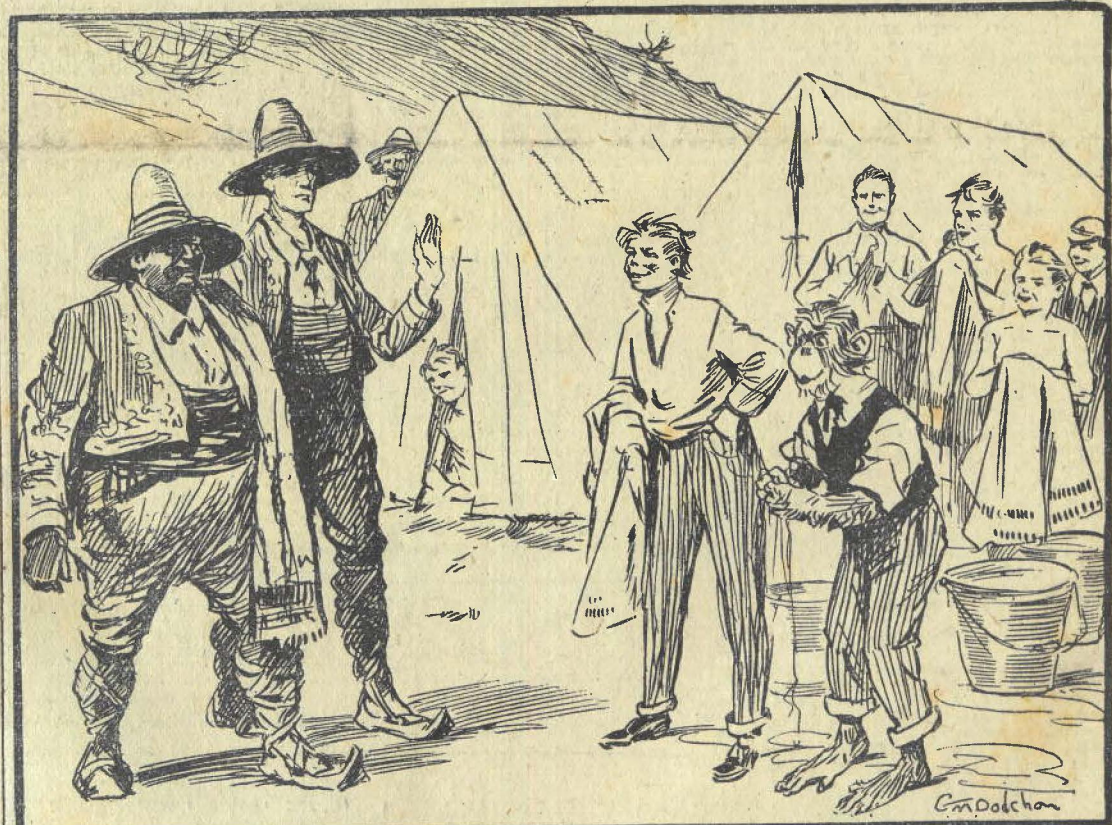
"You look like it, my old peb!" he answered. "But we wash every day in our school. Tell your cobbors to look lively with the pails. We want two pails each!"

Bartolemo and his pals lifted their hands in horror.

They firmly believed that Chip and his chums were doing their best to commit suicide.

They had never seen such washing in their lives, and they stood round murmuring and wondering as the boys soaped one another from head to foot, and scrubbed and lathered till they were like white figures of soapsuds.

Then, when pail after pail of water was dashed over them, the admiration of the muleteers knew no bounds.



There stood Lal Tata and Mr. Parkins, dressed up in little short jackets, braided in fancy designs up to the elbows, and wearing tall steeple-crowned hats, decked gaily with white, red, and green ribands.

Chip went on.

Sliding over Tin Ribs' coffin-shaped head, he rolled head-over-heels, and came to a rest, standing on his head, with a sugar-beet in his neck, and all the stars of the firmament dancing before his eyes.

The other mules followed their leader's example, and came to a sudden stop, with all the brakes on, sliding along, kicking and squealing, in a shower of beets and dust.

Tom and Dick and Pongo took headers amongst the beets exactly as Chip had done, and for a moment, winded and stunned, lay where they had fallen.

Then Chip sat up, and shook his fist at Tin Ribs.

"You tricky old bounder!" he exclaimed. "You swivel-eyed, four-post bedstead! You did that on purpose!"

"Good job for us that he did!" exclaimed Dick, pulling himself together. "Look where you are sitting!"

Chip turned round, and gave a start, for he was sitting with his back within a few feet of a huge crevasse that split

Then they rode slowly back to the farm, where they found Mr. Parkins, dressed in a bath-robe, and Lal, attired in a kilt of blankets, anxiously awaiting them.

"We lost 'em, sir!" said Chip, in crest-fallen tones. And he related the events of the chase and the escape.

"I am heartily glad!" exclaimed Mr. Parkins. "Although your action—ahem!—reflects the greatest credit on your—ahem!—initiative and courage, those were two very desperate ruffians, and I am glad that you did not come up with them. They might have shown fight like cornered rats."

"Now, boys," added Mr. Parkins, "the night is already far advanced, and the padron of this farm has kindly consented to lend some clothes to Mr. Lal Tata and myself to-morrow morning. So I think we had better retire to our slumbers."

The boys were not sorry to take this advice. They slipped from their lathering mules, and stole to their tents, and soon the camp was once more wrapped in slumber.

"Behold the English!" they exclaimed. "Verily they are brave and hardy!"

And Bartolemo became so envious of this great washing, that he dipped the corner of his neckcloth in a teacupful of water, and gave his neck a bath.

Then Cecil, the orang-utang, was brought forth from the nest of hay in a ruined stable, where he had spent the night, and the boys combed him and gave him soap and water, with which he washed his hands just like a human being.

This greatly excited the muleteers again.

"Monk-a plenty wash-a!" exclaimed the admiring Bartolemo.

"You bet!" replied Pongo, who was superintending Cecil's toilet. "Old Cecil don't know he's alive of a morning till he's had his bath!"

Then Pongo nearly dropped flat, for out of the house stepped Mr. Parkins and Lal Tata.

The farmer had lent them his best clothes and a suit which belonged to his brother.

They were Italian peasant clothes.



THE BOYS OF THE "BOMBAY CASTLE"

(Continued from the previous page.)

A titter went round the boys which could not be restrained. It deepened into a giggle, then burst into a mighty roar of laughter.

For there stood Lal and Mr. Parkins, dressed up in little short jackets braided in fancy designs up to the elbows, and wearing tall, steeple-crowned hats decked gaily with white, red, and green ribbons. Their legs were wrapped up in intricate bandagings, a sort of Italian puttees, and they looked as much like a couple of brigands as was possible.

"They only want Cecil hoppin' round on top of a barrel-organ to finish the picture!" muttered Pongo. "Cecil in a red flannel skirt, with a tin round his neck to catch the pennies!"

But Mr. Parkins subdued the storm of laughter with a stern glance.

"I grieve, boys," he said, "that you should—ahem!—discover any material for these rude guffaws in the clothing which our worthy host has lent us, to replace that which was stolen from us by those two wicked fellows who escaped in the night. Now, let us hurry with breakfast, for the guides tell me that we may now approach the summit of Vesuvius in safety, though there has been a small eruption in the night."

"Small eruption!" whispered Dick to his chums. "Parky wouldn't call it a small eruption if he'd seen that chunk of hot rock that buzzed over our heads. But not a word!"

Soon the coffee was steaming on the fires, and the air was pervaded by a delightful smell of frizzling bacon.

Breakfast was hurried over, and soon the whole cavalcade was toiling up the beaten track which the boys had missed on their secret excursion the night before.

Vesuvius was quiet enough when they had climbed to the crater, which did not appear so impressive by daylight to those daring adventurers, who had taken their private view of it the night before. They stood at the brink of the awful cavernous abyss, whilst Mr. Parkins gave them a small lecture on the habits, manners, and customs of volcanoes in general, and of the volcano of Vesuvius in particular.

Mr. Parkins was only half-way through his lecture when Cecil started to stand first on one foot and then on the other, and finally, after a prolonged whimpering, burst into a dismal howl, which drowned the lecturer's voice.

"Walker!" exclaimed Mr. Parkins, fixing Pongo with an angry eye. "You are responsible for bringing that absurd animal with our excursion. Can't you keep him quiet? How am I to convey instruction and erudition whilst I am disturbed by these Simian caterwaulings? Present the unfortunate animal with a banana. Perhaps he is hungry."

But Pongo had soon found out the cause of Cecil's trouble.

"He's not hungry, sir," he replied. "And Skeleton has eaten all the bananas in the nosebag. It's the hot rocks that are burning his feet!"

At the same moment everybody in the group began to shift about, and there was a strong smell of burning leather in the air.

"Cecil can't help crying, sir," said Pongo, with a grin. "He's got hot feet!" He and Dick lifted Cecil off the ground. Sure enough, the spot they were standing on was glowing dull red under the surface.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Parkins. "Let us move! Our boots are burning to cinders!"

Greatly to the relief of everyone, this put an end to the lecture.

The boys had seen enough of Vesuvius, and, with a cheerful yell, they slid down the huge slope of ashes to the spot where their mules were awaiting them, five hundred feet below.

Mr. Parkins and Lal followed their example in glissading down the slope. But they were not so active or so sure-footed as their pupils.

About half-way down the slope Mr. Parkins slipped up, and, grabbing at Lal to save himself, brought him down as well.

Lal let loose a yell like a foghorn, and down the mountain the two came, rolling together in a whirl of grey dust, a rush of rubble, and flying bandaged legs and steeple-crowned hats.

The boys estimated that a rock slide of about twenty tons of pumice and lava rubbish came with them, for when they reached the bottom of the slope, they were sitting up to their necks in ashes, and Mr. Parkins was nursing the beginnings of a black eye, which he had sustained from an unhappy kick from Lal's red-hot boot.

"All right," groaned Lal. "This volcanoes has put lids on me. I am killed! My liver is turned to water, and my mouth is full of ashes. Parkins, my poor old chaps, are you hurt seriously?"

"My dear Mr. Lal Tata!" said Mr. Parkins politely, as the boys dug him out of the debris of the rockslide. "It was my fault entirely. 'Facilis descensus Averni,' as our old friend Horace says! Walker," continued Mr. Parkins, with a rather wan smile, "will you kindly construe me 'Facilis descensus Averni!'"

Pongo looked up from Cecil's singed feet, which he was wrapping in bandages torn from handkerchiefs and soaked in olive oil.

"I protest, Captain Handyman!" he said, standing up in the bows of the lifeboat and taking off his gay, steeple-crowned hat that he might be recognised. "I protest, sir, against being described as a hooligan! I—"

Mr. Parkins' speech was cut off suddenly.

It was just at this moment that the engineer in the towing-launch set his engines ahead, with the purpose of bringing the first of the string of lifeboats alongside the companion-ladder.

The tow-rope tightened with a jerk.

Mr. Parkins swayed forward and swayed back under the jerk, and, with a sudden dive, fell into the sea.

A gasp of horror went up from the boys.

It so happened that, attached to Mr. Parkins' back, was a big knapsack, which he had filled with geological specimens, and with samples of building materials and stones from the ruined city of Pompeii.

Altogether there was a good half-hundredweight of these scientific specimens attached as firmly to his back as a diver's sinker.

So, instead of coming to the surface after his tumble into the water, he sank slowly down, down, down.

The boys could see him looking up through the water, trying in vain to swim to the surface.

"Come on, you chaps!" yelled Dick Dorrington. "He's sinking! The stones are pulling him down."

But Mr. Parkins was already beyond their reach, sinking slowly to the bottom of the Bay of Naples.

The low freeboard and the bobbling movement of the lifeboat, gave them no take-off for so deep a dive as one by one they plunged overboard.

But—whizz! A little, white-clad figure whistled down through the air from the great height of the bridge of the Bombay Castle.

Captain Handyman had seen the master's plight, and had leaped from the rail forty feet above in a magnificent dive.

He plunged with hardly a ripple.

The crowd on the ship, peering down on the blue water, saw the white figure curve far beneath the surface, and grab the sinking form of the master.

Even then it was a tussle for Captain Handyman to lift Mr. Parkins and his millstone weight of geological specimens.

He came swimming slowly up. Then the weight of the intellectual Mr. Parkins seemed to drag him down again.

Perhaps they would never have reached the surface, for the plucky little captain showed no signs of letting Mr. Parkins go.

That was Captain Handyman all over.

He would sooner have drowned with Mr. Parkins than let go once he had taken hold.

But into the tumble of boats around the ship came a shabby little row-boat with four merry-eyed, dirty-looking boys in it.

As soon as they saw the trouble they did not hesitate.

These were the professional divers of Naples, who make their living by diving for shillings and sixpences thrown overboard from the mailboats calling in at the port.

They were quite capable of diving down under the keel of the Bombay Castle thirty feet below.

They made no show of diving.

Scenting a job that was far better than diving for shillings, they slipped out of their boat, and swam down to the two struggling figures, closing round them like four otters.

The extra lift they brought to bear soon fetched both the swimmers to the surface and Mr. Parkins, with his load of rocks, was grabbed by twenty eager hands, and hauled into the lifeboat, where he squinted and spouted water like a fountain.

The boys cheered Captain Handyman as he climbed into the boat, shaking himself like a Newfoundland dog.

"That was a close call, boys!" said the captain, with a quiet smile. "I thought that me and Mr. Parkins and his museum were going to find a berth on the floor of the bay. But a miss is as good as a mile. Help him up to his cabin when we get alongside the ladder, and take that load of rocks off him, so as he can get his wind back."

The boys did as they were bidden.

Mr. Parkins was helped to his cabin, and the four Italian boys, who had assisted in his rescue, were liberally rewarded.

It was not till after the midday meal that a boatman, pulling alongside the ship, brought a long envelope addressed to Signor Pongolo Walker.

Chip collared it at the gangway, and raced along with it to his pal, who was sitting in the Glory Hole, counting on his chances of getting away on the afternoon trip to Capri.

"It's all right, Pongo!" cried Chip. "That Italian girl has typed your lines like a good 'un. Here they are, all ready. Go and show them up to Parky, and hurry up, or we'll lose the launch."

Pongo tore the envelope open. Then his jaw fell.

The Italian lady typist had typed five hundred lines, but, not being familiar with Latin, and thinking that the young English gentleman must have made some mistake in ordering this queer typing job, she had consulted some of her friends in the port, who had given her the English translation according to the best of their ability.

So to Pongo's horrified eyes the lines appeared neatly typed down long sheets.

"Jolly easy to go to blazes."

"Jolly easy to go to blazes."

"Jolly easy to go to blazes."

"Crums!" groaned Pongo. "That's put the polished cap on it. I'm scratched for Capri, and I'd have given anything to see that wonderful Blue Grotto. Go on, Chip. Don't wait for me! I can't show this impot up or Parky will think it cheek, and give me a million more lines to do!"

But just as this moment a steward came bustling into the Glory Hole.

"Mr. Parkins wants to see you in his cabin, Master Pongo!" he said. "I've been looking for you everywhere!"

Pongo hurried off to Mr. Parkins' cabin, where he found that worthy master reclining in his bunk.

"Ah, Walker!" said Mr. Parkins wearily. "I think I awarded you an imposition of five hundred lines on Vesuvius this morning. 'Facilis descensus Averni,' or 'It is easy to descend to the infernal regions.'"

"Yes, sir," replied Pongo dismally.

"I understand that you took part in a very gallant attempt to save me when I so nearly found a watery grave in the Bay, before lunch!" resumed Mr. Parkins.

"Yes, sir," replied Pongo modestly.

"You have purged your offence," said Mr. Parkins, with his grim smile. "I find that it is equally easy for a 'silly mug' as you express it, to descend into the submarine depths. I understand you want to join the launch party for Capri. Be off with you!"

"Thank you, sir," replied Pongo eagerly, and was off like a shot rabbit.

He was just in time to catch the last lifeboat as it slid off from the gangway, leaping in with the faithful Chip amongst the Glory Hole fellows, who received him with open arms.

"Old Parkey's let me off the impot!" exclaimed Pongo. "He's not half a bad old sort."

And the Glory Hole fellows lifted up their voices, and cheered Parky as they swept past the porthole of his cabin, the lifeboats towing rapidly behind the

launch as she headed out across the blue Bay of Naples on the twenty-mile run to the Island of Capri.

In a couple of hours they reached the island, and, entering the small native boats in the harbour, were rowed along to the entrance of the wonderful Blue Grotto, one of the sights of the world.

They found the entrance to the cave four feet high at the foot of a lofty cliff, an entrance inaccessible even for a small boat at high tide.

It was a tight fit to thrust the creaking shell boats in at this narrow entrance, and the boys had to lie on their backs, and push with their feet upon the rocky roof of the entrance.

Once inside, a cry of admiration went up from them, for they found themselves in an arched cavern one hundred and sixty feet long, one hundred and twenty wide, and about seventy high.

How deep this wonderful grotto is no one knows. It goes straight away down to the floor of the sea.

But the wonder of the place was the colour of this subterranean lake.

"Crums!" exclaimed Pongo Walker, in an awed whisper. "This is the bluest thing I have ever seen. There's nothing in the chemists' shops to come near it!"

Then a happy thought seized Chip.

"Let's have a swim in it!" he said.

All hands in the little crowd of boats started to strip.

The Capri Islanders, who were in charge of the boats, shook their heads and muttered something which the boys could not understand.

They had a jargon of their own, and none of the boys had any Italian to match it.

"Never mind what they say!" said Dick. "I feel just like a cooler! I expect there's some silly old regulation that bathing is forbidden in here. But we can pretend we don't understand."

He kicked off his trousers, and plunged overboard.

The boys gave a cry of admiration as they saw Dick dive.

He looked for all the world like some knightly crusader clad from head to foot in silver armour.

One by one the boys dived in, the boatmen jabbering, and making gestures to them to come out quickly.

But they paid little heed to these wild islanders.

Perhaps they would not have risked it had they known that in the last few weeks a pair of big sharks, one of which was probably a sick shark, had been cruising round about that side of the Island of Capri.

This was what the worried natives were trying to explain to them.

But the Italian is not born yet who can hold down a crowd of wildly-excited, holiday-making British schoolboys.

Like a school of gleaming dolphins they swam about in the blue water, shouting and seuffing.

After the hot sunshine outside, the cave was cool, not to say cold, and it was not long before all of them had had enough of it, save Pongo Walker, who was floundering about, trying to wash the last of the Vesuvius dust out of his close-curling hair.

Pongo looked like a great, shining fish as he swam and gambolled round the cave.

"Come on out, Pongo!" shouted Chip, his voice echoing hollow in the vault of the cavern. "Come on out! These chaps are getting impatient, and we've got to get out of the cave before the tide rises."

Pongo turned and swam towards the boat.

"It's a faff treat in here!" he called, spouting the sea-water out of his mouth. "I could stay in here for a—"

Pongo said no more.

Chip, who had been drying himself on his shirt, gave a sudden call of warning.

His quick eye had caught the gleam of a huge moving shape deep under the water on the far side of the cavern, a skulking, evil shape that seemed outlined in blue fire.

He realised at once that this was a shark of the largest kind that frequents the Mediterranean.

The boatmen had not been wrong in their endeavours to stop the boys going into that tempting blue water.

This huge deep-sea brute had sought the calm, still waters of the cavern as a resting-place.

Startled by the splashing of the crowd of boys, it had dived deep into the recesses of the cavern, for there is no more cowardly brute in the seas than the shark.

But now that the water was still again, save for the swimming Pongo, the evil shape showed itself slinking swiftly along the wall of the cavern.

"Look out, Pongo!" yelled Chip. Pongo did not know what he had to look out for. But he started to swim rapidly towards the boat, whilst the boys, slipping the oars into the rough rowlocks, started to row towards him.

The Capri Islander in charge of Chip's boat gave a cry of horror.

The shark, skulking against the wall, had suddenly made up his mind to go for his prey.

There was a swift ripple of blue fire through the deep water, and the brute came on with a rush, heading straight for Pongo.

The boatman seemed paralysed with horror.

He did not move or stir a hand, but sat in the boat as though he were frozen with fear.

Chip did not hesitate for an instant. "What are you up to, Nancy Palani? Give us that knife!"

He snatched the knife from the boatman's belt, and, leaping into the bows of the boat, dived to the rescue as the great flaming shape of the brute rolled slowly over to take its prey.

(Another magnificent long instalment of this amazing serial in next Monday's issue of the BOYS' FRIEND. I should be glad if readers would write and let me know what they think of this new story.)

IN YOUR EDITOR'S DEN

Write to me whenever you are in doubt or difficulty. Tell me about yourself; let me know what you think of the BOYS' FRIEND. All readers who write to me, and enclose a stamped envelope or postcard, may be sure of receiving a prompt and kindly reply by post. All letters should be addressed: "The Editor, the BOYS' FRIEND, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4."

FOR NEXT MONDAY!

Next Monday's magnificent long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. will be entitled:

"THE ROOKWOOD MUTINEERS!"

By Owen Conquest.

In this story the juniors are still determined that Lattrey shall be expelled from Rookwood. The Head is firm in his intention to keep the junior at the school, and Jimmy Silver is resolved that he shall go.

Law and order disappear at Rookwood—the juniors defy the Head, and refuse to obey the masters' commands. There is a state of mutiny at the school; pleadings have no effect upon the resolute chums. They have made a resolve that they will obey no commands until Lattrey is turned out of Rookwood, and they are determined to go to almost any length to attain their object.

No doubt all of you are following the development of this series very eagerly. There are some splendid stories in store for all of you. A whisper in your ear—some magnificent barring-out tales are coming shortly.

Our next story, dealing with the school-days of Frank Richards, the famous author, is entitled:

"THE 'CHOW' OF CEDAR CREEK!"

By Martin Clifford.

Chow is, of course, a name given to Chinamen. Eben Hacke is very indignant when he learns that a Chinese boy is due to arrive at the school in the backwoods. Yen Chin proves to be an amusing character. He has very weird ways, and he is not as honest as he might be.

One particular act of dishonesty on his part brings down the wrath of Eben Hacke on his head. Hacke is resolved to punish the young Chow for his indiscretion, but everything does not turn out so well as Hacke expects—in fact, Yen Chin's pluck is the means of extricating Hacke from a very perilous position.

Next Monday's grand, long instalment of

"THE BOYS OF THE BOMBAY CASTLE!"

By Duncan Storm,

is even more exciting than ever. Chip and Pongo's adventure with the shark is of a very thrilling nature, and the way in which the boys scare Wiggy, the barber, will send you into roars of laughter. You will also enjoy reading about the misfortunes of Slushy, the cook, and the exciting scene at the end of the instalment will cause you to look anxiously forward to the next instalment.

The concluding item in next Monday's programme will be another splendid tale of the dormitory, entitled:

"IN A BULLY'S POWER!"

By Jones Minor.

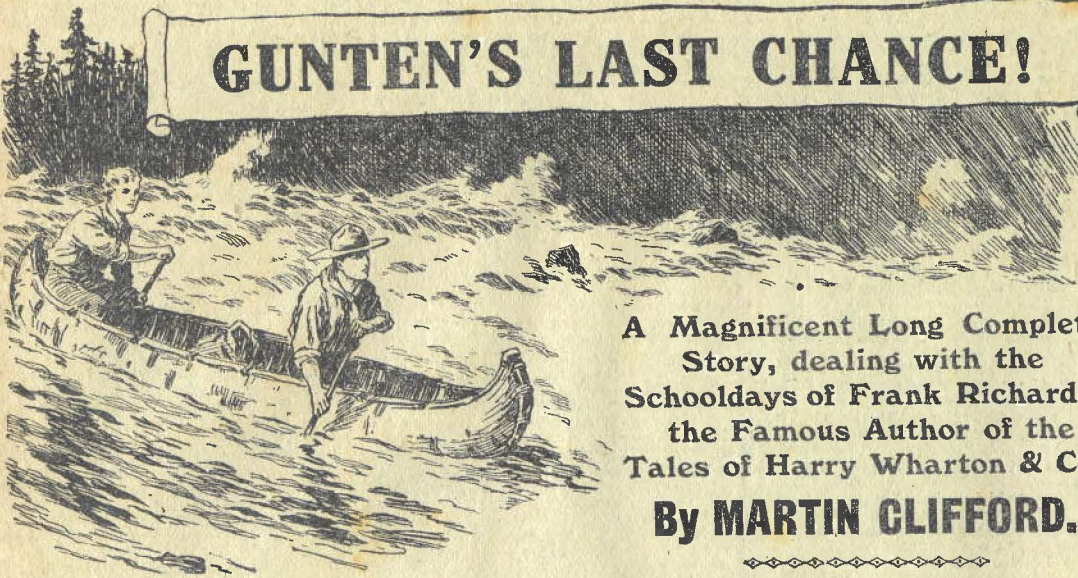
In this story you will read how a fellow in the Fourth Form at Beverley School persisted in bullying fellows younger than himself, and how three straightforward juniors resolved to put an end to the cat's-paws. You will also read how the bully obtained a hold over one of the juniors, and how for a time he was enabled to revel in his bullying. But there is a surprise at the end of this yarn, one which will prove of great interest to you.

GREAT NEWS!

In a few weeks' time there will appear on the market a story of Jimmy Silver & Co. in book form. It will be entitled "The Feud at Rookwood." Fuller particulars next Monday.

Your Editor

GUNTEN'S LAST CHANCE!



A Magnificent Long Complete Story, dealing with the Schooldays of Frank Richards, the Famous Author of the Tales of Harry Wharton & Co. By MARTIN CLIFFORD.

The 1st Chapter.

Mysterious!

"Hold on a minute, you fellows!" Frank Richards and Bob Lawless had jumped down from their ponies, at the fork in the trail where they met Vere Beaulere on the way to school.

Beaulere was waiting for them on the edge of the timber, and instead of joining them in the trail, he called to them in a subdued voice.

"Anything up?" asked Bob. "Yes; something rather queer." Beaulere's face was grave in expression, and perplexed.

Frank and Bob hitched their ponies to a tree, and joined him.

"What is it?" asked Frank. "I don't know that it's our business," said Beaulere. "But it's jolly queer. Come and see, and keep quiet."

He led the way into the timber, and his chums followed him, in considerable astonishment.

There was not too much time to waste if they were to get to Cedar Creek School in good time for morning lessons.

But they followed Beaulere without demur, taking care to move quietly in the snow that lay among the trees.

Beaulere led the way, without speaking again, a distance of a hundred yards or so into the wood.

There he halted, on the edge of an open glade, making his chums a sign to be silent, and to look.

Frank and Bob looked, with surprise dawning in their faces.

There were three individuals in the clearing, at some distance from the schoolboys, but in plain sight.

Two were men, both recognisable as tough characters who "loafed" about the saloons in Thompson town, and the third was Kern Gunten, the Swiss schoolboy of Cedar Creek.

The chums had not seen Gunten for some days.

The Swiss had been turned out of the school for his rascally conduct, and in spite of the wrath of his father, the rich storekeeper of Thompson, Miss Meadows had held firmly to her decision.

All Frank Richards & Co. knew of Gunten since that was that the Swiss was staying away from home, having had enough—or too much—of the parental cowhide.

But it was not the sight of Gunten in the timber that astonished the chums of Cedar Creek.

It was the occupation of his two companions, Black Rube and Dave Dunn.

The two roughs were engaged in painting their faces with Kootenay war-paint, evidently with the intention of making themselves up as Indians.

They wore Indian leggings and moccasins, and other articles of Redskin garb hung on the thicket near them, ready to put on.

Gunten was looking on at the peculiar transformation of his two associates, and grinning.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Frank Richards.

"This beats the Dutch!" said Bob. "What is Gunten doing with those two hoss-thieves, anyway? And what in thunder—"

"I spotted them as I came along through the timber," said Beaulere. "They've been at this some time. They've got their horses in the wood, too. What on earth does it mean, you fellows?"

Frank Richards shook his head.

"There's some gun-game on," said Bob Lawless sagely. "I'm certain that Dunn was one of the rustlers that tried to rob us the night we were going to Fraser. They are a precious pair, those two, anyway. I guess they're going to rob somebody, and that's to keep them from being known."

"Gunten wouldn't have a hand in that!" muttered Frank. "He's an awful rotter, but not quite rotten enough for that."

"Oh, that foreign trash is rotten enough for anything," said Bob Lawless, with a sniff. "Look here, let's speak to them, as we're here. If it's a gun-game, we may as well let them know they're spotted."

Vere Beaulere nodded.

"I was thinking of that," he said. "I waited till you fellows came. It looks to me as if it means a raid of some sort—horse-stealing, most likely, and that trick is to make out that it was the Kootenays did the trick."

"I guess so. Come on!" said Bob.

And the rancher's son strode out into the glade, followed by his comrades.

There was a sudden exclamation from Kern Gunten as he saw them, and Dave Dunn and Black Rube ceased their peculiar occupation all of a sudden.

The Swiss scowled angrily at the three chums.

"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed.

"I guess we want to know what you are doing!" retorted Bob Lawless.

"Mind your own business!"

"If it's a horse-raid, to be put down to the Kootenays, you may as well know that the game's up before it's begun," said Bob disdainfully. "We sha'n't keep this dark, you can bet your boots on that!"

"It's nothing of the kind!" snapped Gunten angrily. "Do you think I'm a horse-thief, you silly idiot?"

"Well, I know your friends are," said Bob; "and you're none too good for it, either, Gunten!"

"It's a lark," said Gunten sullenly.

"Jest a leetle joke, sonny," grinned Dave Dunn. "Don't you be skeered. It's a leetle joke."

"Yes, you look like taking all that trouble for a joke," said Bob. "Look here, what are you up to?"

"Jest as Dave says," replied Black Rube. "A leetle joke to please Gunten."

"Oh, rot!"

"That's all it is," said Gunten. "You can mind your own business, Bob Lawless. And—look here, don't jaw about this!"

"Why not, if it's only a little joke on somebody?" asked Bob sarcastically.

Gunten bit his lip.

"You'll spoil the joke," he said. "Look here, you've no business to come spying on me!"

"Do you want your nose flattened, you foreign worm?" asked Bob politely.

"You've only got to say that again, if you do."

"I didn't mean exactly that. But, anyhow, you've no right to tattle about what you've seen by accident. You—you'll spoil the joke, too."

"If it's only a joke, we don't want to spoil it," said Frank Richards. "But it looks to me more like some piece of rascality, and that's flat."

"I give you my word—"

"What's that worth?"

Kern Gunten gritted his teeth.

"You silly duffers! If you hear of anything being done by a couple of Kootenays, you can jaw them. I tell you, it's only a joke."

"Done!" said Bob at once. "Mind, if there's any yarn in the section of Kootenays running off horses or sleighs, we shall know what kind of Injuns they were, and we shall go to Sheriff Henderson at once about it."

"Done!" said Gunten, in his turn.

"Well, that's all right," admitted Frank.

And the three chums left the spot, leaving the two rustlers still engaged in getting themselves up as Redskins.

The 2nd Chapter. Waylaid on the Trail!

Miss Meadows was very grave that morning.

The schoolmistress of Cedar Creek had been considerably troubled about the Gunten affair.

Gunten had played a disrespectful trick that could not be forgiven, and he had been dismissed from the school, and Miss Meadows did not regret it.

But the news that the boy was staying away from his father's home in Thompson troubled her somewhat.

The storekeeper's attempt to bully her into taking his son back into the school had failed.

For the arrogant wrath of Gompers Gunten she cared nothing.

But she was somewhat concerned for the boy himself.

The angry storekeeper had "cowed" him with great severity, and there was more cowering for Kern Gunten when he came home—if he ever did.

He deserved it, certainly. Still, there was a limit. And Miss Meadows cared, probably more than Mr. Gunten did, what might happen to the perverse young rascal.

Indeed, the schoolmistress was turning it over in her mind whether, after all, it would be possible to allow the Swiss to return to the school.

If he had shown a sign of real repentance for his wrongdoing she would not have hesitated.

Morning school was dismissed at last, and when the school was dismissed Black Sam brought round Miss Meadows' horse from the stable.

Miss Meadows had business in Thompson that day, and Mr. Slimmey, the assistant master, was to preside at the dining-table, where the pupils whose homes were at a distance took their midday meal.

Frank Richards & Co. were talking in the gateway when Miss Meadows rode out on the trail, and they lifted their hats very respectfully to the schoolmistress as she passed.

Miss Meadows gave them a kind smile.

She rode on down the trail through the timber, a lonely trail that ran for miles, without a habitation in sight, to the town on the Thompson River.

Cedar Creek School vanished behind, and the Canadian girl rode at a leisurely pace along the trail, upon which still lay patches of snow.

Suddenly, from the frost-blackened larches some distance ahead, two horsemen pushed out into sight.

Miss Meadows glanced at them carelessly as she rode on towards them.

They were Redskins, in leggings and moccasins and blankets, and their copper-coloured faces were adorned with daubs of paint.

The schoolmistress started a little as she noted it.

Kootenay Indians were plentiful enough in the district, but the days of war-paint were long over.

Occasionally, in the more unsettled districts, an excitable young "buck" would daub his face with war-paint and go on the trail—generally to be "run in," to meditate upon his folly in the log gaol.

But war-paint along the banks of the Thompson was a thing unknown.

The Canadian girl was surprised, but she felt no sense of alarm as she rode nearer to the two bucks.

But alarm mingled with surprise as the two horsemen suddenly closed in

upon her, and a coppery hand caught at her rein.

Her horse was dragged to a halt, and she sat the steed between the two painted braves.

Her eyes flashed.

"Release my horse at once!" she exclaimed sharply. "How dare you!"

The Redskins grinned.

"You come wit' Injun!"

"What?"

"Injun on war-path!" continued the brave. "Look for squaw—pretty white squaw! Wah! I have spoken!"

The Canadian girl's face flushed with anger.

"Let my horse go at once!" she commanded. "Are you mad?"

"You come!" said the other brave gutturally. "You come wit' Kootenay. Me Black Bear, great warrior."

Miss Meadows drew a sharp breath.

She was miles from help, and completely at the mercy of the Redskins, though their audacity was simply amazing.

But the Canadian girl was accustomed to taking care of herself.

With a sudden movement she raised her riding-whip, and struck Black Bear full across the face.

Lash again, and the whip smote the other Redskin, and both of them started back, losing hold of the rein.

In an instant the Canadian girl was urging her horse to a gallop.

Thud, thud, thud!

It was the instant beat of hoofs in pursuit.

The Redskins, their faces furious now, were riding in hot chase.

Miss Meadows urged on her horse desperately.

But the rugged, tangled trail was not fitted for rapid riding.

Her horse stumbled on a broken branch and slipped in a deep gully, and before she could recover the Redskins had overtaken her.

A powerful hand gripped her shoulder, and she was caught.

Lash, lash!

The whip struck and struck again, but it was grasped and torn away and tossed into the thickets.

Strong and savage hands grasped the schoolmistress, and she was held a helpless prisoner.

Black Bear, with a furious look, whipped out a knife.

Miss Meadows' heart turned almost sick within her for a moment.

But the painted brave contented himself with flourishing the knife.



"I guess we want to know what you're doing here, Gunten!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "Mind your own business!" snapped the Swiss junior.

"Now you come—you my squaw!" he snarled.

"Help!" shrieked Miss Meadows, in the faint hope that some white man might be abroad in the timber.

"No cry—you come!" hissed Black Bear. A length of buffalo-hide was whipped round the girl, and fastened her to the saddle.

Then her horse was led from the trail and into the timber.

"Help!"

Her cry rang out again, piercing the sombre shadows of the forest, and echoing among the trees.

There was a sudden shout from the timber in response, and a figure leaped into view, directly in the path of the kidnappers.

"Halt!"

A rifle came up to a level, bearing upon the coppery braves, and behind

the levelled barrel gleamed the eyes of Kern Gunten, the outcast of Cedar Creek.

The 3rd Chapter.

Gunten the Hero!

Miss Meadows panted for breath.

Her captors had dragged in their horses at once at the sharp voice of the Swiss.

Black Bear was gripping his knife, but he did not draw it.

The rifle, in the hands of Kern Gunten, bore full upon the two riders, and his finger was on the trigger.

"Gunten!" panted Miss Meadows.

"All O.K., ma'am," said Gunten coolly. "I've got them covered. You scoundrels, let that lady go at once!"

"No go!" grunted Black Bear. "Kootenay young man want squaw."

"Let her go, or I'll drop you off your horse. Now, then!"

The trigger was already rising.

Miss Meadows gazed at the Swiss in astonishment.

Kern Gunten at the lumber school had never given her an impression of being a fellow of great courage. Yet he was facing the two Kootenays without a tremor.

Such an action would not have surprised her in Frank Richards or Bob Lawless. But it surprised her in the Swiss.

But she was glad to see Gunten there. Unheard-of as such an outrage was in the Thompson Valley, she had been in the hands of the Redskins a helpless prisoner, and she shivered to think of what her fate might have been if the two bucks had succeeded in carrying her off to their lodges in the remote north.

The two Redskins hesitated, growling in an undertone.

But they yielded, and Miss Meadows' horse was released.

"Now vamoose," said Gunten, watching them across the rifle. "I give you one minute to get out of sight."

Again hesitation, but the braves apparently decided that it was "not good enough."

With guttural mutterings, they wheeled their horses and rode away, crashing among the larches.

Not till the sound of their horses had died away did Kern Gunten lower his rifle.

Then he dropped it under his arm and came towards Miss Meadows.

He whipped out a knife, and cut through the buffalo strip that bound her to the saddle.

GUNTEN'S LAST CHANCE!

(Continued from the previous page.)

"Well, I can do without it. I'm back, anyway."

There was no doubt about that, at all events.

And when the boys and girls trooped out of the dining-room after dinner, Kern Gunten was surrounded by a curious crowd, all demanding the details of his gallant rescue of Miss Meadows.

The 4th Chapter.
Not Out of Danger!

"Gunten, you swindler!" exclaimed Bob Lawless wrathfully, as he joined the group in the school ground, with his chums.

"You spoofer!" exclaimed Frank Richards.

Vere Beaulac did not speak, but his lip curled.

The other fellows looked at Frank and Bob in surprise.

"Hallo! What's bitin' you?" demanded Eben Hacke.

"Gunten's done a jolly plucky thing, I guess, from what Miss Meadows says."

"More than Richards would have done!" sneered Keller.

"A good deal more than I would have done, certainly!" exclaimed Frank hotly.

"Oh, you admit that?" jeered Gunten.

"Yes, you swindler! You've spoofered Miss Meadows!"

"What's that?" exclaimed Dawson.

"Are you going to tell tales?" sneered Gunten.

"You made me a promise this morning in the timber, Bob Lawless."

"I guess it wasn't a promise," said Bob.

"I knew you were up to some gun-game. Is this trick what you call a joke?"

"Yes," said Gunten coolly, "and you're bound not to chew the rag on the subject. Telling tales is barred at Cedar Creek."

"We're not thinking of telling Miss Meadows," said Frank contemptuously.

"But it's a bit too thick for you to be swanking as an heroic rescuer when we know—"

He broke off.

"What do you know?" exclaimed Chunky Todgers curiously.

"Out with it, Richards!"

"Yep, out with it," said Hacke.

"What's it all about?"

But Frank was silent.

He felt that he had no right to give the Swiss away, though Gunten's duplicity disgusted him.

"All serene," said Bob. "Gunten can tell you, if he likes. We're not saying anything."

"But do you know anything about it?" asked Molly Lawrence.

"Lots!" grinned Bob. "Don't we, Gunten?"

"Oh, go and chop chips!" grunted Gunten.

"Look here, can't you fellows explain what you're driving at?" demanded Tom Lawrence.

"I guess not; ask Gunten. Gunten knows."

And the three chums cleared off, leaving the Cedar Creek fellows puzzled and mystified.

They plied Kern Gunten with questions, but the Swiss only answered that he had no idea what Frank Richards had been driving at.

In his opinion, the English schoolboy was jealous, that was all he could say.

"Jealous of you!" grinned Chunky Todgers.

"Draw it mild, Swissy! I say, did you help Miss Meadows at all, and were there any Indians?"

"You heard what Miss Meadows said," answered Gunten, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Must be somethin' in it," said Hopkins.

"Miss Meadows has let the rotten worm crawl back into the school!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gunten walked away, leaving the fellows very curious and unsatisfied.

There was a good deal of swank in the manner of the Swiss, as he strolled through the school-ground.

Frank Richards & Co. knew the truth, but they did not feel that they could betray him.

In the eyes of the rest, he had distinguished himself.

How Gunten came to play the part of a hero was a great mystery to them, but Miss Meadows' words could not be gained.

They had to take it as true.

Keller joined his fellow-countryman, grinning.

"All O.K.?" he remarked.

"Well, I'm back again," said Gunten.

"Popper will come round when I tell him. It's all serene."

"Where did you dig up those Redskins?"

"Oh, they happened along! Some of the Kootenays kick over the traces at times, you know," remarked Gunten carelessly.

Keller chuckled.

"Come off, old scout," he said. "Don't give that to me. You fixed it up with them, of course, and Frank Richards knows it, though he won't say."

"And you won't say, either, unless you want to quarrel with me, Keller!" growled Gunten.

"I'm giving you straight goods. They were real Redskins, and I chipped in with a rifle."

"Ha, ha!"

"Look here, Keller, if you want your nose pulled—"

"Easy does it," grinned Keller. "I've come to give you a tip, I guess. There's two galoots outside."

"Gunten started."

"Eh? What—who?"

"Two bulldozers from Thompson," said Keller coolly. "They want to see you. They asked me—"

Gunten did not wait for him to finish.

With a startled face, and his eyes gleaming under knitted brows, he hurried away to the gates.

Keller looked after him with a grin.

Outside the school fence Dave Dunn and Black Rube were standing, evidently waiting.

Gunten hurried up to them.

"You fools, get out of my sight!" he muttered savagely. "Haven't you sense enough to keep away from here after—"

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, Kern Gunten!" said Rube surlily. "We've come hyer to see you."

"If we're seen together it may give away the whole stunt!" hissed Gunten.

"Haven't you any sense?"

"I guess we're bound to see you," said Dunn coolly. "Come into the timber if you don't want to be seen."

"I've nothing to say to you! I've paid you—"

"Then we'll talk here."

"Hold on! I'll come!" Gunten panted, as Frank Richards & Co. came out of the gateway. "Come—quick!"

He hurried the two ruffians into the shelter of the timber.

The 5th Chapter.

The Way of the Transgressor.

Kern Gunten's hard face was pale as he followed the two rustlers into the timber.

He breathed a little more freely when they were out of sight of the school.

Dunn and Black Rube were grinning.

The unconcealed fear and uneasiness of the Swiss seemed to amuse them.

Gunten fixed his eyes upon them fiercely.

"Now, what do you want here?" he said between his teeth.

"I guess that's soon said," drawled Rube. "We want payin' for our trouble. I tell you, I was a good hour washin' that muck off in the creek!"

"I've paid you!" said Gunten shrilly.

"Ten dollars each for the stunt, and I ponied up in advance."

The two ruffians chuckled hoarsely.

"Ten dollars!" grinned Dunn. "What's that? An' you the son of the richest man in Thompson! A hundred dollars would be nearer the mark!"

"Or two hundred!" grinned the other rascal.

And they chuckled again, Gunten watching them in growing terror.

With all his cunning he had not counted upon this.

Gunten had a good deal of the arrogance of his father, the rich storekeeper.

A word from him was an honour to the two loafers—in his opinion. But apparently the precious pair took a different view.

"I've paid you!" he faltered.

"Oh, that was only your little joke!" chortled Dunn.

"You—you agreed—"

"Course we did!" said Rube. "We're agreeable galoots, we are! You paid us ten dollars on account. You're goin' to pay us ten more now."

"That'll do for the present," remarked Dunn, with a nod.

"Ten more on Monday," said Rube.

"And ten more the next week!" chuckled Dunn.

"I can't—I won't—I—"

"I guess you will," said Dave Dunn coolly. "You've fooled your school-mistress into taking you back into the school you was turned out of. It was a good game; and we helped you. That's worth something. Waal, you can't get all that for ten dollars."

"Not much!" chimed in his companion.

"S'pose we was to call on Miss Meadows, and tell her that them two Kootenay Injuns was us!" chuckled Dunn.

"S'pose we let on that it was got-up from the start to make her take you back in the school? You've took her in, Mister Swiss, but how long would it last if we blowed the gaff?"

"Oh, you villain!" almost groaned Gunten.

"Think we hev took all that trouble for ten dollars?" said Black Rube contemptuously. "Not much! That was a beginning. We're going to be paid for our trouble, or we're going to call on the schoolmarm, and that's wot's the matter with Hanner."

Gunten clenched his hands convulsively.

It had been a cunning trick, and all had gone well so far.

Miss Meadows, saved as she believed from the hands of the raiding Kootenay braves, could scarcely refuse to forgive the Swiss. He had calculated on that.

He had calculated well.

The mistress of Cedar Creek had fallen into the trap. The cunning game had been well played.

And now—

Now the schemer's house of cards threatened to tumble down about his ears. He was entirely in the hands of his two confederates.

A word would be enough to enlighten Miss Meadows as to the real state of affairs.

"Well, what's the verdict?" asked Dave Dunn at last. "Are you shelling out, Mister Swiss, or aire we goin' to call on the schoolmarm?"

"You hound!" muttered Gunten thickly.

"That's enough! Come on, Rube! We're goin' to see the schoolmarm."

"Stop!" shouted Gunten desperately, as the two ruffians made a movement towards the school. "You—you dare not—"

"I guess we'll soon see about that."

"Stop, I tell you!" panted Gunten.

"Well, aire you paying up, or ain't you?" demanded Dunn roughly. "We ain't got no time to waste hyer chewing the rag."

"I—I can't!" muttered Gunten.

"Where am I to get the money from?"

"I guess your old popper's got plenty," said Dunn. "He's the hardest case in the Thompson Valley, and there ain't a galoot 'tween hyer and Kamloops that he ain't done brown, one time or another. You've got the spondulicks, you young cub! I've seen you swanking with ten-dollar bills, and your popper's got more. And we're going to have a finger in that pie, I reckon."

"You thief! You—"

"Come on, Rube!"

"Stop!" panted Gunten. "I—I can stand ten dollars, perhaps—"

"I reckoned you could!" grinned Dunn. "Hand over the durocks, and not so much chinwag with it!"

The Swiss fumbled in his pockets.

His hands trembled with rage as he handed out two ten-dollar bills, one to each of the grinning blackmailers.

"I guess that lets us out," said Dave Dunn. "We'll drop in an' see you agin on Monday, Gunten."

And the two rascals went tramping away towards Thompson, where their ill-gotten gains were to be spent in "painting the town red."

With faltering steps Gunten stumbled away towards the creek. He wanted to be quiet, to think it out.

But as he came out of the timber on the bank of the creek he almost ran into Frank Richards and his comrades.

"Hullo, Guntey! Are the cheery Kootenays gone?" chortled Bob Lawless.

"You don't look as if you'd enjoyed a visit from your Indians!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gunten gave him a look of hatred.

But he stopped.

The chums knew the truth, and in his desperation he was willing to turn to them for help.

"I say, I'm in a horrible scrape," he muttered.

"I thought so," said Frank Richards drily.

"Those—those rotters have turned on me!" muttered Gunten huskily. "They're bleedin' me for money—and—and—"

"What did you expect?" said Beaulac.

"They're the kind of men to do it."

"I—I never guessed—"

"You're too jolly clever, Gunty," grinned Bob. "You over-reach yourself. You might have foreseen that."

"Well—I didn't! I say, what am I to do?" muttered Gunten wretchedly.

"I—I can't let them go to Miss Meadows!"

"My word! You'd be fired out fast enough if she knew."

"Can't you advise a chap?" muttered Gunten.

"I—I've got back to school now. My popper will come round when I tell him that. Only—only those scoundrels are goin' to spoil it all. Can't you advise me, Richards?"

Frank gave him a look, in which compassion was mingled with contempt.

His scorn for the wretched schemer was deep enough, but he could not help feeling sorry for a fellow who was utterly down.

"I could advise you," he said. "But I don't suppose you'd take my advice."

"Give it me, anyway."

"Well, go to Miss Meadows and make a clean breast of it."

Gunten started.

"Why, you fool, then she'd know—same as if those bulldozers told her! You want me to give myself away."

"I don't want you to do anything. You asked my advice, and there it is. Miss Meadows is bound to know sooner or later, as it turns out, and your best chance is to confess it yourself, before you're given away."

Gunten paused.

Suspicious as he was, he could see that Frank Richards was giving him the best advice possible, under the circumstances.

And already his cunning brain was at work.

Frank was advising him to make a clean breast of the whole business.

But it came into Gunten's mind at once that he could improve on that—with his usual cunning.

"I guess you're right!" he said.

And he hurried back to the lumber school, his mind made up.

The 6th Chapter.

Gunten Pulls Through.

Miss Meadows was in her study, writing a letter to the sheriff of Thompson, when Gunten tapped at the door.

The Swiss came in with hanging head, and Miss Meadows gave him a kind smile.

His service that day had wiped out all past offences, in the schoolmistress' eyes.

"Well, Gunten, what is it?" she asked kindly.

"I—I've got a confession to make, ma'am," stammered Gunten.

Miss Meadows' brows contracted a little.

"I hope you have been doing nothing wrong again, Gunten."

"I—I'm sorry, ma'am. I—I—I can't let it go like this," murmured Gunten.

"I hope you'll forgive me, ma'am. The fellows are all talking about how brave it was of me to face those Redskins, and—and I can't let it go on."

Miss Meadows looked at him in wonder.

"I don't understand you, Gunten. It was brave of you; your schoolfellows are quite right."

"It—it wasn't, ma'am."

"What?"

"I've come here to confess," said Gunten, his eyes on the floor. "I—I wanted to come back to the school, Miss Meadows, and—and it was a trick."

"A trick?" exclaimed Miss Meadows.

"Yes, ma'am," said Gunten humbly.

"I—I fixed it up with two fellows to do it. They weren't real Redskins, ma'am—"

Miss Meadows caught her breath.

"Gunten!"

"They were got up as Kootenays, ma'am," stammered Gunten. "I—I reckoned you'd let me come back to school, if you thought I'd rescued you, so—so I did it, ma'am."

There was a deep silence for a minute or more.

The Swiss hardly dared to look at Miss Meadows.

Her face had become stern and set.

The schoolmistress spoke at last.

"Then what happened to-day was all a trick, Gunten?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You planned to deceive me in order to be admitted to the school again?" Miss Meadows exclaimed.

"I'm sorry, ma'am."

"And why, Gunten, when your contemptible scheme had succeeded perfectly, have you come to confess to me?"

"I—I couldn't let it go on, ma'am," murmured Gunten. "The—the fellows are all calling me a hero, and—and praising me, and—and it made me feel a hypocrite. I couldn't stand it. I—I never thought there was much harm in it at first, but now—now I can see it, and—and I—I came to own up, ma'am."

Miss Meadows' stern face softened.

The Swiss was playing his part well, and, so far as Miss Meadows could see, there was no other reason why he should have confessed.

"That shows, at least, that there is an honest strain in your nature, Gunten," said Miss Meadows, after a pause. "At least, you did not wish to obtain credit under false pretences."

"I felt rotten, ma'am," said Gunten glibly. "I—I simply had to own up! I—I hope you won't send me away now, Miss Meadows. I could have kept it secret if I'd liked, only—"

"I shall not send you away, Gunten. You have acted very badly, very wickedly, but at least you have shown that you are not all bad. After your confession of your own free will, I cannot punish you. You may go."

"And—and I'm to stay at Cedar Creek, ma'am?" asked Gunten eagerly.

"Yes; at least, so long as you are careful in your conduct."

Gunten left the study, still looking very humble and meek. But outside, when the door was closed, he grinned.

Once more his cunning had saved him.

Frank Richards & Co. met Gunten as he came out of the lumber school, grinning with satisfaction. They regarded him curiously.

"All serene?" asked Bob Lawless.

Gunten laughed.

"All O.K.," he replied.

"Well, you're in luck, I guess."

"Thanks for your advice, Richards," grinned Gunten. "I'd never have thought of it. You've done me a good turn."

"Well, I'm glad of it," said Frank. "If you want some more advice, I advise you to go straight now you've got another chance. And those two bulldozers won't be able to trouble you again, now Miss Meadows knows."

"She doesn't know about them," chuckled Gunten.

Frank stared.

"Haven't you told her?"

"Nope!"

"Then what reason did you give for confessing?" asked Beaulac curiously.

"Because I didn't like getting credit where it wasn't due. It made me feel a hypocrite, to have all the fellows praising me, you know."