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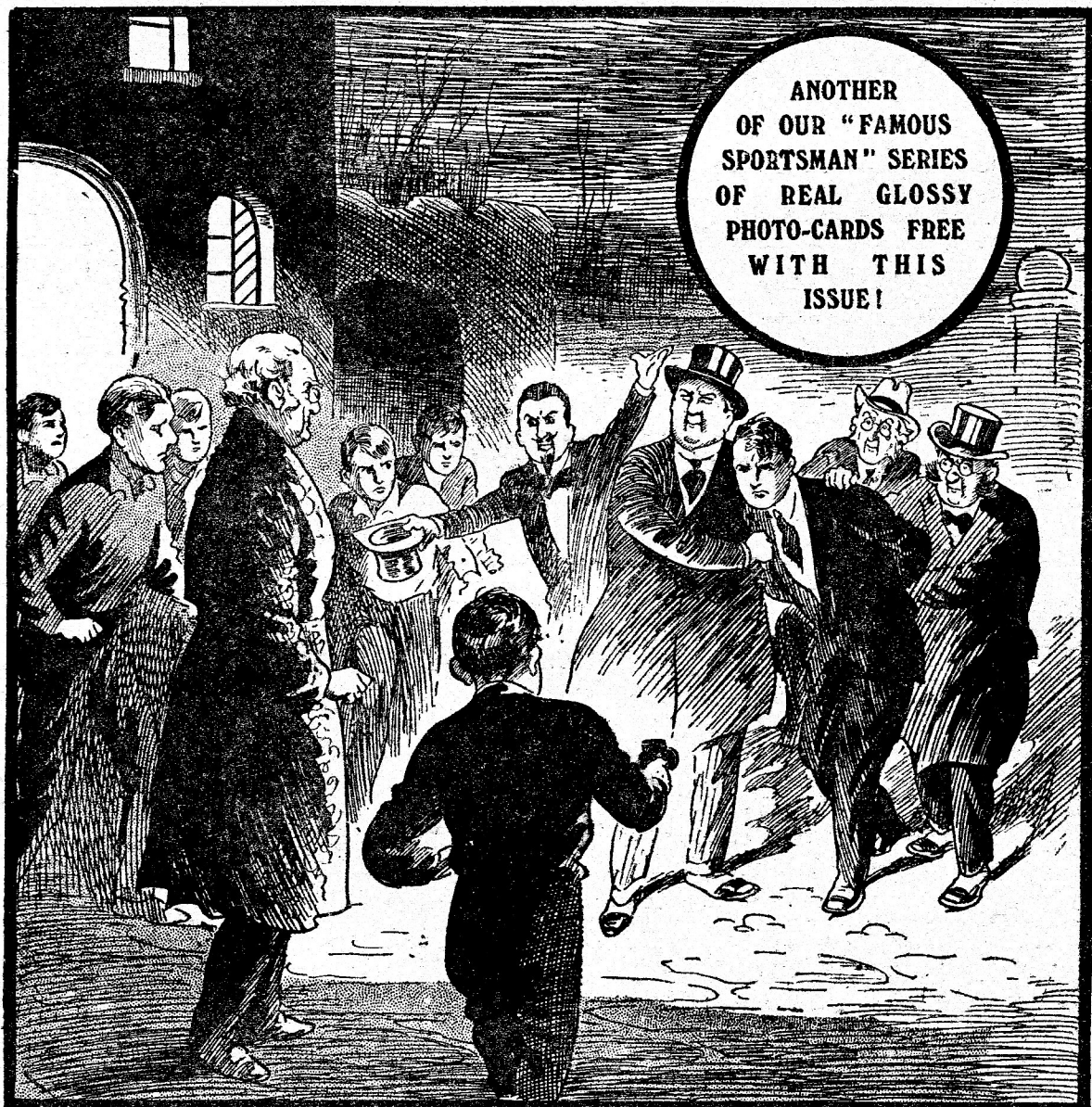
No.
210

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The POPULAR 2^D

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THE DISMISSED MASTERS CAPTURE THE SCHOOLMASTER CRACKSMAN!

(The Head of Rookwood receives a surprise. See The Topping Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. inside.)

THE SCHOOLMASTER CRACKSMAN.—Val Mornington discovers the new master's dark secret, and has a terrifying experience in the dead of night.

FORM MASTER—AND THIEF!

BY
OWEN CONQUEST.

A dramatic long complete tale of Jimmy Silver & Co., of Rookwood, you'll all enjoy :: reading. ::



THE FIRST CHAPTER. What Mornington Knew.

"MORNY!"
"Well?"
"Be reasonable, old scout!"
Mornington of the Classical Fourth shrugged his shoulders.
Jimmy Silver spoke very quietly and earnestly, but Valentine Mornington did not seem in a very reasonable mood.
It was nearly time for morning classes at Rookwood School, and some of the Fourth were gathering round the Form-room door, when Jimmy addressed Mornington in the corridor.

Mr. Egerton, the new master of the Fourth, had not yet appeared.
When he did it would be a signal for the juniors to scuttle into the Form-room.

Mornington's face was very dark, and there was a glitter in his eyes that told of an angry spirit within.

Morny, in fact, had not quite recovered from the licking the new master had bestowed on him the previous evening.

Morny's look boded trouble, and Jimmy was a little uneasy for the dandy of the Fourth.

For Mr. Egerton was not the kind of man to be trifled with.

Most of the juniors liked him, but they had recognised his firmness of character.

"It's no good sharpening your knife for Egerton, you know," continued Jimmy Silver, in a tone of sweet reasonableness. "And it really isn't like you, Morny, to bear a grudge for a licking. Bless your little heart, I had lickings enough from Mr. Bootles when he was here, and I always liked him."

"This is a bit different!" snapped Morny. "I don't see it. The new man found you in his study, and you admitted you'd come there to rag the room. What the merry dickens did you expect, if not a licking?"
"He went for me like a ruffian!"

"Well, he may have laid it on a little," said Jimmy. "But, of course, he was in a wax."

"Oh, give a chap a rest!" said Mornington crossly. "I tell you I'm up against the new man. Why, hang it all, so were the lot of you once! Wasn't it agreed to rag every new master we had till the Head allowed Mr. Bootles to come back?"

"Ye-es; but—"

"Well, I'm stickin' to it. What sort of a crowd are the new masters the Head has got in from goodness knows where?" demanded Mornington. "There's all the old masters resigned, and sticking at Coombe, and a scratch gang brought in to run Rookwood—and Egerton the scratchiest of the lot!"

"Scuff!" said George Raby. "The rest are a weird gang, I know, but Egerton is all right."

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"Right as rain!" said Arthur Newcome. The Fistical Four of the Fourth were all agreed upon that point, evidently.

They were loyal to Mr. Bootles, their dismissed master; but they did not see any reason to be down on the new man, who had given them no cause for offence, and who had, indeed, been kind and considerate.

The opinion of the Fistical Four did not weigh with Valentine Mornington, however. He shrugged his shoulders again.

"You're mistaken in him," he said coolly.

"I could prove it to anybody but an ass!"

"Thanks!" said Jimmy Silver dryly.

"Not at all; you're welcome to my opinion of your intellect."

"Look here, you cheeky ass—"

"Look at the facts!" said Mornington. "Mr. Bootles met the Egerton man the day he came, and recognised him. He let drop something that showed he had a grudge of some sort against the man. Then Egerton forbids us to hold any communication with him. Bootles comes here and forces his way in to the Head. Well, what did he do that for?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"My opinion is that he was warning the Head against the new man. He knows him, and knows something about him."

"He would naturally be a bit prejudiced against the man who's taken his place here," said Erroll.

"Prejudiced be blessed! It's not that. But there's something more," said Mornington. "I was in the man's study yesterday evening, and he caught me there. I'd dodged behind the screen, and he didn't see me at first. Well, I saw what he was doing. He unpacked a trunk—"

"Nothing very wicked in that, is there?" asked Lovell.

"Fathead! He got out writing materials—"

"Why shouldn't he? Perhaps he wanted to write a letter home," suggested Lovell gravely.

The juniors chuckled, and Mornington flushed with annoyance.

"Will you let me finish?" he exclaimed. "He wrote five or six letters, one after another—but all the same letter, as it turned out. He was making it up awfully careful. Then he picked out a paper with an engraved heading on it—"

"He would write on Rookwood notepaper, naturally," said Jimmy Silver.

"But it wasn't Rookwood paper."

"I don't see what else it could have been."

"The heading on the paper was 'Highwood School,'" answered Mornington.

"En?"

"That surprises you, does it?" grinned Mornington. "It surprised me. He copied out his letter on that paper, and burnt all the sheets he'd written. Now, how does he come to have Highwood School paper in his writing-case?"

"May have visited there, and brought some away by chance—same as you do at a seaside hotel sometimes."

"But why should he pick it out to write a special letter on?"

"I'll give that up."

"Well, I'll tell you," said Mornington. "He was writing a letter for some kind of spoof—to make out that the letter was written at Highwood School. He couldn't have had any other reason. When I saw that, I knew he was fishy."

"Look here, Morny—"

"Then he found me there," said Mornington, between his teeth. "He didn't know I'd seen the Highwood School paper. But he was nervous—he thought I might have—and he pitched into me. He was scared at the idea of any fellow nosing about his study. It was quite plain. He pitched into me as a warnin'."

Jimmy Silver knitted his brows thoughtfully.

Morny's story was news to the Fistical Four, though Erroll had already heard it, and it was extremely puzzling.

Why a man at Rookwood should write a letter on Highwood School paper—not by chance, but with intention—was a mystery.

"What do you think now?" demanded Morny triumphantly.

"I don't quite know what to think," answered Jimmy Silver. "Are you sure of what you say?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Perhaps you went to sleep behind the screen and dreamed it," suggested Arthur Edward Lovell.

"Fathead! I'd never even heard of Highwood School before—I don't know now where the place is. The name couldn't have come into my head of its own accord, could it?"

"Well, no," said Jimmy. "Still, he may have had his reasons. I dare say he could explain—if it was necessary."

"I'm up against him," said Mornington obstinately; "and as for his order not to speak to Bootles, I shan't take any notice of it. In fact, I'm goin' down to Coombe specially to see Bootles after lessons."

"Now, look here, Morny—"

"Shush! Here he comes!" said Raby.

The stalwart figure of Mr. Cyril Egerton, the new master of the Fourth, appeared at the end of the corridor.

The discussion broke off abruptly.

Jimmy Silver & Co. went into the Form-room, and the Fourth were all in their places when Mr. Egerton came in.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mornington Rebels.

"GOOD-MORNING, boys!"
"Good-morning, sir!"
Mr. Egerton's greeting was cheery and hearty.

It was scarcely possible to look at his cheery, good-humoured face, and listen to his hearty voice, without liking him.

Even Mornington had liked him at first, till that unfortunate encounter had taken place in the master's study.

The Fourth Form had been in a restless mood owing to the dismissal of their master by the Head, and they had given a good deal of trouble in more ways than one, in consequence.

But the arrival of the new master had changed all that.

He was popular at once, and order was quite established in the Fourth; though in the other Forms at Rookwood there was ever-recurring trouble under the new masters.

In the Fourth Form room there was only one gloomy face—the handsome face of Valentine Mornington.

Mr. Egerton's glance rested on him for a moment, rather keenly.

Mornington met his glance, and his lip curled in a sneer.

That, however, the new master affected not to notice.

He had given Mornington a severe lesson the previous evening, from whatever motive, but he plainly did not desire further trouble with the dandy of the Fourth if it could be avoided.

For some time Morny was left to himself and his sulky humour.

The juniors worked with the new master cheerfully; even Tubby Muffin got through his construe with less blunders than usual.

Mornington was called upon to construe at last.

"Sorry, sir, I've done no prep!" said Mornington coolly.

Mr. Egerton looked at him.

"You did no preparation last evening, Mornington?" he exclaimed.

"No, sir."

"And why not, Mornington?"

"I wasn't feelin' up to it. I'd been badly used by a brute, sir," said Mornington, with icy coolness.

There was a gasp in the Fourth.

Mornington was evidently looking for trouble, and Mr Egerton's expression indicated that he would not be long in finding it.

"Mornington!"

"Yaas, sir!"

"Are you aware that you are speaking to your Form master?"

"Quite so, sir."

"And are you alluding," continued Mr Egerton, "to the punishment I gave you last night for intruding in my study?"

"Yaas."

"I presume, Mornington, that you do not expect your insolence to pass unpunished?" said Mr. Egerton.

"I don't expect anythin' from you, sir," said Mornington deliberately. "You're the third blackleg that's taken our Form master's job, and I suppose you're much the same as the others."

"Morny!" murmured Erroll, in distress.

Morny did not heed his chum. His eyes were fixed upon the face of the new master.

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Egerton. "This is too much! Mornington, come here at once!"

Mornington lounged out before the class, with his hands in his pockets.

The new master had picked up a cane. The gleam in his eyes, for a moment, was not pleasant to see.

The Fourth Form looked on in silence.

"Hold out your hand, Mornington," said Mr. Egerton quietly.

"You're goin' to cane me?" asked Mornington, backing away a little from the Form master, in the direction of the door.

"Most certainly!"

"You're not!" said Mornington coolly.

"Mornington, if you do not hold out your hand at once, I shall thrash you severely!" exclaimed the Form master.

"Will you?" said Morny, between his teeth. He had been backing towards the door, and now he made a sudden run, and tore the door open.

Before the new master could realise his intention, Mornington was outside the Form-room.

Mr. Egerton stood astounded for a moment. But as the rebel junior's footsteps pattered away down the corridor, he strode to the door.

"Mornington," he thundered, "come back at once! How dare you leave the Form-room?"

Mornington did not answer.

He was already making for the quadrangle, and, without a glance behind him, he scudded out of the School House.

Mr. Egerton stared after him, from the Form-room, blankly.

He made a step into the passage, and halted.

Valentine Mornington, plainly, did not intend to be caught, and an undignified chase of an elusive junior was scarcely the thing.

Mr. Egerton, with knitted brows, turned back into the room and closed the door.

The Fourth Form sat with bated breath.

The new master resumed the lesson with quiet calmness as if nothing had happened, Mornington's punishment being left over for the present.

Lessons continued in a very quiet atmosphere.

Some of the juniors expected to see Valentine Mornington come back as soon as he was cool and make the best of his submission, but it did not happen.

While lessons were going on in the Form-rooms of Rookwood, Mornington had dropped quietly over the school wall into the road.

A BIG "BAG" FOR NEXT WEEK!



He had snatched up his cap as he fled, his mind having been already made up as to what he was going to do.

He could not venture near the gates, where old Mack would certainly have stopped and detained him, but the wall was easily climbed, and Mornington was soon free.

With his hands in his pockets, the dandy of the Fourth sauntered away down the lane towards Coombe.

He knew the risk he was running—or, rather, the certainty—but there was no hesitation in his manner.

He wondered whether Mr. Egerton would have left him unpunished if he had known his destination.

But Mr. Egerton, grinding Latin with the Fourth Form in the school, had no suspicion that Valentine Mornington was on his way to see Mr. Bootles.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Startling News.

"B LESS my soul!" It was Mr. Bootles, late master of the Fourth Form at Rookwood School, who made that remark.

A group of gentlemen were pacing sedately along the lane, near the village of Coombe, with rather gloomy faces.

They were the old "staff" of Rookwood, now resigned—or, rather, on strike!

Mr. Greely, former master of the Fifth, stout and portly and important, was talking—as he generally was.

He was holding forth on the subject of the absurd obstinacy of Dr. Chisholm, the

Head of Rookwood, and debating whether it would be judicious to make an appeal to the governors of the school to end the present unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Mr. Greely had been the leader of the masters' strike in support of Mr. Bootles, whom they regarded as having been unjustly dismissed by the Head, with some reason. Mr. Greely had not changed his mind in the least, but he was growing very restive and dissatisfied as the days passed, and no sign came from the Head of Rookwood.

Certainly he had expected the "strike" to bring the headmaster to reason, but it had not had that result.

New masters had taken the places of most of the old, and though they had been hurriedly engaged, and were certainly not giving satisfaction, the Head was contriving to work with them, somehow.

It really looked as if the strikers would be left out in the cold, and that they might as well disperse as remain in their quarters at the inn.

They were taking their morning walk in a body. Mr. Greely holding forth, and the other masters giving him his head, so to speak, when Mr. Bootles sighted Mornington coming along the lane.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles. "This is very irregular. There seems to be very little order in the school. Here is a boy out of gates—"

"What is to be expected?" snorted Mr. Greely. "As I was saying—"

"Matters are very unsatisfactory in my Form," said Mr. Mooney, with a sigh. "Rookwood is certainly suffering from this unhappy state of affairs."

"Mais oul, oul!" murmured Monsieur Monceau.

Mornington came up and raised his cap very respectfully to the masters.

"My dear Mornington," said Mr. Bootles mildly. "Surely you should be in your Form room at this hour?"

"I've cut, sir!" said Mornington.

"What?"

"I was coming to see you, sir," said Mornington to Mr. Bootles. "I have something rather important to say, sir."

"The masters halted.

"You may speak, Mornington," said Mr. Bootles.

"I've something to tell you, sir," said Mornington. "Mr. Egerton has a secret of some kind, and I know he is shady—"

"What, what?"

"The boys are finding it out already!" snorted Mr. Greely. "I am not surprised—not surprised at all! This is what Rookwood is coming to!"

"Mon Dieu!" murmured Mossoo.

"Ahem! Mornington, I sympathise with you, but I am afraid I cannot discuss Mr. Egerton with a boy in his Form," said Mr. Bootles.

"I must tell you what has happened, sir." "Let the boy tell what has happened!" boomed Mr. Greely. "Knowing what we do of the man, Mr. Bootles, we are bound to take measures, if necessary, to frustrate him."

"You—you may proceed, Mornington."

Mornington proceeded.

He related, with minute detail, what had occurred in the new master's study the previous evening, dwelling especially upon the letter which had been written upon Highwood School notepaper, after such careful concoction.

The masters listened in silence, broken only by occasional snorts from Mr. Greely.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Bootles at last.

"Now, sir," said Mornington. "I know you know something about the man. You may know what he played this trick for. He can't be honest to be playing such a game. He's a brute, too! I can't go to the Head; he wouldn't listen to me. That's why I've come to you."

Mr. Bootles was very agitated.

"It—it is very extraordinary!" he said feebly.

"It is clear enough!" thundered Mr. Greely. "The man was a master at Highwood School, and he was dismissed for theft. You informed Dr. Chisholm of the facts. Obstinate as the Head undoubtedly is, he could not avoid asking the man to give him some explanation. What explanation could he give? He could not refer the Head to Highwood. Dr. Woodward would have exposed him utterly. Therefore, he has concocted this letter on Highwood paper."

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4 Four More Topping School Stories in next week's number—Real Rippers!

His motive, sir—his only possible motive—was to deceive the Head with that letter—a pretended letter from Highwood School." Mornington started.

He was learning more now than was suspected. "But—but a letter in his own hand!" stammered Mr. Bootles.

Snort!

"His own hand? Nonsense! What use would a letter in his own hand be?" boomed the Fifth Form master. "The letter is not in his own hand, but in a disguised hand. That letter, sir, purports to be from the headmaster of Highwood School—that is the only possible explanation—and it clears the man of your accusation. That letter, sir, is a forgery—an impudent forgery!" snorted Mr. Greely.

"Bless my soul!"

"He was bound to satisfy the Head after your information. He produced a letter to go to it; and, first of all, forges the letter. Doubtless, when he left Highwood, he was careful to take away some of the school notepaper, in case such a necessity should arise. The matter, sir, is as clear as daylight!"

"What—what an excessively unscrupulous man!" murmured Mr. Bootles. "I am afraid it is as you say, Mr. Greely. I—I must see the Head. I must! But he has given orders that I am not to be admitted to the school."

"There is the telephone, Mr. Bootles."

"True, true! I must speak to him at once—at once!"

And Mr. Bootles, greatly flustered, and apparently forgetful of Mornington's existence, hurried back towards the village.

Mr. Greely & Co. followed him, with evident excitement; and Mornington was left standing in the lane alone.

He grinned.

"By gad!" murmured Mornington. "By gad! A thief—turned out of his last job for dishonesty! My hat! The Head's getting a precious set of blackguards to run Rookwood! Old Greely hit the nail on the head, that's clear. He's an old donkey, but he's got it right! By gad!"

Mornington turned, and strolled back towards Rookwood.

After what Mr. Bootles had to tell the Head on the telephone it was not likely that the new Form master would remain another hour at Rookwood School, and Morny had the pleasant prospect of escaping punishment for his defiance in the Form-room that morning.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Greely Rises to the Occasion.

WHEN Dr. Chisholm stepped into his study a few minutes after twelve, he found the telephone-bell beginning to ring.

He took up the receiver.

"Well?"

"Is that Dr. Chisholm?"

"Yes."

"I am Mr. Bootles."

"Bless my soul! Really, Mr. Bootles—" "Pray do not ring off, sir? I have a matter of the greatest possible moment to speak of."

"I presume you refer to your malicious and unfounded allegations against Mr. Egerton?"

"I refer to my accusation, certainly."

The Head smiled grimly over the transmitter.

"Well, Mr. Bootles, doubtless you will be pleased to learn that Mr. Egerton has completely rebutted your absurd charge."

"Impossible, sir!"

"Not at all—a fact!" said the Head. "He has shown me a letter from the headmaster of Highwood School containing a complete apology for having entertained unfounded doubts of his honour, and requesting him, in the most flattering terms, to return and resume his duties there."

"Sir! I—I—"

"It is an old letter, Mr. Bootles, which the young man has preserved in case such malicious insinuations should ever be made against him. Very fortunately, too, considering your conduct."

"Dr. Chisholm, the letter is not genuine."

"Nonsense!"

"I assure you, sir—"

"Absurd!"

"I shall write at once to the headmaster of Highwood if you refuse to listen to me."

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"You are welcome to do so."

"Meanwhile, I beseech you to be on your guard against that exceedingly unscrupulous young man—"

Dr. Chisholm jammed the receiver back into his place, and the rest of Mr. Bootles' sentence was lost.

The Head's face was very angry as he rose from the telephone.

"Outrageous!" he exclaimed. "I can understand a prejudice—even a bitter prejudice—but this unworthy persecution of an excellent young man—"

Buzzzzzz!

The telephone-bell rang loudly.

Dr. Chisholm did not approach it, however. He quitted the study, leaving the bell to ring.

At the other end of the wire Mr. Bootles was in a state of great perplexity and distress.

He made three or four attempts to "ring on," but it was in vain, and an acid feminine voice from the exchange informed him that he couldn't get "through." And then the little gentleman gave it up.

He turned away from the telephone, which was in the reading-room at the Coombe Arms, with a troubled brow.

Mr. Greely & Co. were all round him; they had the room to themselves.

"He will not listen to me!" sighed Mr. Bootles.

Snort from Mr. Greely.

"Then your only recourse is to write to the headmaster of Highwood," said Mr. Mooney.

"Yes, yes; and at once!" said Mr. Wiggins.

Mr. Bootles nodded.

"I shall do so," he said. "Even Dr. Chisholm cannot refuse to heed a letter from Dr. Woodward."

"That letter," said Mr. Greely, "cannot arrive until to-morrow at the earliest."

"True! The man must remain another day at Rookwood."

Mr. Greely gave a still more emphatic snort.

"What object do you think the man has, Mr. Bootles, in coming to Rookwood at all? His meeting with you, certainly, was unexpected; but he must have known that any day, by any chance, his true character might be exposed. He could not have hoped to remain long at the school. Why, then, did he come? Evidently to feather his nest, sir."

"Eh?"

"He has been a thief once, and he is now a forger," said Mr. Greely. "That man's intention, sir, is to rob the school."

"Bless my soul!"

"Doubtless the Head will tell him what has been said on the telephone, and he will know, sir, that he has only twenty-four hours before him," said Mr. Greely. "To-morrow, at the latest, he will be turned out of Rookwood. If his intentions are dishonest, they will be carried into effect to-night; it is his last chance."

"Good heavens!"

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Greely, folding his arms, and looking round upon his conferees quite grandly—"gentlemen, this is not the time to remember the obstinacy—the absurd obstinacy—of Dr. Chisholm. We must think of the school, in which we hold honourable posts, and in which we may hold honourable posts again. We, gentlemen, must interfere to prevent this knave from carrying out his plans."

"Dear me!" murmured Mr. Bootles.

"It is our duty," said the Fifth Form master. "Incidentally, we shall heap coals of fire upon the head of Dr. Chisholm. He may realise that he cannot so easily dispense with his staff as he apparently imagines. Gentlemen, this is our duty, and to-night we shall do it!"

And there was a general nodding of bald heads.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In Doubt.

JIMMY SILVER & CO. were out of the Form-room when Mornington came up to the school gates.

The gates were open now, and Morny came in, nodding coolly to the chums of the Fourth.

"Come back for it?" asked Lovell.

"For what, old top?"

"The flogging."

"You'll get it pretty stiff, Morny," said Jimmy Silver. "I really don't know what else you expected."

Mornington shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't think there's a floggin' for me," he answered.

Tubby Muffin met Mornington as he entered the School House.

"You're in for it, Morny!" the fat Classical announced.

"Well, Fatty, in for what?"

"Mr. Egerton has got the Head in his study with him," said Tubby, with a fat grin. "The phone bell's been going in the Head's study like—like anything, and now the Head's come buzzing to see Mr. Egerton. They're deciding what to do with you, I think. You'll get flogged, you know!"

Mornington smiled.

He thought he could guess why the Head had gone to see Mr. Egerton after the phone bell had buzzed.

He glanced towards the Form master's study, and as he did so the door opened and Dr. Chisholm appeared.

The Head paused in the doorway to speak to the master within, and his manner as Morny noted, was all graciousness.

"My dear Egerton"—the juniors heard his words—"say no more! My confidence is complete—quite complete! I have simply informed you of Mr. Bootles' statements because I felt that you had a right to know. I regard them, personally, with utter contempt!"

Dr. Chisholm had his back to the juniors, and did not see them.

The master of the Fourth was still invisible, inside the study, but Morny and Tubby Muffin heard his reply:

"Thank you very much, Dr. Chisholm!"

"Not at all, Mr. Egerton. I may add that if I receive a letter from the headmaster of Highwood I shall place it in your hands immediately I have read it."

"Surely Mr. Bootles will not—"

"I fear that he will not hesitate to cause trouble, if he can; he appears to be very bitter," said the Head.

"However, even Mr. Bootles will have the grace to offer an apology when your former headmaster has actually written to me corroborating your statements."

"No doubt, sir. You will probably receive the letter soon."

"To-morrow, probably. I shall inform you at once."

"Thank you, sir."

"Not at all—not at all."

Dr. Chisholm rustled away, Mornington and Muffin backing into a window recess before he saw them.

The study door closed.

Tubby Muffin blinked at Mornington in great excitement as the Head disappeared.

"Has Bootles been slanging Egerton, to the Head, Morny?" he asked breathlessly.

"Better ask the Head!" yawned Mornington. And he walked away.

Mornington was not feeling quite easy in his mind now.

The Head's manner and speech showed that his confidence in Mr. Egerton had not been shaken by Mr. Bootles' telephone message, whatever that had been.

In these circumstances, it was certain that the Head would administer a flogging if Morny's conduct was reported to him; and Morny wondered whether Mr. Egerton had reported it.

Jimmy Silver & Co. found Mornington lounging in the hall when they came in.

"Not called over the coals yet?" asked Lovell.

"Not yet."

"That's queer."

Neither had Mornington been called up when the dinner-bell rang.

He came into the dining-room with the rest of the Classical Fourth, and took his place calmly at the dinner-table, with all eyes on him.

Mr. Egerton took Mr. Bootles' old place at the head of the table.

He gave a slight start as his eyes fell on Mornington.

It was pretty clear that he had forgotten all about the junior and his rebellious conduct in the Form-room, and only the sight of Morny recalled the affair to his mind.

That in itself was surprising enough to the Fourth; they could not easily imagine such an incident escaping a Form master's memory.

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY...PRICE 2:

The Tyrannical New Masters are Sacked! What Happens Then?

It did not surprise Valentine Mornington. He was aware that there were much more serious matters occupying Mr. Egerton's mind at present, if Mr. Bootles' statements about him were correct.

Taking that much for granted, the man must know that ere twenty-four hours had elapsed he would be exposed in his true colours, and the gates of Rookwood would close behind him, and in such circumstances he was not likely to give much thought to a disrespectful junior.

He did not speak to Mornington at dinner, at which he sat silent and thoughtful.

Mornington went out with the rest of the juniors, all of them wondering at Morny's good luck.

When the Fourth came into the Form-room for the afternoon, however, Mr. Egerton called Morny before the class.

The junior had no doubt whatever that Mr. Egerton did not care twopence about what had happened that morning, but it was necessary for him to keep up appearances so long as he remained at Rookwood.

"Mornington," said Mr. Egerton quietly

the dormitory, and Jimmy Silver sat up and blinked round him in the gloom.

"Who's getting up?"

"Quiet!"

"Morny!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver, as the whispering voice came from the shadows.

"Yes. Hush!"

"But what's this game?" asked Jimmy. "I suppose you're not going to raid the Moderns on your lonesome?"

Mornington laughed softly.

"No. I'm goin' down, though."

"What for?"

"To see that the school isn't robbed to-night."

Jimmy Silver jumped.

"Wha-a-t?" he stuttered.

"This is dear old Egerton's last night here," answered Mornington coolly. "He will be shown up to-morrow, and given the order of the boot."

"Ass!"

Jimmy Silver turned over and settled down to sleep again.

The dandy of the Fourth had almost finished dressing.

It was broken at last, and Morny felt a thrill run through him.

In the corridor a soft, stealthy footstep came faintly to his ears.

He was not the only one stirring in Rookwood.

He had been certain, yet this confirmation of his certainty made his heart throb.

He did not move, but his eyes were strained to penetrate the deep darkness of the corridor before him.

A glimpse of a moving shadow caught his eye, and the stealthy footsteps stopped outside the door of the Head's study.

Click!

Mornington smiled in the darkness.

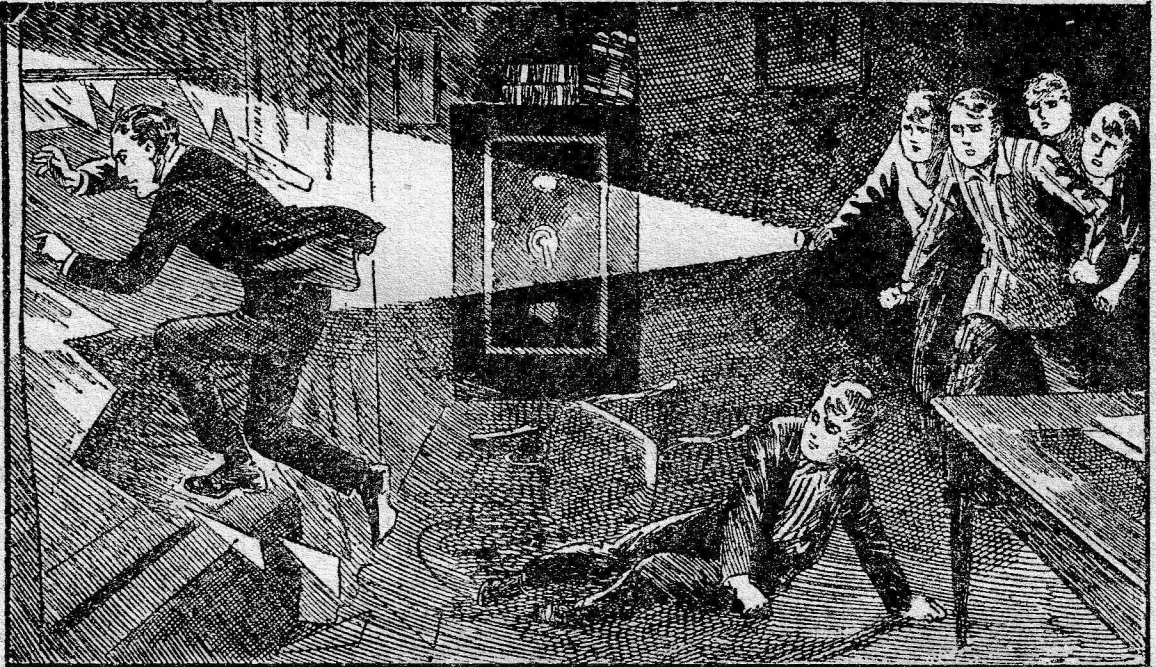
The study door was open now.

It had been locked when Mornington tried it, and now it was open.

The lock had been picked, and little more proof was wanted.

Another faint, stealthy sound—the shadow had disappeared into the Head's study. The door softly closed.

Mornington tiptoed towards it.



IN FLIGHT!—There was a rapid patter of footsteps in the corridor. "This way!" shrieked Mornington. Crash! Bulkeley came dashing into the study with a mob at his heels, and even as he came the crackman leaped through the broken window, and vanished into the darkness without. (See Chapter 6.)

and kindly, rather to the junior's surprise, "you acted very disrespectfully this morning."

"Yes, sir."

"I have considered whether to report your conduct to the Head," said Mr. Egerton. "You are aware, of course, that you would be flogged if I did so. I have decided to pardon you, Mornington, and to give you another chance. I hope that we shall become better friends in future."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mornington.

"You may go to your place."

Mornington went back to his desk.

"He's a brick, Morny!" whispered Erroll reproachfully, as his chum sat down.

"He's a thief!" answered the dandy of the Fourth.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

In the dead of night.

"W HAT—who's that?"

Jimmy Silver awoke suddenly, and sat up in bed.

It was two hours since Bulkeley of the Sixth had seen lights out in the Fourth-Form dormitory.

The half-hour after eleven had chimed out.

There was a movement in the darkness of

He put on a pair of rubber shoes and moved quietly to the door.

He descended the stairs without a sound, in his rubber shoes, and moved along cautiously and quietly to the corridor leading to the Head's study.

In that apartment was the safe, and if Morny's suspicions were well-founded, that would be the thief's objective.

It was known well enough that the Head kept money and securities in the safe; probably a handsome haul for a crackman.

Morny reached the study door and turned the handle softly.

It did not open; the door was locked and the key gone.

The junior stepped back into a window-recess a short distance away and waited.

He heard midnight toll out from the clock-tower.

It was cold in the corridor, and Mornington shivered a little, but his resolution did not falter.

He was determined to keep up the watch, if he had to wait there through all the long, dark hours till dawn.

One!

In the deep silence of the night the solitary stroke from the clock-tower boomed eerily.

Dead silence followed.

From within the study came a glimmer of light.

And then there came a faint, grinding sound, the sound of a steel drill working upon iron.

Mornington's eyes glittered.

There was no doubt now, if there had been any doubt before.

The crackman was at work upon the safe, and had already left traces that could not be concealed or denied.

It remained only to give the alarm, and to effect the capture of the false Form master.

The sound of the drill suddenly stopped.

Mornington was moving away softly, his intention being to call Bulkeley of the Sixth before allowing the crackman to suspect that he was discovered.

But as he moved from the door it opened.

The light was out again, a shadow in the darkness loomed over Mornington, and he heard hard, quick breathing.

He could not repress a gasp, and the next instant a fierce grasp was upon him.

He had not been heard.

It was caution on the crackman part that had made him open the door, to listen in the corridor before proceeding with his nefarious task—a long one.

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Will the Head Give In? See "A Successful Campaign!"—Next Week's Tale of Rookwood!

But the action came as a surprise to Mornington, and he was discovered.

A shudder ran through the schoolboy as the fierce grasp closed on him, but he gathered all his courage and resisted.

"Silence!" hissed a voice.

A hand was groping for Mornington's mouth, while another held him in a grip of iron.

It was to silence him, but it was not quite enough.

"Help!"

That one loud shout rang through the silent house before the groping hand closed over the junior's mouth.

It rang and echoed far and wide.

There was a curse in the darkness, and Morny's mouth was covered, and he was borne to the floor.

A knee was planted on his chest, pinning him down, and the hard hand gripped his mouth with savage force, silencing him.

Morny, half-throttled, wriggled painfully under the weight of the cracksmen, unable to struggle as he was dragged into the study.

He knew that the man above him was listening with fierce intentness to learn whether his shout had been heard and the alarm given.

It had been heard; it could not have failed to be heard.

Already there was a sound of opening doors above.

"Who's that? What is it?" It was the deep voice of Bulkeley of the Sixth Form.

"Who called?"

Mornington heard a savage oath above him.

His mouth was released; it was useless to keep him silent now.

Blows rained upon him from his unseen assailant.

In his rage and desperation the ruffian was wreaking his wrath upon the junior who had foiled him.

"Help!" yelled Mornington. "Oh, help! Burglars! Help! Help! Help!"

Lights flashed on the staircase.

"We're coming!" shouted Bulkeley.

There was a rapid patter of footsteps in the corridor.

The cracksmen was fleeing.

"This way!" shrieked Mornington. "Stop him!"

Crash—crash!

Lights gleamed along the corridor.

The window looking on the quadrangle was flying in fragments under the cracksmen's desperate blows.

Bulkeley of the Sixth came dashing into the room with a mob at his heels, and even as he came the cracksmen leaped through the broken window and vanished into the darkness without.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Coals of Fire!

"MR. EGERTON!"

Bulkeley yelled out the name in astonishment.

The light of his lamp flared full upon the cracksmen as he leaped, and for one moment he saw the new master of the Fourth.

Then the darkness swallowed him up.

The captain of Rookwood stood rooted to the floor.

"Mr. Egerton!" shouted Erroll. "Then Morny was right!"

"Egerton!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Mornington came panting up.

There was blood on his face, where the cracksmen's cruel blows had struck.

"After him!" he shouted. "It's Egerton—he's been opening the Head's safe! After him!"

"Hark!" exclaimed Jimmy Silver.

From the darkness of the quadrangle came the sounds of a desperate struggle.

"Somebody's got him!" yelled Lovell.

"The sergeant, perhaps! Come on—let's get out!"

There was a rush for the door.

Outside the sounds of struggle continued, with a scuffling of feet, a panting of hurried breath, and sharp ejaculations.

The big door was dragged open.

As it swung back the Head's voice was heard.

Dr. Chisholm, in his dressing-gown, had arrived, pale and startled.

"Bulkeley—what—what—" he stuttered.

"Burglary, sir, I think!" said Bulkeley.

"Mr. Egerton—"

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"Impossible!"

"He's left his drill in your study, sir," said Mornington. "He's been drilling your safe."

The Head passed a hand over his dazed brow.

Without a word he hurried along to his study, and turned on the light there. But he went alone.

Bulkeley and the rest rushed into the quadrangle in a shouting mob.

Half Rookwood was downstairs now, in a state of more or less attire—mostly less.

A dozen lamps or bike-lanterns shone in the shadowy quadrangle.

The struggle there had ceased.

A bunch of figures could be seen gathered round a man on his back on the ground, holding him down.

"Mr. Bootles!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

"The merry strikers!" said Lovell. "Oh, my hat! The old masters have bagged the new master!"

"Great Scott!"

Mr. Greely's fat knee was planted on the cracksmen's chest.

Mr. Mooney and Mr. Wiggins were holding his wrists.

Mr. Bootles, hardly conscious of what he was doing in his excitement, was trampling on the hapless man's legs, and Mr. Bull had both hands buried in the man's hair, and was tugging.

Monsieur Monceau was dancing round the group in frantic excitement, gesticulating as if for a wager.

Mr. Mooney and Mr. Wiggins were binding the wretched man's wrists together with a cord; they had evidently come prepared.

The Rookwood crowd surrounded them with wondering stares.

"Safe now!" said Mr. Greely grimly; and he removed his heavy knee from Mr. Egerton's chest at last. "Let the scoundrel get up!"

Cyril Egerton was dragged to his feet.



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His face was deadly pale, his eyes hunted and despairing. The attack in the quadrangle had taken him utterly by surprise, at a moment when he had believed that his liberty, at least, was secure.

"Here comes the Head!" murmured Jimmy Silver.

Dr. Chisholm, pale and agitated, came out of the School House and approached the group, the Rookwooders making way for him.

He stared at the sight of his former staff, but his eyes fixed upon the haggard face of the cracksmen.

"You!" said the Head. "You have deceived me—you have attempted to rob me—" He broke off. "Mornington, it appears to be you who gave the alarm. I am very much obliged to you, my boy; you have saved me from a very serious loss!"

Dr. Chisholm glanced at his former masters.

"May I ask how you came here?" said the Head quietly.

"We came, sir," said Mr. Greely, in his rich, rolling voice—"we came by the side gate, sir, to which I have still a key. We came, sir, to watch for the scoundrel, whom we knew perfectly well would not wait here till to-morrow to be exposed, and whom, we were assured, would rob you before he left—that having been his purpose in coming to Rookwood!"

Mornington gave Jimmy Silver a grin.

Jimmy had nothing to say.

Morny had been right, that was plain enough now, and the grin was on his side.

"We heard the disturbance," continued Mr. Greely. "We had waited a considerable time. At the call of duty, sir, we were prepared to wait, putting aside all considerations of rheumatism. We saw the window smashed, and this scoundrel, sir, jumped fairly into our arms, and we seized him."

"That, sir, is the whole story."

Mr. Greely paused, like Brutus, for a reply.

Perhaps he expected an outpouring of fervent gratitude from the Head.

Perhaps he anticipated a grateful, gracious request to let bygones be bygones, and resume the old duties at Rookwood—himself and the rest.

If so, he was disappointed.

The Head's look was calm and icy.

"I am very much obliged to you," he said. "It appears to be Mornington who prevented the robbery, and you have prevented the escape of the criminal. No doubt a very meritorious action."

"What!"

Mr. Greely drew himself up to his full height.

"Sir," he said, "we have done you a service. We have done the law of our country a service. Meritorious!"

"Yes, sir; no doubt the action is meritorious. Gentlemen, we had better go. This man shall be lodged in the police-station, Dr. Chisholm; after that the affair concerns you, and not us."

"If you do not perceive, sir, that coals of fire have been heaped on your head, the fault is not ours. Gentlemen, let us go!"

And they went—with the prisoner in their midst.

Dr. Chisholm glanced round.

"You will all go back to bed at once," he said.

The Rookwooders crowded into the House.

Mornington went up to the Fourth Form dormitory with his Form-fellows, and in the dorm he bathed his damaged face before turning in.

Eager questions were showered on him on all sides as he towelled his face.

"Morny was right," said Jimmy Silver.

"The man took us in—there's no mistake about that. We've lost our Form master again!"

"And a good riddance!" said Lovell.

"No doubt about that. And—and I think the Head ought to have made it up with the masters, after what they've done!"

"Hear, hear!"

"And I've got this to say," continued Jimmy Silver. "The Head can be as obstinate as he likes, but we're fed-up with his masters, and with the whole game—and we're going to have Bootles and the rest back. And the campaign begins to-morrow!"

And there was a loud cheer in the Fourth Form dormitory. That point was settled at last, without a dissentient voice, and the morrow was to see the beginning of Jimmy Silver's campaign.

THE END

(Jimmy Silver's great campaign commences! How does it end? See next week's topping story of Rookwood.)

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THE FIRST CHAPTER. Under Suspicion!

"WHAT'S on?" Bob Lawless asked that question.

Frank Richards & Co. had just arrived at school, and as they joined the group of Cedar Creek fellows in the playground there was a sudden silence.

Kern Gunten, the Swiss schoolboy, had been speaking, and several other fellows, too. A discussion was going on, when the three chums came up.

But the arrival of Frank and Bob and Vere Beauchere had the effect of a cold douche.

"What's on?" repeated Bob, looking at the group in surprised inquiry. "You were chewing the rag pretty lively a minute ago."

"Ahem!" grunted Chunky Todgers. Gunten grinned sarcastically.

"I guess I'll tell you, if you like," he said. "It's all rot!" said Tom Lawrence. "I don't believe a word of it! Richards ought to be told, though."

"Little me?" said Frank Richards, with a smile. "Well, go ahead!"

"Cut in, Gunten!" said Eben Hacke. "I don't say I believe it myself, exactly," said Gunten cautiously. "But the galoot is coming here, that's a cert!"

"What galoot?" asked Bob. "Four Kings, of Thompson."

Frank Richards started. He had reason to remember that peculiar name.

"Four Kings!" he exclaimed. "Oh, you know the man?" grinned Gunten.

"I've met him once," answered Frank Richards. "He's a thorough rascal!"

"That's a cinch," remarked Chunky Todgers. "He's a bad man, and the sheriff has had an eye on him for a long time. He'll be ridden on a rail out of town one of these days."

"The sooner the better!" exclaimed Vere Beauchere. "You say that he is coming here, Gunten?"

"Correct!"

"To see Frank?"

"That's it."

"Well, let him come," said Frank Richards quietly. "But I don't see how you know anything about it, Gunten—unless that ruffian is an acquaintance of yours."

"Oh, I see the fellow about Thompson, of course!" said Gunten carelessly. "He was starting on the trail when I came to school this morning. I passed him, as he was on foot. He spoke to me, that's all. He told me he was coming here to show you up."

"The rotten mugwump!" growled Bob Lawless.

"He says you're the chap who's been lifting gold from the claims at night, and he knows

it," continued Gunten. "He says he caught you at it. He's going to give you away all round."

Frank Richards' cheeks reddened. Very curious glances were thrown at him by the Cedar Creek fellows.

It was easy to see that few, if any, believed the allegations, but it was odd, to say the least, that Four Kings should come to the school with such a story if there was no foundation at all for it.

The unknown claim-robber was a subject of much discussion in the section, but no one had thought of suspecting that a schoolboy of Cedar Creek was the guilty party.

"He says that you called on him at the Red Dog, in Thompson, to buy him off," went on Gunten. "He wouldn't touch your money."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" ejaculated Bob Lawless. "He says that, does he?"

"You went to the Red Dog yesterday, Richards," remarked Chunky Todgers.

"That's so," assented Frank. He looked round at the curious schoolboys, his colour deepening. "I'll tell you fellows how the matter stands. This man, Four Kings, as he calls himself, wrote to me here. You saw Injun Dick bring me his letters. I went to the Red Dog to see what his game was. He wanted to get money out of me."

"What for?" grinned Gunten. "He's got no claim on you unless—"

"He thought I was the claim-robber," said Frank quietly. "He was prowling round the creek one night, he explained to me, and he caught a boy there who was robbing the claims. He couldn't see him clearly in the dark, but the fellow told him that he belonged to this school, and gave him my name. Of course, he gave a false name."

"Isn't that rather a steep yarn?" said Gunten.

"I don't think so. If Four Kings hadn't been a fool, he wouldn't have supposed that the thief would give him his own name."

"Why should he pick on your name specially?" sneered Gunten.

Frank Richards looked steadily at the Swiss.

"I think he picked on my name because he's an enemy of mine," he answered quietly.

"I can't think of any other reason. The thief must have been a fellow who knew me and my name, and had a grudge against me. You are the only fellow here who answers to that description, Gunten."

"What?"

"Don't I speak plainly?" said Frank coolly.

"That's what I suspect. I suspect that you are the claim-robber, Gunten, and that you gave my name when you were caught."

There was a buzz among the Cedar Creek fellows.

Bob Lawless grinned. He rather liked plain speaking himself.

"You—you dare to accuse me?" panted Gunten at last.

"I'm not accusing you," said Frank. "I think it's very probable. I shouldn't have spoken my suspicions if you hadn't taken this line, Gunten. But you're trying to throw suspicion on me, and so I feel entitled to speak out, though, of course, I haven't any proof. But one thing's certain—if the claim-robber was a Cedar Creek fellow at all, it was you!"

"Straight from the shoulder, by gum!" chuckled Bob.

Kern Gunten clenched his hands hard. He had been "out" to make as much capital as he could out of this story against the English schoolboy, but he certainly had not expected the tables to be turned in this way.

"It's a lie!" said the Swiss thickly. "You know it's a lie, Richards!"

"Nothing of the sort! Someone gave my name instead of his own, and you're the fellow likeliest to do it," said Frank. "It's just one of your rotten tricks, in fact."

Some of the Cedar Creek fellows chuckled. Kern Gunten's face was quite entertaining at that moment.

"As for this fellow Four Kings," went on Frank, "he is a scoundrel! He wanted to get money out of me to keep it dark, believing that I was the chap he had caught lifting dust from the claims. When I found out what he wanted I answered him plain enough. And then he tried to rob us in the Red Dog, and there would have been bad trouble if Injun Dick hadn't chipped in and taken his revolver away. He's no business to come here. If he thinks I am a claim-robber, he should go to the sheriff about it."

"I guess so," agreed Lawrence.

"If he comes here, it will be to stick me for money, if he can," said Frank. "He will get a plain answer, too. Let him come if he likes."

"Talk of angels!" grinned Hopkins. "Ere he comes!"

A burly man had appeared in the gateway, and the schoolboys recognised at once Four Kings, the loafer of Thompson.

He strode straight towards the group. Frank Richards and his chums eyed him calmly as he came up.

The ruffian fixed his eyes on Frank with a threatening stare.

"I guess you're my mutton!" he announced. "I guess I've moseyed along to see you, Mister Frank Richards. This hyer is your last chance to pony up the fifty dollars you owe me!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Frank Richards' Answer!

THERE was a dead silence when Four Kings had spoken.

Bob Lawless and Vere Beauclerc drew nearer to their chum, in anticipation of trouble.

The other fellows looked on, wondering what was going to happen.

Frank Richards set his lips hard. The ruffian evidently believed his own story, that Frank was the fellow he had caught on the claims at night.

But that was no justification for his attempt to obtain money from the schoolboy. His duty was to make his statement to the sheriff of Thompson.

"I guess you'd better pay up," continued Four Kings. "Mind, I'm hyer on cold business. I'm going to the schoolmarm. Arter that, I guess I'm going to money round to Sheriff Henderson. Now, what's the verdict, hay?"

"You want an answer to that?" asked Frank.

"Co-rect."

"Here it is, then!"

Frank rushed forward as he spoke, and struck out.

The blow caught Four Kings on the point of his bristly chin, and he went backwards like a sack of coal.

Crash!

There was a roar of rage from the ruffian as he went down on his back.

His hand flew to his belt, evidently for a weapon, but he had no chance of drawing it.

Bob Lawless was too quick for him, and his heavy boot clumped on the rascal's wrist in time.

A revolver went whirling through the air, and Four Kings uttered a howl of pain.

The next moment Frank Richards' knee was on the ruffian's chest.

Bob Lawless grasped his wrists, and held them fast.

Four Kings struggled, but in vain.

"Get a trail-rop, Cheruh!" shouted Bob.

"What-ho!"

Beauclerc ran up with the trail-rop.

With the excited crowd of schoolboys buzzing round him, Four Kings had his hands bound securely together.

He kicked out furiously, but Bob stamped on his legs without mercy, and he soon gave that up.

"Now, you brute," said Frank Richards, "you could be sent to the calaboose for drawing a weapon here! Chuck that pistol into the creek, Chunky!"

"You bet!" grinned Chunky Todgers.

"Now you're going to be cleared out," continued Frank Richards. "You've tried to get money out of me, and you claim to have information about the claim-robber. You're going to the sheriff."

Four Kings panted.

"Trot out the horses, Bob!"

"I—I say, Frank—"

"I'm going to take him to Sheriff Henderson," said Frank Richards resolutely. "He's accusing me of robbing the claims. He can make that accusation again before the sheriff. You fellows can come if you like."

"Oh, we'll come; but the bell goes in a minute."

"Can't be helped."

"Oh, all O.K." said Bob. "Then we'd better get off before Miss Meadows sees this beauty."

Beauclerc was already leading the horses out of the corral.

"Come along!" said Frank, dragging on the rope that bound Four Kings' wrists together.

"I guess I'll have your life for this!" yelled Four Kings.

"Will you come?"

"Nope."

"You'll be dragged, then."

The two schoolboys put force on the rope, and the ruffian was yanked along into the gateway.

The excited crowd followed.

Kern Gunten was looking on with a sneering grin. But he did not venture to interfere.

Beauclerc had the horses outside the gates, and Frank Richards fastened the loose end of the trail-rop to the saddle of his pony.

Then he mounted.

Four Kings yelled furiously as the pony started.

As he refused to rise to his feet and walk, he was dragged bodily along on the rough trail in a series of bumps.

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Naturally, he very soon had enough of that. He jumped to his feet and ran after the rider, to keep pace with the pony, panting with rage.

His face was inflamed with fury, and if his hands had been free just then, and he had had a weapon, there was no doubt that Four Kings would have earned a noose upon the spot.

Fortunately, he was not able to do any damage.

Miss Meadows had come out of the school-house, but the three chums were gone before she could reach the spot.

Tom Lawrence explained the matter to the schoolmistress, and the Cedar Creek fellows went in to morning lessons in a state of great excitement.

Meanwhile, Frank Richards & Co. were trotting along the Thompson trail, Four Kings following at the end of the trail-rop.

Half-way to Thompson the ruffian was panting breathlessly.

The strong fire-water of the Red Dog did not conduce to physical fitness, and Four Kings was feeling the strain of the long run.

And as they drew nearer and nearer to the sheriff's residence, the ruffian's fury gave place more and more to uneasiness.

He had no proof against Frank in the matter of the claim-robbery, for his word was quite worthless, and his attempt at blackmail showed that his interest in the matter was only a rascally one.

Sheriff Henderson was, in fact, the very last man in the Thompson Valley whom Four Kings was desirous of meeting.

"Let up, gents!" he gasped at last, as he trotted wearily after the horses. "Give a galoot a chance."

"Oh, keep it up," said Bob Lawless, glancing back. "This will do you good."

"I guess I don't want to go to any old sheriff," gasped Four Kings.

"It's too late to think of that," answered Frank Richards. "You've accused me of claim-robbery, and you've got to stick to it."

Four Kings groaned.

"Don't be hard on a galoot, gents," he pleaded. "I own up I made a mistake in the dark. That young galoot gave me your name. I see now as he was lying. I guess I got the wrong antelope by the tail. Let up! I'll clear out of the section, if you like. I'll go over the line. Honest!"

Frank Richards slackened rein.

The ruffian had angered him, but his complete surrender disarmed the good-natured schoolboy.

Four Kings had evidently come to his senses, and was convinced now that the unknown claim-robber had fooled him by using a borrowed name.

And he had many little accounts to answer for, if once he was placed in the hands of the sheriff on a serious charge.

"Oh, let him go through with it," said Bob. "The sheriff will be glad of a chance of nailing him. We don't want his sort loose in this section."

"I'll light out!" gasped Four Kings.

Frank halted.

"Let's give him a chance," he said. "If he clears out of Canada, that's good enough."

"Oh, all right," said Bob. "You're a soft-hearted duffer, Frank. But let the brute go, if you like." And Vere Beauclerc nodded assent.

Frank Richards gave the panting ruffian a stern look.

"You'll clear out of this section, over the line?" he asked.

"Yep."

"Mind, we shall look for you to-morrow, and if you're still in Thompson, we go to the sheriff and make a charge against you," said Frank.

"I guess I'll vamoose instanter," said the ruffian. "I ain't no hog. I know when I've had enough."

"You can clear, then!" said Frank contemptuously.

He untied the trail-rop, and the ruffian stood free.

The run after the horses had exhausted him, and he staggered away in the direction of Thompson.

Frank Richards & Co. wheeled their horses, and rode back to the lumber school.

They arrived there an hour late for lessons.

Miss Meadows quietly told them to go to their places, and nothing more was said just then, but after lessons the schoolmistress called the chums into her study, and Frank had to give an explanation of the whole affair.

He did so quite candidly.

"I am sorry you let the man go," said Miss Meadows quietly. "I do not believe one word against you, Richards, but I am afraid some suspicion will cling until the claim-robber is caught. However, it cannot be helped now. You may go."

Frank Richards looked very thoughtful as he left the schoolmistress.

He soon found that Miss Meadows was right.

A crowd of fellows wanted to know what had been done with Four Kings; and when Frank explained that he had been allowed to escape there was a mocking laugh from Kern Gunten.

The Swiss did his best to spread the impression that Frank had allowed Four Kings to go free because he feared to take him to the sheriff, and, although he did not quite succeed, there was a lingering doubt in a good many minds.

Frank Richards for once was under a cloud at the backwoods school, and he was very silent and thoughtful for the remainder of that day.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Three on the Track!

"PENNY for 'em, Franky!" said Bob Lawless, when the three chums were leaving Cedar Creek School after lessons.

"I've been thinking—" began Frank Richards, as they trotted down the trail into the timber.

"My dear chap, you've been looking like a moulting crow all day!" chuckled Bob Lawless. "Are you worrying about Gunten's rotten yarns?"

"I was thinking of knocking those yarns on the head, and perhaps Gunten, too!" said Frank.

"I was thinking of that," said Beauclerc quietly. "The claim-robber has got to be found, Frank."

"That's it," said Frank. "Look here, you fellows. There's no doubt that Four Kings actually found a kid about my age and size at the claims the other night, who gave him my name. I can't help suspecting Gunten. It was just one of his tricks. Who else would have thought of giving my name? Only a fellow who had a grudge against me, and Gunten's the only enemy I've ever had."

"Correct!"

"Well, I don't say it's Gunten, but I think very likely it is," said Frank. "But Gunten or not, the rotter's got to be found, or this yarn will cling to me. We're going to find him if we can."

"My idea exactly," said Vere Beauclerc.

"How are you going to work the riddle, though?" asked Bob thoughtfully. "We live a thumping long way from the creeks, at the ranch. It won't be easy to keep a watch on the claims."

"That's the only way, though."

Bob whistled.

"But that isn't all," said Frank. "Three of us could keep watch, but the claims go a long way along the creeks, and we couldn't watch a tenth part of the ground the robber might come to. But we suspect Gunten—at least I do!"

"Same here! Cut on!"

"Well, my idea is to watch Gunten's place in Thompson, and see whether he sneaks out at night," said Frank. "We can't watch all the claims, but if Gunten gets out at night to go there, we can watch him, and catch him at it. I think that's justifiable, in the circumstances."

"I guess so!" Bob Lawless nodded. "But the claim-robber isn't at work every night. It looks as if it may be a big job."

"That's so; but there hasn't been a robbery at the claims for nearly a week now," said Frank. "That's a long interval, and it looks as if the thief has had a scare—and he has, of course, from Four Kings having collared him that night. Well, Gunten knows now that Four Kings has been cleared out of Thompson, and that will make him feel easy in his mind again, if it's Gunten. Well, then, if it's Gunten, he's jolly likely to try again to-night!"

Bob nodded.

"That's so; he'll know the coast is clear, so far as that spying bulldozer is concerned," he remarked.

"There's another reason, too," added Frank. "Gunten was playing poker in the

old corral to-day, and he lost money. If he makes good his losses by robbing the placers, he will be at it again soon."

"Likely enough."

"But if we don't spot him one night we may another," said Frank. "I'm ready to watch for a week to catch him at it. He's tried to throw it on me, and it's up to us to put the guilt where it belongs. I don't know what your pater will say about our going out at night, that's all, Bob. Uncle will have to know, I suppose."

"I can fix that," said Beauclerc. "My father's away at Kamloops, and I'm alone at the shack now. Stay with me to-night."

"Good man!" exclaimed Bob Lawless. "That's a clach! Look here, I'll cut home and tell popper that we're staying the night at Beau's shack. No need to worry him with details. And I'll get my lasso, in case we come on the claim-robber."

"Good!" said Frank.

And so it was arranged.

Frank Richards rode home with Vere Beauclerc, while Bob galloped on to the Lawless Ranch.

Beauclerc's home—the little wooden shack by the creek—was deserted now. The remittance man was away, and was likely to be absent for some days.

Few fellows would have cared to sleep alone in the lonely shack, surrounded by whispering woods. But Vere Beauclerc did not mind. He was not troubled with nerves.

But he was glad to have his chums with him, all the same, and it was certain that Mr. Lawless would heartily approve of Frank and Bob keeping him company while his father was away.

Beauclerc and Frank Richards had supper ready at the shack by the time Bob came trotting back from the ranch.

He had brought a bag with him and his lasso, as well as permission from Mr. Lawless for the two boys to remain at the shack.

"We'll turn in early, and get some sleep," said Bob, as they sat down to supper. "We can get two or three hours' snooze before it's necessary to get a move on. We don't want to nod off in class to-morrow, you know."

"No fear!" agreed Frank. "If we don't catch Gunten to-night, we've got to try again. If he spotted us nodding in class he might smell a rat."

After supper the chums turned into the bunks, and it was eleven o'clock when Bob Lawless rose and called his companions.

They turned out at once.

Outside there was a glimmer of moonlight above the trees, and the creek glistened as it murmured by the reedy banks.

The three horses were saddled, and the chums mounted, and rode away in the direction of Thompson.

They came out of the woods into the trail that ran from Cedar Camp to the town.

The schoolboys rode on till the buildings of Thompson were visible in the distance.

Then they dismounted, and the horses were tethered in a thicket.

"Shanks pony now," said Bob.

It was close on midnight when the chums entered the sleeping town of Thompson.

Gunten's Store was closed long ago, and both the store and the house were dark.

Bob Lawless led the way to the rear of the store.

Behind the store there were several out-buildings—stables, sheds, and store-houses.

Among them lay a path which led from the back of the store to the waste land outside the town.

If Gunten came out it was certain, of course, that he would not venture by way of the street in the front, where he might meet a belated pedestrian or a roysterer reeling home to his cabin.

If he came he would come cautiously by the back way, stealing along in the shadow of the out-buildings.

In an open shed, where a cart was upended, the three chums stopped to watch the path.

They were in complete shadow, and from where they stood they could see every possible way of leaving the store from the rear.

"I guess this is where we hang on," murmured Bob Lawless. "You galoots can squat down if you like and I'll keep watch."

But his chums were too keen for that, and all three of them remained watching from the shed and listening for the sound of footsteps.



AT THE END OF THE ROPE!—Four Kings jumped to his feet and ran after Frank Richards & Co. He was panting with rage, but the rope, tied from the pony to his hands never slackened, and he had to keep pace with the riders. (See Chapter 2.)

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

"HARK!"

Bob Lawless whispered the word under his breath.

It was just one o'clock now.

The lights were out in the Red Dog now, away across the main street of Thompson, and only occasionally came an echo from the street of the footsteps of some belated citizen tramping home.

It was a sound closer at hand that had caught Bob's keen ear.

Frank Richards and Beauclerc did not speak; they breathed hard, listening intently.

There was a faint footfall close at hand. From the deep darkness of the shed they watched the moonlight without, and their eyes gleamed as a dark figure flitted by.

Dim as the light was they recognised Kern Gunten.

He passed within six yards of the hidden schoolboys, and tramped on quietly and cautiously.

Had not the chums suspected Gunten before they would have suspected him now, so stealthy were his movements, and the glances he threw to right and left as he stole on.

"Follow on!" murmured Bob Lawless. "Keep in cover! He's bound to look back!"

"Right-ho!" breathed Frank.

Silently the chums stepped from the shed and followed on Kern Gunten's track.

They kept in the cover of the buildings till the latter were left behind, and then took advantage of trees and bushes to cover their movements.

Once or twice Gunten disappeared from sight, but they knew he was making for the creek, and it was easy to pick up the track again.

Near the creek there was a bunch of miners' shacks, and Gunten made a wide detour to avoid them.

Frank Richards drew a deep breath.

"There's no doubt about it now," he said in a low voice. "He's gone straight to the placer claims, Bob."

"Straight as a string," murmured Bob, preparing his lasso for a cast, and seeing that it was in perfect order. "I guess that galoot is going to have the surprise of his life. Come on, and not a sound!"

The moon had disappeared behind a cloud, and darkness lay upon the scene.

As the chums crept on in the gloom, close now to the mining creek, a faint sound came to their ears from ahead.

It was the jarring of a cradle.

The gold-thief was evidently at work.

Bob Lawless' hand tightened on his lasso as they crept closer on to the creek in the dark.

Their hearts were beating with excitement now.

Close by the bank they were within a short distance of the claim-robber, but the darkness hid him from sight.

As soon as the moon emerged from the bank of clouds they would see him. He was near enough for them to hear his movements.

With tense feelings they waited for the light.

A dim, silvery glimmer came from above as the clouds sailed slowly from under the moon.

The light strengthened.

It glimmered on the shallow creek, and on the beds of sand exposed by the wooden dams built out into the stream.

Many of the cradles, mostly built of osiers from the woods, were full of "dirt," as the miners called the auriferous sand from the bed of the creek.

With long and laborious toil the pan-dirt had been gathered up for the golden grains to be washed out in the cradles.

All was as it had been left by the placer-miners when they knocked off work at sundown.

Faintly from the creek came the creaking of the cradle where the gold-thief was at work, reaping the fruit of the labour of others.

The chums watched till the figure of the claim robber was clear to their view in the strengthening light.

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10 Free Real Photos of Football Teams starting in next week's "Magnet"!

Gunten had his back to them, standing ankle-deep in wet sand as he worked the cradle.

Bob Lawless grasped his lasso. He was almost near enough for a cast. Signaling to his comrades to remain where they were, Bob tiptoed towards the creek, lariat in hand.

He made no sound, but if he had done so the creaking of the cradle was sufficient to drown it.

Frank and Beaulere watched him breathlessly.

They caught their breath as his right arm rose for the cast of the noosed rope.

Whiz!

Gunten heard the sound as he bent at his nefarious occupation, and before he knew what was happening the loop was over his shoulders, and Bob Lawless was dragging it taut.

Gunten made a terrific, desperate wrench at the rope, and Bob dragged on it harder, and Gunten went sprawling over in the wet sand.

"Caught!" shouted Bob.

Frank and Vere Beaulere ran forward. From the bank the three chums looked down upon the wet sand, where Gunten lay sprawling helplessly in the grip of the lasso.

He was covered from head to foot with sand and mud, and panting with fear.

As yet he did not know who his captors were, and he was in deadly fear for his life.

Some, at least, of the placer-miners would not have hesitated to drive a bullet through the gold-thief if they had caught him at his work.

"Our game!" grinned Frank Richards. "Hurray!"

Gunten ceased to struggle with the rope, and looked up at the trio on the bank, recognising Frank Richards' voice, and then the chums themselves.

"You?" he panted. "Frank Richards?"

"We've caught the claim-robber!" chuckled Bob.

Gunten staggered to his feet.

"Don't try to loosen that rope, Gunten!" called out Bob. "I'll have you over if you do before you can say 'no sugar in mine'!"

"It—it's you, Lawless?"

"I guess so. Come out of the creek, you pesky rotter!" said Bob. "I'm going to walk you along to the cabins. The placer-men will be glad to see you."

Gunten panted as he clambered up the bank.

His face was white with terror.

"You—you won't give me up?" he breathed.

"Won't we?" grinned Bob. "I reckon that's what we're here for, you thief! You're going to get your deserts now! Bring him along, you fellows!"

Gunten fell on his knees.

"Lawless," he muttered hoarsely, "stop! They'll murder me—you know they will!"

"What do you deserve?" said Frank.

"You don't want to see murder done!" panted Gunten. "Take me to the sheriff, if you like—not to the miners!"

Bob Lawless nodded.

"I guess that's so," he agreed. "I reckon they'd drown you in the creek like a mangy dog if they got their hands on you, Gunten. You can come along and see the sheriff."

"Let me loose!"

"No fear!" grinned Bob. "You mosey along with us, my pippin, just as you are—mud and sand and all. When you start telling lies you can explain how you got wet and sandy all over. Come on!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Gunten Makes Amends.

RICHARDS!

Kern Gunten gasped out Frank's name as they reached the outskirts of Thompson. Frank glanced back at him.

Much as the wretched Swiss had injured him, Frank could not help feeling a little compassion as he looked at his white, terrified face.

"Let me off, Richards!" muttered Gunten. "For mercy's sake, don't take me to the sheriff! Think of my people—what they'll think!"

"It's too late now," said Frank. "You've tried to make the fellows at Cedar Creek believe that I was the claim-robber, Gunten. You've got to take the consequences of what you've done!"

"I'll undo what I've done! I'll—I'll own up at the school!" panted Gunten. "I—I don't mind that so much; only don't take me to the sheriff! I'll tell all Cedar Creek the truth, if you like. They won't give me away!"

Frank Richards hesitated, and glanced at his chums.

"Can't you see he's lying?" exclaimed Bob impatiently. "He'll say anything now; but if we let him loose he will deny it all tomorrow. We've got to nail him down while we've got proof."

"I suppose that's so," admitted Frank. "We can't trust you, Gunten. I'd let you off if I could, but you're too false."

"I swear it!" panted Gunten. "Look here, Richards! Take me to the school as I am—you needn't even let me loose. I'll stand that—I'll stand anything. It's not long to daylight now. Take me as I am to Cedar Creek, and tell the fellows everything when they come to school!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Bob Lawless.

"He's no right to ask anything of the kind," said Vere Beaulere. "But—but there's his people, Bob. They would feel this. I don't think Gunten will try claim-robbery again, so far as that goes. He's rascal enough, but he hasn't courage enough—after this!"

"I swear I won't!" groaned Gunten. "I'm sorry I ever thought of it! I'd been losing money at cards, or I'd never have done it! I'll never go near the claims again!"

Bob Lawless hesitated.

"I guess it means a night out for us," he said. "No reason why we should take so much trouble over a rotten thief!"

"Richards—" began Gunten.

"Oh, let Frank alone!" exclaimed Bob sharply. "He's a soft duffer, and he's going to let you off, if I let him. Look here, Gunten, we'll do it—you're not worth it—but we'll do it. But if you try to hedge at the school you go straight to Sheriff Henderson. If you don't own up to the whole story without beating about the bush, I'll yank you right away to the sheriff without giving you another chance. Savvy?"

"I mean business!" faltered Gunten.

"Mind you keep to that, then!"

Gunten almost sobbed with relief as the chums turned from the road into Thompson. The disgrace and shame at the school he could face, so long as he escaped the worse fate of being taken by the strong arm of the law and punished as he deserved.

"You cut off and get the horses, Franky," said Bob. "I'll keep this pilgrim in charge, and I'll take care he don't get loose."

Bob and Beaulere walked along the trail towards Cedar Creek with the captured claim-robber, while Frank went for the horses.

He overtook them an hour later, riding his own pony and leading the other two.

Then the chums kept on towards Cedar Creek.

There was a glimmer of dawn in the sky when they reached the school, but no sign of life yet about the place.

They had a long wait before there ere the earliest scholars arrived at Cedar Creek.

They halted a hundred yards from the gates, in the timber.

Gunten was still securely confined by the lasso.

The wretched rogue of the lumber school threw himself wearily at the foot of a tree to rest.

Bob took another turn of the lasso round him, and knotted it.

He did not mean to give the cunning Swiss the hair's-breadth of a chance for trickery.

Then the chums threw themselves in the grass, to rest in the growing warmth of the rising sun.

Frank Richards sat up, rubbing his eyes, as there was a clatter of hoofs on the trail.

Tom Lawrence and his sister Molly came in sight, riding towards the school, with Chunky Todgers and Keller and Dick Dawson.

Frank Richards & Co. jumped up, and Gunten struggled to his feet, his face crimson.

The riders halted in astonishment at the sight of the strange group.

"What the thunder's this game?" exclaimed Lawrence.

"Wait a bit!" grinned Bob. "Gunten's got a yarn to tell as soon as there's enough to hear it. Take a little rest."

In great curiosity the schoolboys dismounted, and soon there was a good crowd on the spot, as more and more of the scholars of Cedar Creek came along the trail.

As soon as the gathering numbered fifteen or sixteen—all in a state of great amazement—Bob Lawless judged that it was time for the climax.

He gave the lasso a jerk.

"Go ahead, Gunten!" he said. "And remember that, at the first lie, straight you go to the sheriff!"

But the rogue of Cedar Creek was not thinking of lying now, and he faltered out his confession.

He did not look up once.

"By gum," said Tom Lawrence, in utter disgust, "so Gunten's the gold-thief! And he was trying to make us think—"

"He tried to make us think it was Frank!" exclaimed Molly Lawrence, her eyes flashing. "He ought to be sent to prison!"

"I guess so!" said Chunky Todgers emphatically.

Gunten gave the chums a haggard look. Bob untied the lasso, and the Swiss stood free.

"You can vamoose!" said Bob contemptuously.

Without a word more Kern Gunten tramped up the trail for home.

Even the thick-skinned Swiss felt that he could not face his schoolfellows at Cedar Creek that day.

Frank Richards received a good many congratulations that day.

No one had really believed anything against him, but his friends were very glad when the matter was put beyond the shadow of a doubt.

As for Gunten, he found some pretext for remaining away from school for the last few days, before the holidays, hoping, perhaps, that when Cedar Creek gathered again after the vacation the matter would have been forgotten.

But before the holidays ended Frank Richards & Co. were destined to see the rogue of the lumber school again.

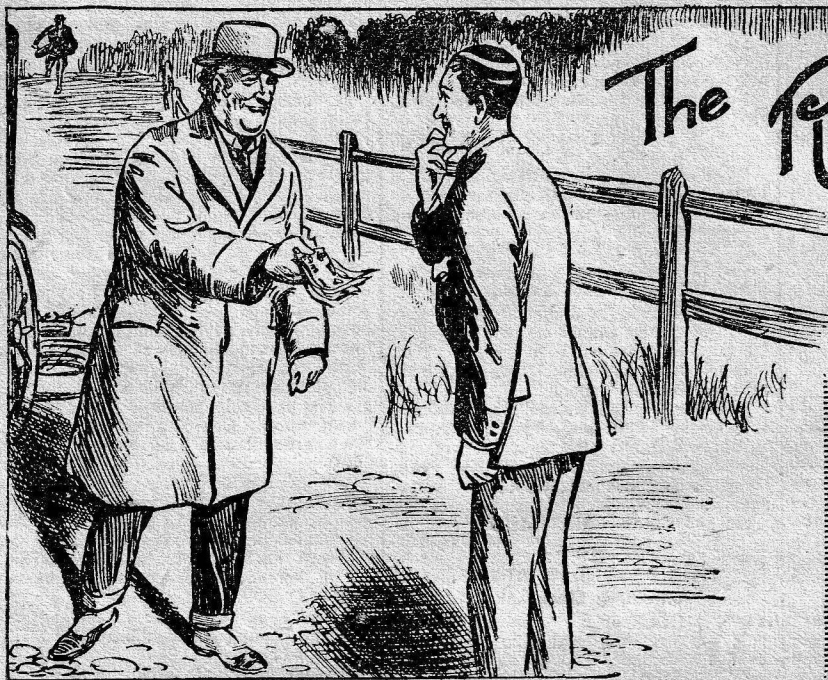
THE END.

Off for the Holidays, on the trail for Adventure into the Great Roaring North-West of Canada:—

"HEADING NORTH-WEST!"

is the title of next week's tale of FRANK RICHARDS & Co., of Cedar Creek, which is abounding in thrills and breathless escapes.

WHEN PLUCK SAVED HIS NAME!—Blundell, of the Fifth, learns a lesson that he will never forget—that "Honesty is the Best Policy" !



The Reward of Valour!

When Blundell, of the Fifth, borrows the funds from the games box, he finds himself in a very unpleasant position—but his pluck saves him in the eleventh hour. Read about it all below.

... By ...

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Despair—and Hope!

EVERYBODY at Greyfriars could sympathise with Blundell, of the Fifth.

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove, were particularly sympathetic. Blundell had entered for a competition, and had received a letter which had told him that he had been awarded the first prize of one hundred pounds.

One hundred pounds!

Blundell was simply wild with excitement. For many a month he had an eye on a motor-bike, and when that news had come through he had thoughtlessly borrowed a few pounds from the Fifth Form Club funds.

Then the blow fell. Blundell received not one hundred pounds, but one pound. Somebody at Greyfriars had altered his letter to read "one hundred pounds." Blundell would have given a term's pocket-money to know who that somebody was, and so would Harry Wharton & Co.

Billy Bunter knew Blundell's secret, and Billy Bunter, unfortunately, was far too obtuse to know that "borrowing" money from a fellow under threat of informing the Fifth that the club funds had been tampered with amounted to blackmail. Five shillings had left Blundell's pocket, and gone to Billy Bunter's.

There was only one thing to do. Blundell had to sell his motor-bike, and the afternoon of the day he received the blow he inserted an advertisement in the local paper. Then it was a question of waiting.

The trouble was that Blundell would have to show his accounts very soon, and when that day came Blundell was the most miserable fellow at Greyfriars.

So far Bunter had said nothing. But Blundell's very appearance told Harry Wharton & Co. that something was very wrong. And the Famous Five were concerned. Blundell was a decent chap, and they didn't like to see him in trouble.

The only junior who seemed highly pleased was Snoop, and the other juniors

surprised Snoop by giving him a sound bumping. After that Snoop took care to do his chuckling unobserved.

Blundell came down next morning—Saturday morning—looking pale and depressed. His mind was full of doubts. What was he going to do?

The Fifth Form meeting was to be to-night, and eight pounds of the club funds were missing—the bulk of the cash. So far, not a soul in the Fifth suspected the truth.

They all saw that Blundell was worried, but they naturally thought this was the result of his disappointment.

Blundell entered the hall, and glanced carelessly into the letter-rack. This morning he was not down so early, and the postman had already been.

There was a letter for him.

Blundell took it out, and opened it quickly. Then he gave a little gasp of relief.

The letter was from a man living in a little town twenty miles distant. He said he had seen Blundell's advertisement in the evening paper, and would like to see the motor-cycle the following afternoon—Saturday afternoon—with a view to purchasing it.

"Thank goodness!" muttered Blundell. "I'll make him buy it! If he only gives me fifteen quid I shall be satisfied!"

The wrinkles left his forehead, and he felt almost light-hearted. It was a half-holiday to-day, and he could easily run over during the afternoon.

He would get the money, and be back at Greyfriars by tea-time. Then he would make the club funds right, and take the chair at the committee meeting with a light heart.

And Blundell told himself that after this he would never touch another penny of money which did not belong to him as long as he lived. Whatever the circumstances, it was a risky thing to do.

He met Coker in the Close.

"Hallo!" said Coker. "You're looking happier!"

"Yes," replied Blundell.

"How about that motor-bike?" asked Coker. "You're in a bit of a hole, ain't you? Didn't you borrow the tin to buy it with on the strength of your whacking great prize?"

"Yes; but I think I shall be able to pay the money back to-day," replied Blundell. "I'm going to sell the machine, of course!"

Coker nodded.

"Poor old chap!" he said. "It's rotten for you!"

"I must make the best of it."

"I wish I knew who altered that form!" said Coker darkly. "My hat, I'd make the rotter sit up!"

Snoop passed by, and a chuckle came from him.

"Lend me a tenner, Blundell!" he grinned.

"You young rotter!" roared Coker angrily.

Snoop darted away, and Blundell looked thoughtful. He didn't exactly suspect Snoop, but certain things were beginning to form in his mind. Before he could think further breakfast-bell rang.

After morning lessons Blundell waited impatiently for dinner. To-day he ate a hearty meal, and then got his motor-bike out.

The news that he was going to sell it had got round, for Coker had mentioned it to several fellows—it was no secret—and a little crowd of juniors watched Blundell start.

"Wish you luck, Blundell," said Harry Wharton heartily.

"Thanks!"

"Don't break your giddy neck!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "It might come in useful to you some time."

"It's hard luck having to sell it as soon as you've got it," exclaimed Johnny Bull. "It's all the fault of that rotter who altered the form. If you find him, I suppose you'll bump him, Blundell?"

"If it's a junior," said Blundell. "I shall leave him to you—you'll punish him for me, won't you?"

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Another Astounding Tale of Greyfriars—"The Kidnapping of Hop Hi!"—Next Week!

"Rather!"

"You can do it better than I could," went on Blundell. "A mere lamming isn't good enough!"

"Do you think it was a junior?" asked Wharton.

"Yes; I think so."

And by pure chance Blundell's eyes rested for a second on Snoop. The sneak of the Remove turned a little white, and walked away.

Blundell started up, and was soon buzzing along the clean road. He was thankful that the weather still held fine.

He was in good spirits now, for he was certain that he could effect a sale. Possibly he would be able to get the full twenty-eight pounds for the machine.

He arrived at his destination without the slightest mishap, and he enjoyed the ride immensely. His only regret was that he had to sell the machine.

But it was the only way of saving the situation; it was the only thing he could do. Strictly speaking, the bike was not his at all, and he ought not to grumble.

And he didn't. He was quite cheerful as he pulled up outside a large house on the outskirts of the little town. He wheeled the machine up the drive, and rang the bell.

"I want to see Mr. Belton, please!" he said to the maidservant who answered his ring.

"Yes, I'll tell the master at once," she replied.

A minute later Mr. Belton presented himself. Mr. Belton was a small man of about thirty, and he looked at the motor-bike with interest.

"So that's the machine?" he asked, bending down and looking at the working parts critically.

"It's in splendid order," said Blundell eagerly. "I've just ridden it over from Greyfriars, and it came along flying."

"Um!" said Mr. Belton.

Blundell stood by anxiously.

"Rather old," remarked Mr. Belton. "Must be two or three years old. How does she climb hills?"

"Splendidly!"

"Quite so! And what's the figure?"

"Twenty-eight pounds," said Blundell.

"Twenty-eight pounds—eh?" repeated Mr. Belton. "It's too much, my lad—too much!"

"But I only bought the machine two days ago!" protested Blundell. "I paid twenty-eight pounds for it, and the shop-keeper said it was wonderfully cheap!"

"Motor-cycles are going very cheaply now," said Mr. Belton. "When they get a bit old they're out of date, and sell for nothing. I dare say this machine goes along first-rate."

"It does," said Blundell.

"H'm! Well, it's not so high-powered as I wanted, but it will do. I will give you twenty pounds for it provided that I find it runs well and is in perfect order."

"Good!" said Blundell in relief.

Mr. Belton smiled to himself. For twenty pounds the machine was dirt cheap; but the prospective purchaser was one of those very, very careful men. He did not want to buy a pig in a poke.

"That's settled, then?" he asked.

"Yes," said Blundell. "You can have it for twenty."

"Of course you will not object to my having it for a day or two on trial?" suggested Mr. Belton. "Or, at least, until Monday."

"On t-trial?" stammered Blundell.

"Exactly. I will go for a spin on it tomorrow and test it. If it is satisfactory,"

THE POPULAR.—No. 210.

I will send you a cheque by post to reach you on Monday."

"M-Monday!"

Blundell stared at Mr. Belton.

"I want the money to-day," he said, recovering himself. "It's most important I should have it to-day."

"To-day? Preposterous!" said Mr. Belton flatly.

"Well, eight pounds of it," said Blundell quickly.

"Not a penny, sir, until I know what I am buying. As a matter of fact, I have only five pounds in the house at the present moment."

"But—but I must have eight pounds to-day!" exclaimed Blundell helplessly.

Mr. Belton regarded him suspiciously.

"I think you had better keep your machine, young man," he said abruptly. "I am not prepared to pay for a thing before I have had time to examine it at leisure. Good-afternoon!"

And Mr. Belton walked up the steps, entered the house, and closed the door.

Blundell stared after him blankly, his face haggard again. The Fifth Form skipper's troubles seemed to be never-ending.

He had drawn blank again.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Something Unexpected!

"WELL, of all the funny little rotters, that chap takes the bun!" muttered Blundell. "What on earth shall I do now?"

He wheeled the motor-bike into the road, and looked up and down rather helplessly.

What could he do? Mr. Belton was no good as a purchaser. How could he get the eight pounds? The time was getting terribly short; it was well on in the afternoon now.

If he did not turn up for the committee meeting, Bland, Fitzgerald, or one of the other Fifth-Formers would take his place in the chair, and would discover the shortage in the funds. In five minutes the news would be over Greyfriars, and when Blundell returned he would be in dire disgrace.

"I must get back in time!" muttered Blundell frantically. "I must get the money! Oh, what shall I do—what the dickens shall I do?"

All his worries were heavy on his shoulders again. He had not sold the machine, and it was getting late. He stood there gazing unseeingly into the distance.

Then he suddenly clenched his teeth.

"I'll go back to the chap in Court-field," he decided. "It's simply rotten; but there's nothing else for it. It's humiliating, but it's the only way of getting the money. If I offer him the jigger for ten quid he simply can't refuse."

Blundell made up his mind. There was nothing else for it. He would lose eight pounds clear, but there was no other way out of the difficulty. Lord Mauleverer would be the one to suffer.

"But Mauly's rolling in money, and won't mind," thought Blundell. "I can write home, explain things, and try to get the mon- . . . If I had time it would be as simple as anything. But I haven't got time. I've got to get money to-day, or I'll be sacked from Greyfriars!"

It was a terrible thought. Any sacrifice was better than that. Once he had that eight pounds he would be content. But Fate seemed to be conspiring against him all along the line.

Blundell was being taught a bitter

lesson. He was being shown the folly of using money which was not his. No matter how certain he had been of replacing it, he ought not to have touched it. Hitches are always liable to occur, and disaster follows.

It was his endeavour to avert disaster. It meant sacrificing a lot, but that could not be helped.

"Yes," Blundell told himself, "I'll ride straight to Courtfield. It'll get me out of the trouble anyhow. By George, what an ass I was to buy the bike before the cheque arrived—what a silly ass!"

He was soon pop-popping along, and the miles were left behind him. Half way to Courtfield he stopped on the middle of a long, winding hill to put some oil into the crank-case. The oil-pump worked hard, and could not be operated from the saddle.

Blundell gave the engine one pumpful, and then prepared to mount again. He glanced up the long hill—for he had been going uphill, and had decided to give the engine oil before he essayed the long climb.

The road was clear.

No, something had appeared round a gradual curve. It was a brougham, and it seemed to be travelling fast.

It was tearing down the hill furiously. The horse was actually galloping.

"Well, the driver of that thing must be a silly chump," murmured Blundell. "Fancy coming down a hill like this at that rate!"

He stared at the approaching brougham, then started violently.

The box was empty!

The brougham had no driver at all!

Out of one of the side-windows a head was thrust, and Blundell could see that the hair of the owner of the head was white.

"Good heavens!" shouted Blundell.

The horse was running away. It was tearing down the hill at full gallop.

And there was no driver. Those in the body of the brougham could do nothing; it was impossible to reach the reins! The horse had its bit between its teeth.

From side to side the vehicle swayed, nearly running into the ditch. Then it got into the centre of the road again, and came onwards rapidly.

Blundell's heart beat like a sledge-hammer.

He glanced round. Not a soul was within sight. Farther down the hill was a sharp curve, bordered on either side of the road by a low stone wall.

"Great Scott!" gasped Blundell, agast. "There'll be a fearful accident! The brougham simply can't get round that corner."

That fact was only too evident. At the rate the vehicle was travelling the horse would endeavour to turn the corner, and the brougham would overturn.

It would crash into the wall, and splinter to matchwood.

The occupant, or occupants, would be crushed and battered in the wreckage. Death would be almost certain.

Blundell stood looking at the thundering brougham with staring eyes and pallid face.

"There's not a soul about!" he panted. "It'll mean death if I don't do something!"

He gave a frantic look round again, then rushed forward.

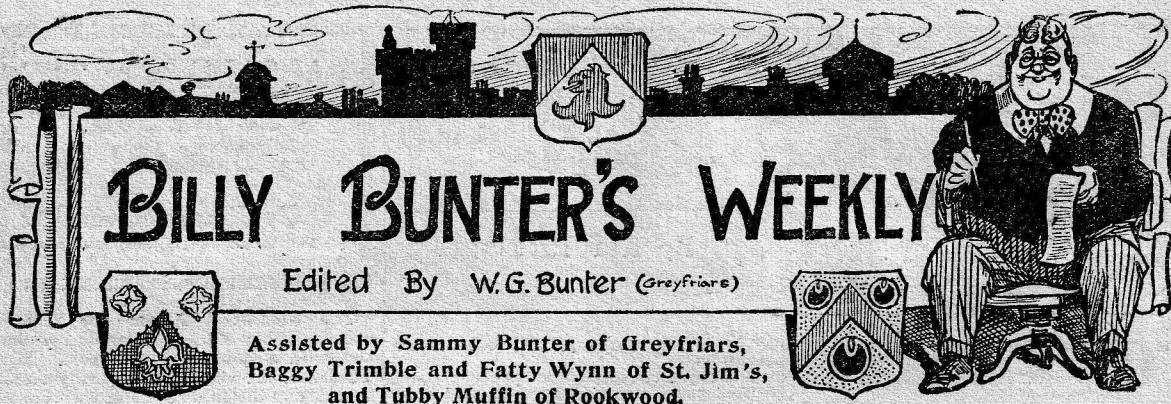
His teeth were set, his mind was made up.

He would make an attempt to stop the vehicle.

There was nothing else to be done.

(Continued on page 17.)

Who is the Mysterious Man who Kidnaps the Chinese of Greyfriars?



Supplement No. 107.

Week Ending January 27th, 1923.

GREYFRIARS SHOPPING NOTES!

By Bob Cherry.

Greyfriars is now a great commercial centre. You can buy anything you fancy, from a pin to a passenger-train. Our open-air market in the Close is surely one of the biggest attractions of modern times.

If it's tuck you want for a study celebration, Billy Bunter—now head cook and bottle-washer at the school tuckshop—will supply all your needs. Billy fancies himself in the role of tuckshop proprietor, and he tells me he is taking five pounds a day. Jolly good going—what? Incidentally, now that he is in the happy position of being surrounded by tuck, Bunter has eight meals a day instead of the regulation four!

If you want prime Canterbury lamb, or the good roast beef of Old England, or a pork chop or a juicy steak, do your shopping at Bolsover the butcher's! Bolsover's prices "undercut" everyone else's, and his civility is never "overdone." If you want to see a sausage roll, or a ham-and-beef turn-over, go to Bolsover's!

Fisher T. Fish is making things hum in the greengrocery line, and I can strongly recommend his eighteen-carat carrots; also his Brussels sprouts, direct from Belgium. Fishy's prices are very reasonable, in fact, he actually gives things away. I saw a fag upset Fishy's barrow, and the American junior promptly "gave him beans!"

Lord Mauleverer started in business as a dairyman. But he had the misfortune to topple over backwards into a crate of new-laid eggs. Mauly staggered away in order to get a bath and a change of clothes, and he hasn't been seen since. His business has been taken over by that flourishing firm, Messrs. Redwing, Russell, & Rake.

Alonzo Todd is carrying on the business of a dispensing chemist. If you have the misfortune to go under a steam-roller, and feel "run down" in consequence, go to Alonzo Todd for some of his Soothing Syrup for Squashed Schoolboys. He also has some Pink Pills for Purple People—or Pale Pills for Pink People, I forget which.

EDITORIAL!



By Billy Bunter.

My dear Readers,—This week we are indulging in a flite of fancy.

We are going to pretend that Greyfriars, Rookwood, and St. Jim's have got their own shops, run by schoolboys for schoolboys.

What a mity brane-wave! And the fool credit it belongs to your plump and genial editor.

Nobody but a born jernalist, with a powerful imagination, could have thought of such a wheeze.

Now, you've got to imagine that all the tradesmen have gone on strike, and that we've got to buy and sell for ourselves. I am taking over the control of the tuckshopp from Mrs. Mimble, and running it on my own lines. Bolsover major is setting up in bizziness as a pork butcher. Dicky Nugent is a chimbly-sweep. And so on and so forth.

The Close at Greyfriars is crowded with stalls and barrows, and all the schoolboy tradesmen are advertising their wares.

"Buy, buy! Nice sholder of mutton, lady? This way for prime pork sossidges!" That's Bolsover major.

Then we get Fisher T. Fish, the greengrocer.

"Walk up, ladies and gents! Try my carrots and cabbages and cauliflowers! Try my greengages, goosegogs, and ghurkins! Taste my tempting, topping turnips! I guess these are the real goods!"

At Rookwood and St. Jim's, the schoolboy tradesmen are marketing their wares in the same manner. There is hustle and bustle everywhere.

If this number duzzent fairly bring the house down, I shall refuse to publish another till—next week!

Don't forget to pass this number on to all your friends, and mind you tell them the wonderful history of my WEEKLY.

Yours sincerely,
BILLY BUNTER.

KING OF THE TUCKSHOP!

By Dick Penfold.

Bunter, at the counter standing,
Sees the chaps come in;
And his visago is expanding
In a merry grin.

"Chaps, I'm pleased to get your custom,"
Billy does declare;
"Not the cads—I do not trust 'em—
They can go elsewhere."

"Half a dozen tarts!" cries Cherry;
"Ginger-pop!" says Russell.
Billy Bunter's busy, very;
You should see him hustle!

"Rabbit-pie this way!" says Morgan.
"Dish it up at once,
Or I'll dot your nasal organ,
You long-winded dunce!"

Bunter hustles, Bunter bustles,
With a right good will;
Can't control his facial muscles
When he sees the till!

For that till is flowing over
With a mint of money;
Billy Bunter is in clover,
And the prospect's sunny.

There's no sign of Mrs. Mimble,
With her beaming face;
Billy Bunter, blithe and nimble,
Takes the good dame's place.

Tarts and doughnuts, cakes and patties
Billy Bunter makes;
All the fellows grumble at his
Many mad mistakes!

"One of these fine days," says Skinner,
"We'll receive a shock;
Bunter, having had no dinner,
Will devour the stock!"

THE POPULAR.—No. 210.

Supplement 1.]

A Jolly Fine Issue of Our Special Supplement Next Week!



Tubby Muffin - Coal Merchant!

By KIT ERROLL.

"COAL! Coal!"

That shout rang down the Fourth Form corridor at Rookwood.

It was a bitterly cold day, and never was the need of coal more acute.

The coal merchants of Coombe and Latham had not been delivering at the school of late, owing to their men being on strike. And in the majority of the studies there were no fires.

Consequently, the word "Coal!" had a very welcome ring about it.

Study doors were opened up and down the corridor, and the fellows were all amazed to see Tubby Muffin, grimy and perspiring, pushing a hand barrow, which was almost the width of the passage. The barrow was laden with coal.

"What the thump——" began Jimmy Silver.

"Have you turned coal merchant, Tubby?" asked Lovell, in wonder.

The fat junior nodded, and grinned a grimy grin.

"Bring out your scuttles!" he shouted. "Coal! Coal! Best South Wales nuggets—only a penny a scuttle!"

"My hat!"

"Where did you get that coal, Tubby?" asked Rawson suspiciously.

"No time to answer silly questions!" was the terse reply. "Bring out your scuttles!"

Mornington, my study-mate, gave a chuckle.

"Might as well take advantage of this generous offer," he said. "This is the first time in our little lives that we've been offered coal at a penny a scuttle."

Morny promptly fetched our coal-scuttle, and Tubby Muffin up-ended the barrow. A deluge of coal shot out into the scuttle, and overflowed on to the linoleum. But Tubby didn't seem to care how much mess he made, or how much coal he wasted.

"Thanks awfully!" said Morny. And he placed a penny in Tubby Muffin's grimy palm.

Now that somebody had taken the lead in buying coal, the others were not slow to follow.

Fellows came rushing up from all directions with their scuttles.

"We shall be able to have fires, after all!" said Dick Oswald. "How ripping!"

Jimmy Silver looked a trifle worried.

"The question is, where did Tubby get this coal from?" he said.

"He must have got it jolly cheaply to be able to sell it at a penny a scuttle," said Newcome.

"So cheaply, in fact," said Raby, "that I don't think he bought it at all!"

"Oh, really, Raby——"

"The thing is not to inquire too closely into the matter of where the coal came from," said Mornington. "Suffice it to say that we've got it."

"Yes; but——"

"And it's a godsend in this bitter weather."

Tubby Muffin continued to fill scuttle after scuttle, and his supplies were nearly exhausted when Bulkeley of the Sixth came striding into view.

"What's all this?" demanded the captain of Rookwood sharply. "Have you been selling coal, Muffin?"

"Yes, Bulkeley."

"Where did you get it from?"

"Ahem!"

"Speak up!" said Bulkeley sharply.

"—I found it," stammered Tubby Muffin.

"Where?"

"In—in the roadway, just outside the school gates," Bulkeley frowned.

"Did you have this barrow stacked right up?" he demanded.

"Yes, Bulkeley."

"Do you seriously wish me to believe that you found this coal lying scattered about the roadway?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Answer me, Muffin!"

Before Tubby could reply, who should come on the scene but Mack, the porter, Mack's face was convulsed with fury, and he was waving his arms about like windmills.

"My coal!" he hooted. "Wot I says is this 'ere—that young raskil 'as looted my coal-cellar!"

"Oh, really, Mack—— I—I——"

"Own up!" said Bulkeley sternly. "You have raided Mack's coal-cellar!"

Tubby Muffin was silent. And his silence was eloquent of guilt.

"It—it was only a lark, Bulkeley," he said, after a pause.

"I don't fancy the Head will view it in that light," said Bulkeley grimly. "You



"Bring out your scuttles!" shouted Tubby Muffin. **"Coal, coal! Only a penny a scuttle!"**

will come with me at once to his study. You, too, Mack."

"To give evidence?" queried the porter.

"Not only to give evidence, but to explain to the Head what you were doing with coal in your cellar, when only yesterday you declared that you hadn't a single lump! You have been hoarding coal for your own selfish ends!"

Mack grew very alarmed.

"Don't be 'ard on me, Master Bulkeley!" he pleaded.

"I feel bound to report the matter," was the reply. "You were asked yesterday to hand over your stock of coal, so that it could be distributed among the studies. And you distinctly said you hadn't a lump of coal in your cellar. Step this way, please!"

The procession of three made its way to the Head's study.

We learnt afterwards that Tubby Muffin, the amateur coal-merchant, received three stinging cuts on each of his grimy paws, and that Mack, the porter, received a severe reprimand. So justice was administered to the dissatisfaction of Muffin and Mack, and to the satisfaction of the fellows who had obtained coal at a penny a scuttle!

BARGAINS AT THE ROOKWOOD BAZAAR!

By Jimmy Silver.

(Captain of the Lower School, Rookwood.)

The Rookwood Bazaar—the school's own shopping store—was opened yesterday with a flourish of trumpets. Mrs. Chisholm, the wife of our worthy Head, presided at the function, and we were all invited to roll up and see the astounding bargains. Needless to say, my chums and I were early on the scene.

You never saw such a miscellaneous collection of articles for sale! Where they had all come from was a mystery. Lovell declares that they were things which had been confiscated, at some time or other, by Form masters, and this was borne out by the fact that I recognised an old penknife of mine among the collection.

Every article in the bazaar was priced at sixpence. The majority of the things were worth several times that sum, so you can guess the bargain-hunters were in clover! It was a case of first come, first served. There was actually a football on sale for sixpence, and Tommy Dodd snapped it up before anybody else could get a look in. Tommy discovered later, however, that he had bought a pig in a poke, for the football flatly refused to be blown up, owing to numerous punctures in the bladder.

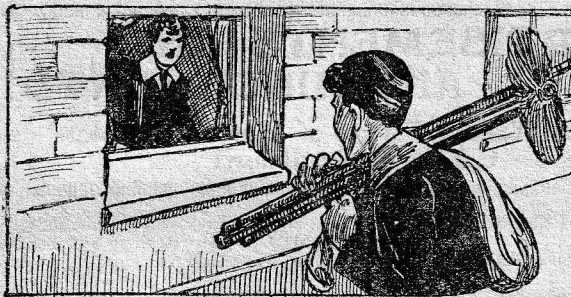
Lovell obtained quite a decent mouth-organ for sixpence, and for the same amount Newcome secured a tin whistle. Raby bought a concertina—not a new one, of course. It wasn't even second-hand, but about seventh-hand. In fact, it was no longer recognisable as a concertina. It looked like an old pair of bellows. But, dash it all, what could you expect for a modest tanner? The Modernites chipped us about our purchases, and sarcastically inquired if we were forming a jazz band.

Mornington, grinning broadly, purchased an alarm-clock. "Of course, the beastly thing won't go," he said. "It was manufactured in Germany somewhere about the year Dot, and it's run down by now." As events proved, however, that alarm-clock did go. It kept the occupants of the Fourth Form dormitory awake nearly all night with its perpetual whirring and buzzing. Morny had set it for 7 a.m., but the wretched thing started before midnight, and no human power would cause it to stop. Finally, in despair, Morny chucked it out of the window!

Adolphus Smythe, of the Shell bought a clothes-brush. It was in a very dilapidated condition, and half the hairs were missing. "My dear fellow," protested one of his pals, "you'll ruin your togs if you attempt to brush 'em with that!" And then Adolphus explained that he hadn't bought the clothes-brush for his own use, but to brush his fox-terrier's coat with!

[Supplement II.]

You'll Roar with Laughter over Next Week's "Weekly" !



Dicky Nugent - Chimney Sweep!

By TOM BROWN.
(The Humorist of Greyfriars.)

NUGENT minor of the Second has often been styled "a cheeky young sweep," but nobody dreamed that he would ever become a sweep in the real sense of the word.

But the other afternoon, whilst I was standing at my study window, staring vacantly into space, Dicky Nugent came toddling across the Close. He was carrying one of the long, round-topped brushes that chimney-sweeps use.

The fag's appearance was extraordinary. His face was as black as the ace of spades. And his togs suggested that he had been rolling on the floor of the coal-cellar.

I had some difficulty in recognising Dicky at first. I thought he was a second edition of Hurree Singh. As he passed my window, however, he looked up at me with a sooty grin.

"Sweep your chimney, Brown?" he said.
"No, thanks!" I said hastily.
"Oh, do let's! I only charge a tanner a time."

"Keep away from my study, you grimy young rascal!" I shouted. "Look here, young Nugent, what's the little game?"

"The official chimney-sweep at Friardale has gone on strike," explained Dicky. "He refuses to come up to Greyfriars to do the chimneys. So I'm taking on the job—see?"

"I wish you joy of it!" I growled.
Dicky chuckled.
"I've already made a start," he said. "I set the ball rolling by sweeping Gosling's chimney."

"Did you make a good job of it?"
"Better ask Gosling. I left him choking and spluttering in his parlour. He declares I've set of snowed him up with soot."

"Ha, ha, ha! How can you snow anybody up with soot?" I said, laughing. "Snow's white and soot's black!"

"That was just a figure of speech," said Dicky. "Sure you don't want your chimney swept, Brown?"

"Positive, thanks!"
Dicky Nugent gave me a black look—I don't mean an angry look, but a sooty one—and passed on.

He had not gone very far when he bumped into Mr. Prout.

The master of the Fifth stopped short in astonishment.

"Why, bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "What is the meaning of this, Nugent minor?"

"Sweep's gone on strike, sir," explained Dicky cheerfully. "And I've taken on his job!"

"Good gracious!"
"Would you like your chimney swept, sir?" asked Dicky, with an eye to business. "It will only cost you sixpence."

Mr. Prout was about to decline the fag's offer, when he suddenly remembered that he had been having a good deal of trouble with his chimney of late. Lumps of soot were constantly falling into the fire. Moreover, the chimney was not a non-smoker. It smoked day and night.

Mr. Prout regarded Dicky Nugent doubtfully.

"Are you capable of performing such a task?" he inquired.

"Absolutely, sir!"

"You will make a—clean sweep of my chimney?"

"Trust me, sir!"

"Then you have my permission to do so," said Mr. Prout. "I do not quite approve of a Greyfriars boy sweeping chimneys. Still, if the professional sweep is not available,

one must enlist the services of an amateur one."

"Quite, sir!" said Dicky Nugent.
"I am now going to play golf," said Mr. Prout. "On my return, I shall expect to find my chimney—"

"Of course you'll find it, sir! You don't suppose I'm going to knock it down?"

"Pray allow me to complete my sentence!" said Mr. Prout. "I shall expect to find my chimney properly and thoroughly swept."

"The job shall be soot-ably done, sir!" promised Dicky, permitting himself a pun.

Mr. Prout nodded, and went on his way.

The amateur chimney-sweep hurried along to the study occupied by the master of the Fifth.

Gatty and Myers, Dicky's two chums, joined him. They were anxious to see the fun.

"I've been commissioned to sweep Prout's chimney," said Dicky, "and I'm going to do the job thoroughly."



Dicky dropped down into the fireplace, and a shower of soot came down after him.

"Good!" said Gatty. "But that broom you've got will never reach to the top of the chimney."

"It opens out," said Dicky. "It's three times this length when it's properly extended."

"Even so," said Myers, "it won't be long enough for your purpose. Prout's chimney's a jolly tall one, remember."

"Never mind!" said Dicky. "I'll climb up the chimney myself, and take the broom right up to the top."

"You'll be in a fine pickle when you come down!" chuckled Gatty.

"What matters? A chimney-sweep can't study his personal appearance. Here we are!"

The trio stepped into Mr. Prout's study. There was no fire in the grate, so Dicky Nugent's task seemed simple.

But when he started to squeeze himself up the chimney, the fag found that he was unable to get a foothold.

Dicky dropped down into the fireplace, looking more sooty than ever. A shower of soot came down after him, and some of it shot over Mr. Prout's hearthrug. Moreover, Dicky's shoes were sooty, and he was trampling soot into the carpet.

"Prout will be pleased!" chuckled Myers.

"He'll have several sorts of a fit when he sees all this mess!" said Gatty.

"Rats!" growled Dicky Nugent. "A speck of soot here and there can't be helped.

I say, you chaps, it's no use tackling the chimney from this end! I shall have to go up on to the roof."

"My hat!"
"Come and help me rear a ladder up," said Dicky.

The trio proceeded to the wood-shed, and borrowed the longest ladder they could find. With great difficulty they reared it up to the room, and Dicky Nugent started to ascend. His progress was watched by a rapidly-growing crowd in the Close.

Dicky surmounted the ladder without mishap, and found himself among the chimney-pots.

His geography of the roof was pretty good, and he soon located Mr. Prout's chimney. He thrust his broom down it, and gave it a violent push.

There was a sound of soot being dislodged and sent hurtling downwards.

Had anybody been in Mr. Prout's study at the time, he would have seen showers of soot come shooting out into the fireplace; and not only into the fireplace, but beyond it.

The study window happened to be open, and the wind, coming through in a fitful gust, scattered the soot in all directions.

Soon everything was smothered. The table, the chairs, the carpet, the mantelpiece—all received a black coating of soot.

Dicky Nugent was certainly sweeping all the soot from the chimney, but he was making an unholy mess in the process!

Cheered on by the crowd below, Dicky shoved and thrust with his broom. And he was still shoving and thrusting when Mr. Prout returned from his brief game of golf.

The master of the Fifth noticed the activity up aloft, so to speak, and he inquired what was happening.

"Dicky Nugent's sweeping your chimney, sir!" said Gatty cheerfully.

"Bless my soul! That is an extraordinary method of sweeping a chimney!" gasped Mr. Prout. "I trust Nugent has barricaded my fire-grate with a cloth or a screen, in order to prevent the soot spreading beyond the fireplace?"

"Can't say, sir!" muttered Gatty. "You'd better go and see."

With rapid strides, Mr. Prout stalked away to his study. What he said, when he crossed the threshold, and saw the state his study was in, will hardly bear repetition.

Mr. Prout gave one wild glance round the apartment. Then, snorting with fury, he snatched up a cane and rushed out into the Close.

"Boy! Nugent!" he thundered, glaring up at the amateur chimney-sweep. "Come down at once, that I may chastise you! My study is in a dreadful state, thanks to your clumsy antics!"

Dicky Nugent ceased his operations with the broom. But he did not come down. Mr. Prout was not a safe person to encounter just then. Dicky wisely decided to pretend not to hear, and to remain on the roof until the Form master's wrath had simmered down somewhat.

Once or twice Mr. Prout looked at the ladder, as if contemplating an ascent. But he realised that the spectacle of a master climbing a ladder and chasing a small boy over the roofs would be a very undignified one.

Finally, Mr. Prout turned on his heel, and strode away in high dudgeon.

Mr. Prout captured Dicky that evening. And three stinging cuts on each grimy paw was the reward of the amateur chimney-sweep.

THE END.
THE POPULAR.—No. 210.



By
Jack Blake.

Herries was hungry. So was I. In fact, we were both famished.

The school tuckshop was closed, and the study cupboard was bare. Moreover, we had been out for a cycling spin, and had missed tea in Hall.

It was too late to go out of gates, and so we had to abandon the idea of popping down to the village bunshop for a feed.

"I can't possibly hold out till brekker tomorrow morning," said Herries.

"Neither can I," I said.

"What about trying Trimble's restaurant? He's advertising full-course dinners in Study No. 2."

"Yes, at three-and-six a time!" I growled. "And we've no guarantee that the grub will be good."

"Might as well try it," said Herries. "Baggy's got his study screened off. One half is the restaurant and the other half is the kitchen, where he has a cooking-stove and prepares all the food."

"But three-and-six!" I protested, aghast.

"We can beat Baggy down to half a crown."

"All serene."

We went along to Trimble's study, on the door of which was posted the following announcement:

"TRIMBLE'S RESTERONG!

"Dinners. Teas. Suppers.

"Step inside and ask for one of my fool-course dinners!"

Accordingly we stepped inside.

Baggy Trimble was there. His jacket was off, and he wore an apron. A table had been laid for prospective patrons, and he beckoned us to it.

"What would you like, gentlemen?" he asked suavely.

"A full-course dinner," I replied. "But I'm dashed if we're going to pay three-and-six for it. Make it half a crown, and we shall be satisfied."

With some reluctance Baggy agreed to my offer.

"I always demand cash in advance," he said.

"Then you can jolly well demand!" I said wrathfully. "We're not paying for our dinner until it's consumed. Buck up and get it ready!"

Baggy disappeared behind the screen, and we heard him bustling about in his "kitchen."

After a long interval he reappeared, carrying a couple of soup-plates.

"I'm going to see that you get a good square meal, you fellows," he said. "You look awfully peckish."

"We are!" said Herries. "What on earth is this concoction?"

"Mock turtle soup!"

Herries tried a spoonful, and shuddered.

"You can take it away and feed it to the kitchen cat," he said. "It tastes like nothing on earth! What's the second course?"

"Hoar doovers!" said Baggy.

"What the merry dickens is that?"

"He means 'hors d'oeuvres,'" I said, laughing. "It's a sort of mix-up. Bring it along, Baggy!"

The amateur caterer then brought us a stale sardine on a piece of parched toast. We couldn't possibly eat it. Neither could we manage the "trussed fowl," which was the next course. It was a tough old bird which had scarcely been cooked at all.

Finally, in despair, we decided to try apple dumpling. But we found that the apples were raw, and the crust was simply dough.

Baggy's "full-course" dinner was such a signal failure that we hadn't been able to eat a scrap of it!

Herries rose to his feet.

"Bump the fat swindler!" he said savagely.

And we gave Baggy Trimble such a terrific bumping that he was compelled to close his premises for the evening.

THE POPULAR.—No. 210.

ADVERTISEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Do You Want a Packet of Pins or a Motor-Car?—Glance Below!

ARTHUR AUGUSTUS D'ARCY,

Gentlemen's Tailor

(Late Cutter to Messrs. Snipp & Shears, of Savile Row).

TRY MY SPECIAL SUITS FOR WINTER WEAR, DEAR BOYS!

Each suit comprises an Eton jacket, a smart pair of striped trousers, and a fancy waistcoat wrought in all the colours of the rainbow.

PRICE PER SUIT, 25 GUINEAS.

Come along to my study, and I will give you a perfect fit! I am also selling off a stock of

20,000 High-class Silk Toppers

(some slightly battered by Herries' bulldog) at Sixpence each. (Those purchasing one of my 25 guinea suits will be given half a dozen toppers FREE.)

I also specialise in neckties, socks, football jerseys, spats, scarves, etc., etc.

FITTING ROOM, Study No. 6, Fourth Form Passage. Come Early!

JACK BLAKE,

High-class Hairdresser.

COME TO ME TO BE SHORN AND SHAVEN!

Don't go tramping over to Wayland, to be cropped bald by an inefficient barber. JACK BLAKE has had experience in trimming the hedge round the Head's garden, so he is fully capable of trimming YOU!

SIXTH-FORMERS! Don't go about with stubbly beards and small boys yelling "Beaver!" after you. Come to BLAKE, and he will give you a close shave—a very close shave indeed if his razor gets anywhere near your nose!

Remember, BLAKE is a gentle and a painstaking barber. No barber-ism about BLAKE! My Toilet Saloon is in the Woodshed. I tried to bag Study No. 6, but Gussy is using it as a fitting room.

Favour me with your patronage, and you will agree that I am a very smart "young shaver"!

TUCK! TUCK! TUCK!

If you are looking for a square meal,

COME TO TRIMBLE'S TIP-TOP RESTERONG!

The St. Jim's Tuckshopp is now a back number. It is dead and defunked. My Resterong has taken its place. You can have anything you want, from a parched pea to a pheasant pie!

All Meals Prepared on the Premises by BAGGY TRIMBLE himself. No sheffs, cooks, or waiters employed. If

you want to "tip" anybody, tip TRIMBLE! He is sheff and cook and waiter rolled into one.

MENU OF SPECIAL 3s. 6d. DINNER.

Mock Turtle Soup.

Hoar Doovers.

Lark and Caper Sauce.

Sir Loyne of Beefe, Neck of Mutton, or Trust Fowl.

Sirrup Pooding, Apple Dumpling, or Jam Roley-Poley.

Cheese. Nuts. Froot.

Come to TRIMBLE'S, and you'll never feel so "fed up" in your life!

CARDEW, CLIVE & LEVISON,

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[Supplement IV.

A Good Long Laugh? Step This Way and You'll Enjoy Yourself!

THE REWARD OF VALOUR!

(Continued from page 12.)

None but a craven would have stood by and watched the brougham's occupant tear on to death.

And Blundell was not a coward; he now proved himself to be possessed of wonderful resource and courage.

He rushed forward, leaving his motor-bike resting against the bank. On came the runaway horse, its eyes showing the whites, its muzzle flecked with foam.

It thundered up. It was alongside. Blundell made a spring, a frantic spring.

But the horse swerved across the road; Blundell felt himself grazed by the wheels of the brougham, and the vehicle had passed.

He had failed!

He watched, dazed. The brougham was running on two wheels only; and as Blundell looked, it righted itself with a crash. Then it rushed onwards to that fatal corner.

"Oh, heavens!" shouted Blundell, white to the lips.

Then he saw his motor-bike against the bank.

"The bike!" he yelled.

Like one possessed, he darted forward. With one spring he had grabbed the handlebars of the bicycle. He pushed it forward, and the engine commenced working.

In a second he was in the saddle. The throttle was wide open, and he was tearing down the hill at an appalling pace.

Could he reach the brougham before it arrived at the corner?

Could he overtake it in time?

All Blundell's troubles were forgotten in the intense excitement. The club's funds, the Fifth Form meeting, the selling of the motor-bike—were all driven out of his head.

He bent low over the handlebars. He was overhauling the brougham rapidly, for he was travelling like the wind.

"Can I do it?" he gasped. "Oh, can I do it?"

He never thought about the dire peril of the undertaking. Yet it might mean death for him.

Faster he went. And yard by yard he overtook the tearing brougham. He was immediately behind it. With splendid judgment he swerved to one side.

He was alongside now, riding with fluttering hair and panting breath. He caught a glimpse of a terrified face, then he was past.

The horse was galloping along within a yard of him. He touched the shaft, and wobbled dangerously.

And now he was neck and neck with the animal. It was a terrifying race. Horse and motor-cycle rushed along.

Ahead, now only a hundred yards distant, was the dreadful corner.

Blundell knew that he must act at once.

With a sudden resolve, insane though it seemed, he released his hold of the handlebars. He was within a foot of the horse's bridle.

Next second he had the reins in his hand.

He leapt upwards, caring nothing what happened to the motor-bike. By a miracle his feet did not become entangled, and he was dragged along in mid-air, hanging like grim death to the reins.

THE THIRD CHAPTER,

Pluck Rewarded!

CRASH! Blundell hardly heard the awful smash as his motor-cycle rolled to the ground and was caught beneath the brougham.

The vehicle pitched and lumbered. Underneath it the motor-bike had become jammed, and it was dragged along, a shattered and worthless wreck.

Blundell hung on to the reins, and the horse seemed to realise that its mad escapade was over.

It slowed down, and Blundell was able to run beside it, and drag backwards with all his strength.

Although he did not know it, his motor-bike was the prime cause of the sudden slackening of speed. It was firmly fixed under the brougham, being dragged along and rendered more and more of a wreck every second.

But it acted like a brake, and a very powerful brake. The brougham no longer ran freely down the hill; the horse had to drag it forcibly, and that made a wonderful difference.

Slower and slower, until Blundell was walking. He tugged at the reins violently, and the horse came to a standstill, quivering from head to foot, and streaming with perspiration.

Its breath came in great hollow pants, and it was utterly spent.

Ten yards ahead was the sharp corner. But for Blundell's wonderful spurt on the motor-cycle, disaster would have been certain. Undoubtedly, the Fifth Form captain had saved the brougham's occupant from a violent death.

He staggered back, and fell against the hedge. His clothing was torn, his face wet with cold perspiration. And blood was on his hands, caused by the chafing of the reins.

"Thank goodness!" muttered Blundell. "I've done the trick—the giddy thing's saved!"

He recovered rapidly. Now that the danger was over he felt a little faint, but he was very soon himself.

And the first thing he set eyes on was his motor-cycle—or, rather, the remains of it.

The wheels were twisted and bent out of all recognition; the petrol-tank was gaping open, the engine was twisted out

of place, and the cylinder showed a fatal crack; the handlebars were missing altogether.

The motor-bike was nothing but scrap iron. To repair it would be an impossibility. Its total worth could be nothing but a few shillings. Even the tyres were torn and useless.

"Great Scott!" muttered Blundell.

The full truth dawned upon him, and he looked at the wreck in horror. His last chance was gone. Where would he be able to get the eight pounds?

He could not sell the machine—and there was no other way in which he could raise money.

He was done!

It would mean the sack from Greyfriars.

Blundell's eyes roved from the motor-bike to the brougham. Then he saw a movement inside the carriage, and pulled himself together. He stepped across to the door and opened it.

Inside was a white-headed old gentleman. He was lying back against the cushions, breathing hard and mopping his brow.

"Upon my soul!" he gasped. "Upon my soul!"

"Are you hurt, sir?" asked Blundell anxiously.

The old gentleman turned and started. "Hurt?" he ejaculated. "Bless my life, no!"

He stared at Blundell, then waved his hand.

"Help me out," he said. "The horse might take fright again. Upon my soul, what an experience! What a ride!"

Blundell helped the old chap into the road. He gazed at the horse, then eyed the corner and the brick walls.

"H'm!" he muttered. "Not much chance there! By gad, no! If the horse had tried to turn that corner we should have run into the wall. Upon my soul, I should have been killed!"

"Perhaps not killed, sir—"

"I tell you, I should have been killed!" snapped the old gentleman testily. "I know! And, by gad, look at your motor-bicycle. Wretched things—deplorable things!"

"Yes, sir," said Blundell, rather taken aback.

"It's utterly ruined, young man!"

"So I—I see, sir."

The old gentleman eyed Blundell for

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THE POPULAR.—No. 210.

Mystery, Thrill, and Fun in Next Week's Breathless Tale of the Greyfriars Chums!

a moment, then a twinkle entered his eyes. He looked at the Fifth-Former with admiration and pride.

"Give me your hand, sir!" he ordered. "My—my hand?" gasped Blundell, startled at the old gentleman's abrupt manner of speaking. "Y-yes, sir!"

The old chap took Blundell's hand and shook it heartily. Then he patted him on the shoulder.

"I've seen some brave things done in my time, my lad," he said; "but I've never witnessed a braver action than yours. It was splendid! It was wonderful!"

"Oh, sir!"

"It was wonderful, I tell you!"

"I—only did the right thing, sir!" muttered Blundell, turning red. "It was nothing!"

"Don't dare to contradict me, boy!" thundered the old gentleman. "I say it was the bravest thing I've ever seen. To ride up on that beastly motor-cycle, and jump for the horse while going at full gallop—why, bless my life, it was the act of a hero!"

"I—I didn't think of anything, sir," explained Blundell. "I simply rushed after the brougham, knowing it would mean a fearful smash at the corner, and tried to stop it in time."

"And you succeeded—you succeeded marvellously!" said the old gentleman. "You saved my life, young man. But, by the look of things, your machine has suffered!"

"Ye-es, a little, sir."

"A little! Don't be absurd, boy—the confounded machine is utterly wrecked! It can never be ridden again. You'll have to walk home; that's all there is about it!"

Blundell nodded dismally, and with aching anxiety.

"How did it happen, sir?"

"A piece of paper, my boy—a wretched piece of paper!" said the old fellow, glaring at Blundell. "It was the wind. We were going along smoothly when a gust of wind blew my coachman's hat off. He got off, and ran back. And while he was behind I'm hanged if a great sheet of newspaper didn't blow across the road. The horse shied, and the paper lifted up and drove on to its legs. That did it! Away we went at full gallop!"

"But the coachman, sir?"

"The coachman was left behind. He could do nothing," said the old gentleman. "Things always happen that way. If Thomas had been in his box he could have steadied the horse. But he wasn't there, and I couldn't do anything, being packed away inside. The horse simply had its head, and the faster it ran the more frightened it became."

He laid his hand on Blundell's arm.

"You risked your life to save mine, my boy," he said, altering his tone of voice until it was soft. "It was a noble effort. In performing your brave action you saved my life and saved my brougham. But your own machine is a wreck."

"I know," said Blundell, in a low voice.

"I feel like rewarding you," went on the old gentleman, "but your looks tell me that you would be offended. It is reward enough to know that you have proved yourself to be a hero."

"Yes, sir," said Blundell dully.

"Nevertheless, you have ruined your motor-bicycle, and I must certainly be allowed to compensate you for the damage."

And the old chap brought out a fat pocket-book, and fingered a roll of crisp

banknotes. Blundell regarded him blankly for a moment, then his eyes gleamed, and he uttered a little gasp of relief.

"Oh, sir, do you mean it?"

"Do I mean it, boy? Of course I mean it!" snapped the other. "Now, how much did you pay for that machine?"

"Twenty-eight pounds, sir, two days ago."

"Twenty-eight pounds! Preposterous!"

"But I did, sir!"

"I do not doubt you, young man, but such a sum is preposterous!" scoffed the old gentleman angrily. "Utterly ridiculous!"

And he glared at Blundell.

"Twenty-eight pounds—for a motor-bicycle!" he repeated. "Pish, my boy! Tish! My nephew paid eighty guineas for his. My name is Mr. Wellford, let me tell you. I do not believe the motor-cycle cost less than thirty pounds!"

"But—but—"

"Do not argue! Thirty pounds, I say!" Blundell felt his heart give a leap. Thirty pounds! It was too good to be true! He could not accept such a sum! It would be dishonest. But the old gentleman was a curious customer to deal with.

"No, sir," said Blundell eagerly; "twenty-eight—"

"How dare you bandy words with me!" roared Mr. Wellford. "I say the machine cost thirty pounds! I am going to give you thirty-five! The extra five will compensate you for the inconvenience of losing your machine, and will pay for the doctor."

"The doctor!" gasped Blundell.

"Certainly! Your hands are wounded!"

Blundell looked at his hands. They were only grazed. Then Mr. Wellford thrust a bundle of banknotes into his palm.

"But—"

"Not another word!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Blundell joyfully. "It's splendid of you! I—I don't know what to say!"

The old gentleman regarded Blundell with a twinkle. Then he gazed up the hill. A figure was hurrying down, and behind came a motor-car.

"Ah, here is Thomas!" said Mr. Wellford.

Thomas came up, panting. Blundell hardly heard what was said. He was in a whirl. He knew that the motor-car stopped, and the occupant got out. Then Blundell found himself helping to extricate the wrecked motor-cycle. It was placed on top of the brougham.

"I am going to take it with me," said Mr. Wellford. "I shall keep it as a memento of your wonderful action, my lad. Tell me your name."

"It's Blundell, sir, and I belong to the Fifth Form at Greyfriars."

"Ah, yes, Greyfriars—a fine college!"

"Then you will want to get to Courtfield in order to take the train?" asked the occupant of the motor-car.

"Yes."

"Jump in, then. I'm going to Courtfield."

"Splendid!" exclaimed Mr. Wellford heartily. "Well, good-bye, my boy, and thank you from the bottom of my heart. You saved my life to-day at the risk of your own. It was wonderful!"

Blundell shook hands again, and two minutes later found himself being whirled through the dusk towards Courtfield. He told the car-owner what had happened, and the car-owner informed him that Mr. Wellford was one of the richest men in the district.

They arrived at Courtfield, and Blundell caught a train at once.

He got a compartment to himself, and stared unseeingly out of the window as the train steamed towards Friardale.

At last he was alone; at last he could think.

Thirty-five pounds!

It was wonderful!

All his troubles were over. He could pay the fund money, he could pay Lord Mauleverer, and he would still have plenty left. Blundell could hardly realise his good fortune.

But he had earned the money, his brave action was one deserving of the highest praise.

In Friardale he cashed two five-pound notes, and then hastened to Greyfriars. He would arrive quite half an hour before the committee meeting of the Fifth Form.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Snoop is Sorry!

BILLY BUNTER felt indignant.

It was past tea-time, and Bunter had had scarcely anything to eat. That morning he had applied to Blundell for a further sum of "hush-money," but Blundell had refused to give Bunter another farthing.

And the Owl of the Remove was feeling indignant about it.

All the afternoon he had said nothing, for he thought that there might be still another hope of getting money out of Blundell. But Blundell had not turned up, and Bunter was hungry.

His hunger made him angry, and he decided to show up the scapegrace of the Fifth. For, in Bunter's opinion, Blundell was a very wicked boy indeed.

Bunter rolled into the Common-room. Nearly all the Remove were there, discussing the football match of the afternoon.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Nugent, I've come to tell you something!" protested Billy Bunter. "It's something important!"

"Concerning a postal-order?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Nunno! It's about Blundell," said Bunter, blinking through his glasses. "Something jolly rotten!"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"We don't want any sneaking, you fat worm!" he said sharply.

"It ain't sneaking!" gasped Bunter. "I happened to find out something—"

"By placing your ear to a keyhole, I suppose?" asked Johnny Bull contemptuously.

"No!" roared Bunter truthfully. "I never do rotten things like that. I—I do know, so there! How did Blundell buy his motor-bike?"

"With tin, I expect!"

"I mean, where did he get the money?"

"What's the good of asking silly riddles?" said Bulstrode warmly. "Clear out, Bunter!"

"I sha'n't!" shouted Bunter. "Blundell borrowed twenty quid from Maully and eight quid from the Fifth Form Club funds!"

"Rot!"

"Piffle!"

"It's true!" roared Bunter. "And I think that Blundell ought to be sacked! Nice chap, ain't he? Fancy being trusted with the funds of the Form, and then using the money to buy a motor-bike!"

"How do you know this?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I—I found it out!"

What is the Strange Mystery Surrounding the Disappearance of Hop Hi?

"By listening to somebody's conversation?"

"I won't tell you!" howled Bunter. Several juniors made a rush at the Owl of the Remove, and he hopped outside the door and slammed it. The Removites didn't follow him.

Lord Mauleverer was not in the Common-room, so knew nothing of Bunter's revelation.

"It's one of Bunter's lies!" said Nugent.

"Of course."

"It seems peculiar, though," remarked Bulstrode. "I don't see why Bunter should invent such a thing. We ought to speak to somebody about it."

"It would be serious if Blundell had used the Fifth Form Club funds," said Bob Cherry. "Suppose we go and ask old Coker if he knows anything about it?"

"Yes, it would be as well," said Harry Wharton. "Bunter will only exaggerate the thing if we don't. Then the Fifth might get into a panto. You know what asses they are!"

So Harry Wharton & Co. left the Common-room and went to the Fifth Form passage. Several other Removites followed behind out of curiosity, Snoop amongst them.

Harry Wharton knocked at Coker's door.

"Come in!" shouted Coker.

Harry Wharton & Co. went in, and Coker glared.

"What the dickens is the meaning of this?" he demanded. "What do all you kids want?"

"We've just heard something from Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "He says that Blundell has pinched the Fifth Form Club funds!"

Coker stared.

"Rot!" he exclaimed. "Bunter's a liar!"

"We know that, but he gets hold of the truth sometimes, especially when the truth isn't pleasant," answered Wharton.

Coker looked serious.

"Well, we shall soon know if it's the truth or lies," he said. "The Fifth Form meeting will be held in the Form-room in a quarter of an hour. Blundell has to fork out the money then, and if he hasn't got it there'll be trouble!"

"Rather!" said Potter and Greene.

"Is Blundell in his study?" asked Coker.

"I don't know," said Harry.

"Well, we'll see."

And Coker rose to his feet and left the room. A few moments later he entered Blundell's study, the Removites following him.

Blundell was there, looking unusually cheerful. He had had a wash, and looked spruce and tidy. He looked up in surprise as the crowd entered.

"What's this—an invasion?" he asked.

Coker hesitated.

"Ahem! These young fatheads say that—"

"We don't say anything," interrupted Bob Cherry. "It was Bunter who said it. We don't believe it ourselves."

Blundell understood, and smiled.

"Well?" he asked.

"Bunter's been saying that you—er—you used the club funds for that motor-bike," said Coker, looking an ass. "It's rot, isn't it?"

"Of course it's rot!" laughed Blundell. "The funds amount to ten pounds odd, don't they?"

"Yes."

"Well, here they are," said Blundell, opening the cash-box and displaying a little pile of notes. "Satisfied?"

Coker grinned sheepishly.

"Of course," he said.

Blundell looked out into the passage.



BLUNDELL'S DARING—Blundell was neck and neck with the runaway horse. Ahead, now only a hundred yards distant, was the dreadful corner. He knew he must act at once if he was to save the brougham and its occupant. He leaned forward and reached out for the reins. (See Chapter 2.)

Then a frown came over his smiling face. He had caught sight of Snoop, and he had been thinking about Snoop when Coker entered.

Blundell rose, rushed outside, and collared Snoop before he could escape.

"Here, what's the giddy game?" howled Snoop.

The Removites looked on interestedly.

"I want a word with you, youngster," said Blundell grimly. "Before these Remove kids, too!"

"Let go!" roared Snoop, in alarm.

"Not yet. I believe you're the chap who altered that one pound into a hundred pounds" said Blundell. "Own up if you did!"

"I didn't!"

"Don't tell lies—"

"I don't know anything about it!" bellowed Snoop, shaking with fright. "I took the letter off the postman. Oh, I—I mean, I—I—"

Blundell looked grim.

"So you took the letter off the postman, eh?" he said. "I think that's enough, Snoop."

"Rather!" put in Bob Cherry quickly.

"He knew all about it!" said Nugent.

"I didn't!" roared Snoop. "Let go, you rotters!"

"But why did he do it?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I think I know," replied Blundell.

"That same afternoon I caught him playing a rotten trick on a village kid, and I gave him a thorough lamming for it. He did it for revenge, I suppose!"

Bob Cherry set his lips.

"The evidence is concluded!" he said grimly. "The prisoner is proved guilty. Snoop, you howling rotter, did you do it?"

"No!"

"Then we'll bump you until you say you did," said Wharton cheerfully. "Don't worry, Blundell, old man. We'll attend to this worm!"

"I'll leave him in your hands," said Blundell.

"If—if you let me off, I'll confess!" blubbered Snoop, gazing round him frantically.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You have confessed now!"

"And we're not going to let you off!" said Nugent darkly. "I vote we give him a frog's-march round the Close, and then send him to Coventry until next Wednesday!"

Snoop was yanked outside, and Coker and Blundell were left alone.

"I'll be in the Form-room in a few minutes," said Blundell cheerfully.

"Good!" said Coker, and he left.

Blundell sat looking into the fire, and on his face was a smile of content. At last his worries were over.

And from outside a considerable uproar arose, and the strongest voice distinguishable was Snoop's. He was being treated to the first part of his punishment. And presently Billy Bunter's howl was added to the din.

Blundell got up and picked up the cash-box.

"It's been a rotten time," he murmured. "By George! I shouldn't like to go through it again. Thank goodness I've got this money safe and sound!"

And as Blundell looked at the club funds he made a mental vow that as long as he was captain of the Fifth he would never touch another penny which was not his own property.

THE END.

(Another fine tale of Greyfriars next week, chaps.)

THE POPULAR.—No. 210.

DICK TURPIN—HIGHWAYMAN!

The most Breathlessly Thrilling and Dramatic Tale of the famous Highwayman ever written—a Story that will Thrill the World.

The Days of Cloak and Rapier.

There is so much to tell you all about the grand new serial in the **POPULAR** that I scarcely know where to begin. It is the finest, most dramatic, and the intensest yarn David Goodwin has ever written. The author has made the study of his life the history of the old days of cloak and rapier, the stirring "cut and parry" times, when the roads of England were not safe; everybody went armed; the Members of Parliament left Westminster in strong parties under escort—that's the meaning of the old question heard nowadays of "Who goes home?" David Goodwin fairly jumps to the splendid spirit of the ancient times of dash and heroism. He styles his magnificent story as one describing a perilous friendship which gallant young Dick Neville had for the brave highwayman, Dick Turpin. We find in this tale the truth about the man who ranged the Old Country, whose word was at one time law; a fearless rider, a consummately skilful swordsman who could afford to laugh at the officers who pursued him, and were foiled again and again.

The King of the Highway.

Dick Turpin has become a hero of popular legend. I advise you to read about him and understand why this was so; why the owner of Black Bess figured as a noble fellow, on the lines of Robin Hood; for his sword flashed from its scabbard often enough in defence of the right, and to his friends he was true as steel.

Dick Neville, of Neville Court.

I am proud to have the opportunity of giving such a yarn in the good old **POPULAR**. It has the genuine ring all through—the gleam of high resolve, the old romance; while, as you read, you will feel a warm-hearted sympathy for Dick Neville, Turpin's friend. Neville, at one time in early youth, was a follower of



DICK TURPIN AT NEVILLE COURT!

Dick Neville started forward as the masked figure leapt lightly into the room. Then he gave a shout of joy. "Dick Turpin! 'Tis you!"

THE **POPULAR**.—No. 210.



BY
DAVID GOODWIN.

the highwayman; then the young fellow, by a sudden whirl of fortune's wheel, came into his estates. He was a great man. The country was at his feet; in his old baronial hall he feasted the greatest people of the countryside. And then Dick Turpin comes back on the scene. The highwayman is tracked to the splendid castle of his young friend. Dick stands loyal to his old comrade, and the results are bad for Neville. He is thrown back into the exile of the road because he has shown contempt for those who are after Turpin. He foils the King's Riders, and Turpin, who has found shelter under Neville's roof, shows the pursuers a clean pair of heels.

Back to the Road.

After this the action gets fast and furious. Neville is outlawed because of his complicity in the escape of Dick Turpin, but the young fellow had grown weary of a silk-cushion existence, and meets the disaster with the careless spirit of his race. Amidst these ups and downs of fate, the sets-back which would have chilled the marrow of many a man, we see a tremendous lot of the thrilling pageantry of the far-off time. You will be captivated with every line, and the breathless adventure and reckless, dare-devil spirit of it all cannot fail to grip you right away from the start to the brilliant wind-up. I am not going into that part, it would not be fair; but pluck wins, and it always will.

Real Old England.

I tell you frankly, a perusal of this finely-told story is a revelation. It is just as if Mr. David Goodwin had drawn aside a curtain on a radiant picture of splendour and vivid colour. We see the brave-hearted king of that remote age, and get a glimpse of palace and hovel, as well as of the white, ribbon-like roads down which Dick Turpin and his comrades rode at breakneck pace. They were the real fighters, meeting with cool audacity the deadly perils of each day. We see the quaint old hostleries where the famous highwayman found sanctuary time and again; the old strongholds of the noblemen, with their centuried trees and beautiful parks, the panelled rooms, the wide hearths

Moving Times.

You will be delighted with this record serial. Read it, and let me know your ideas. It pictures the grand old country in those moving times of wars and tumult, and history shows that some of the knights of the road were great gentlemen, ready to die for their king, prepared to serve their country through stress and storm.

Captain Sweeney—Footpad.

And you will be interested in the exploits of some of the characters who represent the lesser, shadier side of things. Just as your heart will be touched by the exhibition of affection of dear old Janet, the homely, good-hearted cook, who had served young Neville all her life, so will your contempt be excited by the low-down villainy of Captain Sweeney and his miserable gang of harpies. Just make a note of this rare treat that is coming. It will make you think more highly than ever of the **POPULAR**, if that is possible.

The Date!

Now I can tell you that this greatest of all serials commences in the **POPULAR**—**TWO WEEK'S HENCE!** Get your order placed now!



EXIT THE SNEAKTHIEF!

With a bound Dick Neville was beside Captain Sweeney—and the next moment had picked him up and thrown him clean through the window!

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By **MARTIN CLIFFORD.**

(Author of the Famous Tales of *St. Jim's* appearing in the "GEM.")

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Madness of Cardew!

CLANG! Clang! The telephone-bell rang loudly in Mr. Railton's study. The athletic young Housemaster was looking very worried. His responsibilities sat heavily upon him just then.

Nearly a quarter of the school was down with influenza, and it was a trying and an anxious time for all.

It was Saturday morning, and Mr. Railton had an appointment at the West Sussex golf course.

But golf had to be put on one side now. The Housemaster's time was divided between keeping order in the School House, and visiting the sanatorium to speak words of cheer to the unfortunates who had contracted "flu."

Clang! Clang! Mr. Railton picked up the receiver.

"Who is there?" he asked. "Harry Wharton, of Greyfriars, speaking. Is that *St. Jim's*?"

"Yes. I am Mr. Railton. Do you wish to speak to me, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir, if you can spare a few moments. It's about the Public Schools' Cup, sir."

"Oh, yes?"

"As you know, we were drawn to play *St. Jim's* in the second round. The match was played at *St. Jim's*, and it ended in a draw; so it had to be replayed at Greyfriars. The replay ended in a draw, also."

"I am aware of that, Wharton."

"Well, sir, it was decided that the two teams should meet again—on neutral ground this time. We are due to play *St. Jim's*, on the Rookwood ground, this afternoon."

"That is so, my boy. But—"

"I've just heard, sir, that an epidemic of 'flu has broken out at *St. Jim's*, and I'm most awfully sorry. It appears that Tom Merry is down with it, and nearly all the chaps in his eleven. The only four who have escaped are Figgins, Kerr, Wynn, and Redfern."

Mr. Railton sighed.

"Your information is quite correct, Wharton," he said.

"Then I take it, sir, that the match cannot be played? It's terribly hard lines on your fellows, because they will

have to cry off, and we shall automatically pass into the third round."

"Yes, I fear that is the case, Wharton."

"Then there is no need for me to take my team over to Rookwood this afternoon, sir? I presume there will be no match, and that Greyfriars will be counted as winners in the second round. It's an awful pity, sir, but there it is. The Cup-tie is down to be played to-day, and the Public Schools' Football Association makes no allowance for illness. Cup-ties can't be postponed like ordinary friendly matches."

"I quite understand, Wharton," said Mr. Railton. "But if you will kindly hold on for a moment, I will make inquiries to make certain that we are not sending a team to Rookwood this afternoon."

"I'll hang on, sir," said Wharton. Mr. Railton rested the receiver on his desk. Then he went along to the Shell passage.

It was strangely silent in the long corridor, which on Saturday mornings usually re-echoed to the sound of happy schoolboy voices.

Half the fellows were down with 'flu, and the other half—the survivors—were far from cheerful.

St. Jim's had entertained high hopes of being able to defeat Greyfriars in the second replay. But with Tom Merry & Co. ill in the "sanny," it seemed that all was lost.

Consequently, a cloud of depression hung over the school, and the Shell passage was as silent as a vault.

At the end of the passage was a notice-board; and it bore a newly-posted announcement, which caused Mr. Railton to make his way in that direction.

The Housemaster gave a start when he saw what was written.

The announcement ran as follows:

"PUBLIC SCHOOLS' CHALLENGE CUP."

"Second Round.

"ST. JIM'S v. GREYFRIARS."

"In spite of the fact that seven members of our regular eleven are down with influenza, it has been decided to play this important fixture.

"I have interviewed Tom Merry, and he has given me permission to raise a team, and to captain the same.

"This being the case, the following players will travel to Rookwood this afternoon: to meet—and, if possible, defeat—the Greyfriars Remove:

"Goal, Wynn; backs, Figgins and Kerr; half-backs, Roylance, Redfern, and Glyn; forwards, Cardew (capt.), Clive, Brooke, Dane, and Koumi Rao.

"We are not dismayed at the prospect of meeting the powerful Greyfriars eleven, and we mean to do all in our power to maintain the high traditions of *St. Jim's* football.

"(Signed)

"RALPH RECKNESS CARDEW."

Mr. Railton looked fairly staggered. "This—is this madness!" he muttered.

"Cardew must be out of his senses to imagine that a scratch team has a chance of defeating Greyfriars. I will go and see him at once."

The Housemaster set off in the direction of the Fourth Form passage. He tapped on the door of Cardew's study, and a cheery voice bade him enter.

The study was crowded. Cardew's eleven were there in full muster. Their bags, containing football equipment, were already packed; and Cardew had evidently been addressing them on the subject of the forthcoming match.

"Cardew!" exclaimed Mr. Railton. Cardew faced the Housemaster respectfully.

"Yes, sir?"

"I have just seen your announcement on the notice-board to the effect that you are taking a team over to Rookwood to meet the Greyfriars Remove."

"Yes, sir. We're just going to start."

Mr. Railton ran his eye over the assembled footballers.

"This is sheer madness, Cardew!" he exclaimed. "My knowledge of junior football is not very extensive, but I do know that the Greyfriars Remove have one of the fastest and most dashing sides in the south of England. Our regular eleven has met them twice, and failed to defeat them. How, then, do you suppose a scratch team will fare?"

"Why, we shall win, sir!" said Cardew cheerfully.

THE POPULAR.—No. 210.

A Split in the Ranks of the *St. Jim's* Footballers—"UNDER TWO BANNERS!"

"We'll go all out, anyway!" said Dick Redfern.

"Hear, hear!"

"Then you are really serious in this matter, Cardew?" said Mr. Railton. "This is not your idea of a joke?"

"We're in grim earnest, sir," said Cardew. "We mean business, as the Greyfriars fellows will find to their cost."

"Then I wish you well," said the Housemaster. "I admire your fighting spirit. At the same time, I cannot entertain the slightest hope of victory. The most I can hope is that you will not be defeated by too big a margin."

"You may take it from me, sir," said Fatty Wynn, "that although we may be beaten, we sha'n't be disgraced."

Mr. Railton saw that the juniors had made up their minds to go to Rookwood.

Cardew might be mad, but it was a splendid madness. The Saints were not going to be foiled by the influenza epidemic. If they could not send their best team to meet Greyfriars, they would send their next best; and from start to finish of the fatal ninety minutes they would play up with all the energy and dash of which they were capable.

The Greyfriars Remove had a great reputation. But names and reputations didn't trouble Cardew. Even the best teams have to bite the dust sometimes; and Cardew hoped and believed that Harry Wharton & Co. would meet their masters that day.

Mr. Railton nodded to the footballers, and went back to his study.

Harry Wharton was still waiting on the telephone.

The Housemaster spoke into the transmitter.

"I find, Wharton, that this Cuptie will take place after all. A team is being sent over to Rookwood from here, under Cardew's captaincy."

"My hat!"

Harry Wharton was frankly astonished. He had imagined that St. Jim's would cry off, and that Greyfriars, as a result, would pass into the third round.

"Is—is Cardew really serious, sir?" asked the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

"I have questioned him," said Mr. Railton, "and it appears that he was never more serious in his life. His team is starting for Rookwood now, and your eleven had better follow suit."

"Very good, sir," said Wharton. "Rather lucky I rang you up. We very nearly took it for granted that the match was off."

"I trust you will have a good game," said Mr. Railton.

And then he hurriedly rang off, to attend to his duties.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Game for the Gods!

JIMMY SILVER, of Rookwood, was a busy host that afternoon.

He had two teams to welcome. And his chums loyally assisted him.

Cardew's eleven was the first to arrive. They had not so far to come as Harry Wharton & Co.

The chums of Rookwood met them at the station. And Jimmy Silver's face betrayed his astonishment.

"Hallo!" he ejaculated. "Where are all the old familiar faces? What's happened to Tom Merry and Gussy and Talbot, and all the rest of them?"

"Down an' out, dear man," said Cardew; "bemoanin' their fate in the sanny at St. Jim's. There's an epidemic of 'flu at the school."

"Great Scott! So you've had to bring over a reserve eleven?"

THE POPULAR.—No. 210.

"Practically speakin'. We've still got our rock-like defence, an' that's a blessin'. Fatty Wynn's keepin' goal, an' Figgins an' Kerr are the backs. An' Dick Redfern has been spared to play for us at centre-half."

"But—but it's only a shadow of a team!" gasped Jimmy Silver.

Cardew smiled. "Are you suggestin' that the remainder of us are no good?" he asked.

"Nunno!" said Jimmy Silver hastily. "But there's no denying that you're not quite up to the weight of Tom Merry & Co. Methinks you will come a nasty cropper this day."

"We shall see."

The footballers and their hosts walked up to the school.

Harry Wharton & Co. arrived by motor charabanc shortly afterwards.

Wharton looked decidedly sympathetic as he shook hands with Ralph Reckness Cardew.

"Rough luck that all your best men should be away," he said. "I was in two minds whether to bring over our full team. I thought of including five or six reserves, to make the conditions more equal."

"I'm jolly glad you didn't!" said Cardew. "That would have been an insult to our footballin' ability. Besides, it will be a much greater honour to lick your best team than to lick a second-rate one."

FREE REAL PHOTOS AGAIN NEXT WEEK!

"Do you honestly think you've a chance?" said Wharton.

"We do."

"Well, I admire your optimism. Although I don't anticipate that we shall have a runaway victory, I've no doubt we shall finish on the right side."

"Of that there isn't a shadow of doubt, no possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever!" said Bob Cherry, quoting from the Mikado.

Jimmy Silver & Co. escorted the rival teams to the ground.

Practically all Rookwood turned out to see the match.

The Rookwooders themselves had been knocked out of the Cup competition in the first round. They had been drawn against Westminster School, and although they had put up a plucky fight in London, they had been outclassed.

But their interest in the Public Schools' Challenge Cup was not dead. They were very eager to see how the other schools fared; hence the big crowd.

As the rival elevens were changing in the dressing-room, Jimmy Silver turned to his chums.

"It's always been our policy to support the weaker side," he said. "So I vote we give St. Jim's all the encouragement we can."

"They'll need it," said Lovell.

"And they'll get it. They're jolly plucky to play the fixture at all, in the circus. So whenever your Uncle James starts a rousing cheer, mind you join in with the full force of your lungs."

"Trust us!" chuckled Raby.

"Here come the 'Friars!" said Newcome suddenly. "We must give them a cheer as well, you know!"

A burst of applause greeted Harry Wharton & Co. as they sprinted on to the ground.

In their dark-blue jerseys and white knickers, they looked a very attractive side.

All their faces were familiar to the Rookwood crowd.

Harry Wharton came first, dribbling the ball in front of him. Curly-headed Bob Cherry came next, chatting with his chum Mark Linley. Then came Nugent and Penfold and Vernon-Smith, greyhounds from the leash, so eager for the fray did they appear.

Hurree Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, got a special cheer from the crowd, for he was recognised as one of the best sportsmen in that team of true sportsmen.

Then came Peter Todd, the centre-half, who played football as if it were a game of chess—with his brains. Peter was a great tactician, and St. Jim's would find him a big stumbling block.

Lastly came the defenders—Johnny Bull and Tom Brown, and Bulstrode the goalie.

It was certainly a well-balanced side, and there was not a weak link in the armour.

After the briefest of intervals, Ralph Reckness Cardew came on to the field at the head of his men.

"Bravo, St. Jim's!" roared Jimmy Silver. "Give 'em a hearty cheer, you fellows! Hip, hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

Cardew's heart warmed with gratitude towards the Rookwood fellows. For they showed real sympathy for the weakened St. Jim's side.

Ralph Reckness won the toss. Was this a good omen? he wondered.

There was very little wind, but Cardew took advantage of the little there was, and elected to kick with it at his back.

The Saints, in their red and white striped jerseys, presented an odd appearance.

The defence was the same as ever, but the forward line was entirely new, Tom Merry, Talbot, Blake, D'Arcy, Levison—all were conspicuous by their absence.

But the new forward line looked very businesslike. Dick Brooke, who had already proved himself a footballer of real merit, was in the centre, with Clive and Clifton Dane on either side of him.

Cardew was to operate at outside-right, and Koumi Rao, who looked like Hurree Singh's twin brother, figured at outside-left.

"Now look out for squalls and cataracts!" murmured Jimmy Silver, as the referee sounded his whistle.

The 'Friars made headway in the first minute. Vernon-Smith went racing through, but was pulled up for off-side.

Again the 'Friars attacked, and Harry Wharton, beating Kerr in a race for the ball, sent in a hard drive, which rattled the crossbar.

"Buck up, the Saints!" yelled Jimmy Silver.

And the cry was taken up all round the ground.

The Saints did buck up—in a way that nobody bargained for.

Dick Redfern, with a judicious pass, set the forward line in motion, and Cardew & Co. made ground in fine style.

A shocking mis-kick by Tom Brown let in Clive, who feinted as if to pass to Cardew, but shot for goal instead.

Bulstrode was taken completely by surprise, and the ball whizzed over his shoulder into the net.

Which Team Will Play in the Next Round of the Challenge Cup—Cardew's or Tom Merry's?

"Goal!"

A stunned silence followed that astonished shout.

It was amazing—it was well-nigh incredible. The Saints, with their half team, had drawn first blood!

Cardew turned joyfully to Clive.

"It's a pity that demonstrations on the football field are taboo," he said, "because I feel like huggin' you!"

Clive laughed breathlessly.

"It was a soft goal," he said. "We shan't catch their defence napping so easily next time."

Bulstrode fished the ball out of the net with a rueful countenance.

That goal had come as a bombshell to the Greyfriars team. They seemed utterly dazed.

Play was resumed at a fast pace.

The 'Friars swung the ball from wing to wing, and made things as lively as possible. Nugent suddenly picked up a pass from Vernon-Smith, and cut in towards goal, only to be heavily charged off the ball by Figgins. It was a fair charge, but the game had to be held up for a few moments while Nugent received attention.

When Nugent resumed, limping a little, the 'Friars attacked more fiercely than ever.

Fatty Wynn had a hail of shots to deal with, and he disposed of them in his masterly style. Fatty was cool and self-possessed, and he had need to be, for critical situations continually arose.

For twenty minutes the St. Jim's citadel was bombarded before it fell.

Vernon-Smith tested Fatty Wynn with a fast cross-shot. Fatty pushed it out, but the ball fell at the feet of Harry Wharton, who made no mistake. He whipped the ball into the net, and the 'Friars had brought the scores level.

But they were not satisfied with this success. They had a long way to go yet, and they hoped to build up quite a big lead before the interval.

Again and again the 'Friars attacked, and the St. Jim's defenders played like Trojans.

Figgins and Kerr were ever in the thick of the fray, and Dick Redfern dropped back to assist them.

The 'Friars were having all the play now, but they were up against a brick wall. Their shots were charged down, or headed away, or punched clear by Fatty Wynn.

And so it went on until the very stroke of half-time, when Bob Cherry came galloping up, to score with an unstoppable shot. Fatty Wynn, with a bunch of players in front of him, completely lost sight of the ball.

"Two to one for the 'Friars!" murmured Jimmy Silver, as the teams came off for the interval.

"They are on top, but only just," said Lovell. "The Saints are making them fight every inch of the way."

"Yes, rather!"

"I think we shall see a thrilling finish," said Newcome. "Let's hope so, anyway."

It started to snow during the interval. The flakes fell thick and fast, covering the ground with a magic mantle of white.

But nobody gave a thought to the weather. If a typhoon were raging the game would have gone on.

It was typical Cuptie football in the second half. The players did not spare themselves, and no quarter was asked or given.

St. Jim's struggled desperately to make up the leeway. The backs were as sound as ever, and Roylance, Redfern, and Glyn were rare spoilers. Time and

again they broke up the Greyfriars attacks, and placed their own forwards in possession.

There were about three thrills a minute, but no goals.

On one occasion Koumi Rao showed the Greyfriars defenders a clean pair of heels, and worked his way into a fine scoring position, only to balloon the ball over the bar.

On another occasion, Bob Cherry was penalised for "hands," and Dick Redfern, who took the free-kick, almost scored with a rasping drive.

Meanwhile, the 'Friars were not idle. Their forwards were always dangerous when they got going; and they got going far too frequently for Cardew's liking.

Cardew himself was playing the game of his life. He had many duels with Johnny Bull, the burly Greyfriars back, and he nearly always came off best.

But there were times when Johnny, who did not stand on ceremony, sent Cardew crashing to earth. Yet he was on his feet again in a twinkling, and plunging into the fray with renewed vigour.

"That fellow," said Jimmy Silver, with sparkling eyes, "ought to have a permanent place in the St. Jim's eleven. He's a giddy wizard!"

But it was not until late in the game that Cardew's wizardry was rewarded.

The snow was falling fast, and ground and players and referee were smothered. White figures flitted and darted to and fro like phantoms.

Cardew wondered how many minutes remained for play. Not many, he knew. A desperate effort would have to be made now, or the Saints would go under.

As if he could read the thoughts that were passing through Cardew's mind, Dick Brooke suddenly gained possession

of the ball, tricked three men in succession, and swung across a perfect pass to Cardew.

Ralph Reckness was away like the wind. Johnny Bull and Tom Brown closed in to intercept him, but he darted through them as clean as a whistle.

Bulstrode saw the danger, and he dashed out of goal with the intention of taking the ball from Cardew's toes. But Cardew was too quick for him. He swerved to one side, and then crashed the ball into the unguarded net.

"Goal!"

The Rookwood spectators fairly let themselves go. Thunderous cheers boomed across the playing-pitch. Even the referee, a stranger to both teams, found himself clapping his hands together like an exuberant schoolboy.

"Level!" panted Jimmy Silver. "Oh, how great! Two goals each—"

"And five minutes to play!" said Lovell, glancing at his watch.

Those five minutes were destined to be more exciting than the remaining eighty-five put together.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

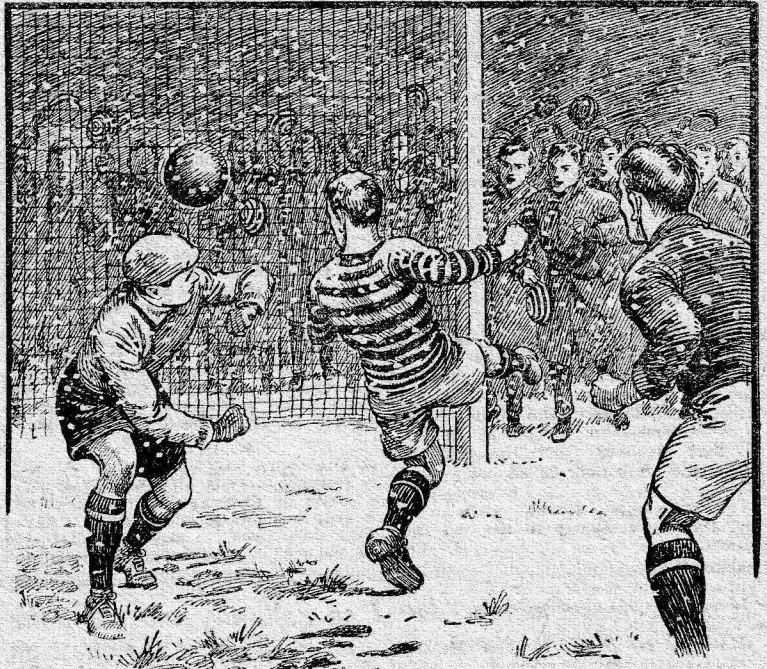
The Return of the Cup-Fighters!

CARDEW gathered his men around him for a brief consultation whilst the ball was being punted to the middle of the field.

"Time's nearly up," he said, "and there's no disguising the fact that we're practically played to a standstill. The 'Friars are fresher than we are. They've still got some reserves of energy to draw upon. But we haven't. An', therefore, it's up to us to get the winnin' goal durin' the next few minutes. If we don't, you know what will happen?"

"The referee will order extra time," said Roylance.

"Exactly! An' we're not fit—not one



A BATTLE ROYAL!—Bulstrode saw Cardew, and he dashed out of goal with the intention of taking the ball from his feet. But Cardew was too quick for him. He swerved to one side and then crashed the ball into the net. "Goal!" (See Chapter 2.)

of us—for another twenty minutes of this exhaustin' struggle. Look at Piggy! He can hardly stand. An' Glyn's on the point of collapse. So we've got to get that merry goal. We've simply got to—you understand? If we don't, we shall never survive the extra time. Play up, you men—for the honour of St. Jim's!"

Cardew's address was by no means such a masterpiece of eloquence as Henry the Fifth's speech before Agincourt. But it had precisely the same effect upon his hearers.

Just as the Britons of old plunged with renewed zest into the battle, so did the young Britons of St. Jim's plunge now. They swept down the field like a human avalanche, and the 'Friars were almost spellbound by their attack.

Cardew & Co. were playing as if the fortunes of an Empire hung in the balance. They literally hewed their way through the Greyfriars defence.

Dick Brooke shot hard and true for goal, but Bulstrode was upon the leather with the spring of a panther. He kicked clear, but Clifton Dane leapt at the ball and sent it crashing in again.

Bulstrode flung himself at full-length, and made another sensational save. He pushed the ball to the feet of Tom Brown, who cleared with a mighty kick.

And now the referee was consulting his watch, and the whistle was about to be put to his lips.

It was at this critical moment that Dick Redfern came into the limelight. He and Bob Cherry struggled for possession of the ball, and Redfern got it after a thrilling duel. He gave a swift glance round to see how his men were placed, saw that most of them were in a state of dire collapse, took the ball forward half a dozen yards, beating two men in the process, and then fired in a glorious drive from twenty yards out.

Bulstrode said afterwards that he thought a cannon-ball was being fired at him! He made a heroic effort to have, but the ball flew past him like a live thing, and landed in the top right-hand corner of the net.

It was the winning goal. Extra time would not now be necessary.

St. Jim's had accomplished the miracle; and the first person to wring the hand of Ralph Reckness Cardew was Harry Wharton.

"Oh, well played!" he panted hoarsely. "Jolly well played!" Cardew smiled happily.

"It just had to be done," he said simply, "an' we did it! Good old Reddy!"

And he seized both of Redfern's hands and shook them like pump-handles.

As for Jimmy Silver & Co., their delight knew no bounds. They cheered the triumphant team to the echo. And there were more sore throats at Rookwood that evening than the school matron could remember in all her years of service.

"Wonder how it's gone!" said Tom Merry, turning restlessly in his bed in the sanny.

"Oh, ten to nil against us," said Monty Lowther morosely.

The influenza had completely damped Monty's sunny spirits.

"Footah's a funny game, deah boys," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy—another of the influenza patients. "You nevah know what's goin' to happen next. Not a week goes by without a big team bein' licked by a no-account one. An' I wogard Cardew as a fellah of gweat tact an' judgment. It is just possible that he has forced a dwaw."

"No such luck!" said Jack Blake gloomily. "Cardew's a dashing, go-ahead fellow when he likes, but he can't work miracles."

A cloud of gloom hung over the sanny. It was with a sense of hopelessness that

Tom Merry & Co. awaited the return of the St. Jim's team.

Presently Mr. Railton came on the scene.

"Cheer up, my boys!" said the Housemaster pleasantly. "There is no need to be down in the dumps. I have just received a telephone message from Rookwood."

Eagerly the juniors sat up in their beds.

"Tell us all about it, sir!"

"We are on tentah-hooks, Mr. Wailton—"

The Housemaster smiled.

"I am informed," he said, "that five minutes from the end of the game the scores were level."

"My hat!"

"Somebody's been pulling your leg, sir!" said Tom Merry.

"Not at all, my dear boy. It was an authentic message from one of the masters. The score stood at two goals each at the time the information came through. I have no doubt that extra time is now being played."

This news sent Tom Merry & Co. into such a flutter of excitement that Mr. Railton became alarmed lest their temperatures should go up.

"I almost wish I had not told you," he said. "You must be calm, my boys, and await the return of Cardew's team with as much patience as you can muster."

An hour later the footballers returned, bringing tidings of great joy to the fellows in the sanny.

The news that Cardew's team had won was received with incredulity at first, and later with wild cheering.

Not even the most sanguine optimist at St. Jim's had expected anything like this.

The Saints, with only four of their regular players in the team, had actually defeated the famous 'Friars, and entered the third round of the Public Schools Cup competition.

Cardew, like a modest hero, faded away as soon as he had imparted the good news. But Figgins and Fatty Wynn lingered in the sanny, and gave Tom Merry & Co. a graphic account of the great match.

Monty Lowther, despite the matron's orders, leapt out of bed and executed a sort of war-dance.

"This is a day of days!" he exclaimed. "Haven't heard such good news for ages! It's completely cured my 'flu'!"

Although Monty's statement was received with laughter, it was surprising how quickly the patients recovered after the news of the St. Jim's victory.

Monty Lowther always declared, afterwards, that it was the good tidings that had wrought the cure. At all events, the epidemic died down within a very short time, and St. Jim's became normal again.

And, needless to state, the one topic of conversation in study and dormitory and Common-room was the Match that Made History!

THE END.

The RESULT of The "CHELSEA" COMPETITION!

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

MRS. A. BARRIE,

19, Barrie Terrace,

Ardrassan.

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

James Wilson, 8, Alexandra St., Perth, N.B.; Fred Lynn, Main St., Caledon, Co. Tyrone, Ireland.

The ten prizes of 5s each have been divided among the following twenty-two competitors whose solutions contained two errors each:

Mrs. A. F. Clinie, 15, Barrie Terrace, Ardrassan; Miss M. O. Aitken, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrassan; Chas. Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Rd., E.2; Maud Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Rd., E.2; William Tarbotton, 37, Lyndhurst St., Leeds Rd.; Wilfred Tarbotton, 37, Lyndhurst St., Leeds Rd.; Bradford; W. Boyd Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrassan; G. W. Dungworth, 334, Edmund Rd., Sheffield; Dolly Diver, 55, Rutland Rd., South Hackney, E.9; Eric Charnock, Skaton's Bridge, Scarborough, Ormskirk; W. H. Jones, 113, Bryn Rd., Tondur, Glam.; Vernon Murray, 13, Westbury Rd., Forest Gate, E.7; Frank Digby, 24, Lincoln St., Leytonstone, E.11; Jessie Rushton, 8, Albert St., Whitworth, near Rochdale; J. De Gruy, Market St., Woodstock, Oxon; Rose Kennedy, 4, Flanders Vennel, Perth; E. A. J. Crook, West St., Banwell, Somerset; A. W. Board, Dowel St., Houlton, Devon; J. Brunt, 17, Windows, Offerton, near Stockport; Stanley Barrie, 19, Barrie Terrace, Ardrassan; Clara Love, 20, Enmore Green, Shaftesbury, Dorset; Ronald Johnston, 168, Henderson St., Glasgow, W.

SOLUTION.

In the long record of football, no club ever rushed into fame with such astonishing suddenness as Chelsea. In 1904 they did not exist; now large numbers of football enthusiasts all over the globe have heard of their magnificent ground and proud record

Has the team which played so gallantly and won the second round of the Cup a right to play in the next round?—That is the question which started the trouble! Read all about it in next week's Dramatic, Long and Complete Tale of St. Jim's, entitled:

"UNDER TWO BANNERS!"

By
MARTIN CLIFFORD.

THE POPULAR—No. 210.

When Old Friends Fall Out— See Next Week's Dramatic Tale of St. Jim's!

The Wanderers' Great Fight in the Cup Final. Who Wins?



The RIVAL SPORTSMEN!

A Gripping New Sporting Serial, dealing with an amazing struggle for a great fortune.

By VICTOR NELSON.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

By the terms of the late Sir Charles Lestrade's will, Harry Lestrade and his cousin, Austin Courtney, must fight for the possession of the Lestrade fortune on the field of sport. The one who distinguishes himself most becomes owner of a vast amount of wealth. Harry Lestrade receives the first opportunity to distinguish himself in a local football match, and he is "signed on" to play for the Wessex Wanderers permanently.

Several other sporting events, in which both the cousins compete, are won by young Harry Lestrade. Furious at his non-success, Courtney tries underhand methods of getting Harry out of the struggle.

In the fourth round of the English Cup, Courtney's team, Romford Rovers, is drawn to meet the Wanderers. Courtney arranges with a reserve, Jem Newbold, who is up against Harry, to administer drugs to his team at half-time.

The dastardly scheme is carried out, and when the two teams commence the

play again, three of the Wanderers fall down unconscious. But in spite of this catastrophe, Codling, the captain of the Wanderers, decides to continue the match, playing short.

After a stern struggle the Wanderers defeat their opponents. Later Tony Wagg discovers that Newbold is responsible for the drugging, and Newbold is turned out of the club.

On Tearing Haste Harry wins the Grand National. Courtney is so furious that he meets Newbold, and they kidnap Harry Lestrade near the castle and remove him to a deserted saw-mill.

But their dastardly actions have been witnessed by Tony Wagg, who follows cautiously on their heels and arrives just in time to prevent Harry from being killed by a great revolving saw.

A fight between the trainer and the two rascals ensues, and help comes to Tony in the shape of the village constable. Courtney contrives to escape from the mill.

(Now read on.)

Courtney's Escape!

IN the moonlight Newbold saw a heavy bolt lying between the two sets of metals, evidently left there by some gang of plate-layers.

He snatched it up, and brought it down upon the temple of Briggs. The constable's grip upon him momentarily relaxed, and Newbold shook himself free of the officer's clutching hands and leapt to his feet.

It was at that moment that Tony Wagg came hopping on his one good foot towards the line.

Newbold hurled the bolt at the trainer, and had the latter not ducked, he might have received a serious injury. The ex-footballer wheeled about after that, and, leaving his late opponent lying between the metals, he raced away in the direction he had seen Austin Courtney taking.

Tony Wagg had lost his balance, and fallen to his hands and knees.

He picked himself up, and hopped to where Briggs lay in a state of only semi-consciousness.

"Hurt much?" Tony asked, as he fell to his knees beside him.

For a moment the constable did not reply.

He lay prone upon his back, with his eyes looking dazedly up into the trainer's face. Then he pulled himself together with an effort of will-power.

"The brute caught me a blow on the head with something heavy," he said unsteadily. "No, I am not badly injured. Help me up"—setting his teeth. "I mean to go after them. They shall not escape if I can help it."

"You are not fit," Tony protested.

"I am," the constable declared gamely. "At least, I soon will be. The effects of the blow he caught me will soon wear off when I am on my feet. Help me, man! I must

get them! Ah, I forgot for the moment that your ankle was crooked!"

"All right; I can help you," Tony said. He had risen, and, balancing himself on one leg, had seized the policeman under the armpits. "I hope you can arrest the dirty assassins; but look after yourself. They are desperate, and in the mood to stick at nothing."

Somehow, Tony had managed to help the half-stunned policeman to his feet.

For a few seconds Constable Briggs stood swaying dizzily. Then he took a grip upon himself, and, first walking unsteadily, then, as his brain cleared, breaking into a run, he set off towards the level-crossing.

Coming in sight of the road running past the residence of Sir Travers Randall, the policeman witnessed that which caused him to increase his pace, badly though his head was whirling and throbbing.

A motorist had been obliged to pull up near the house on account of a burst tyre.

He had jacked up his car, removed the wheel, and put on the spare one he carried. Making it fast and letting the car down on to it, the man had been restoring his tools to the box on the footboard, when Courtney had dashed into view.

The rogue had approached him with some plausible excuse. Then suddenly Harry Lestrade's cousin had leapt at the unsuspecting man and struck him a blow in the chest that had sent him staggering back into the ditch, when Courtney had leapt into the automobile.

The motorist had been game, however, in spite of being a man well past middle age.

Before Courtney could start the car, he had scrambled out of the ditch, and, dashing forward, had attempted to drag the young man from the seat at the wheel.

Courtney had struck at him and sent him reeling for the second time. But yet again the motorist had come back to the attack,

and, annoyed at the delay the man was causing him, Austin Courtney had jumped down into the road, and the two had gone at it hammer and tongs, Courtney slinging at giving the elder man a knock-out blow.

Austin Courtney heard running footsteps, and, sending the motorist staggering to one side with a heavy, swinging blow to the side of the head, he looked round apprehensively. To his relief, he saw that the runner was Newbold. He flung up his hands and warded off a fresh rush from the indignant and angry car-owner.

Newbold took in how matters stood at a glance. The motorist called to the ex-footballer to help him, little guessing that he was an associate of the man whom he had taken to be a car-thief.

Then, to the motorist's surprise, he found hands gripping at his throat from behind. He was held helpless and half-choked in Newbold's grip, whilst Courtney struck him several vicious blows full in the face.

The unfortunate man's knees sagged under him as his senses swam. Newbold picked him up bodily and lurled him down in the road. And this was just as Constable Briggs came at full pelt towards the road.

"Quick—into the car!" Courtney panted. "It's penal servitude—perhaps worse, if my accursed cousin was not saved!"

He had climbed into the seat at the wheel as he had jerked out the breathless words. With Briggs rushing towards him, Newbold sprang into the tonneau. Courtney threw in the clutch.

Constable Briggs jumped, trying to clutch at the side of the car. But he was just too late.

The automobile leapt forward, and the policeman thudded to his hands and knees in the road. He picked himself up in less time than it takes to write, and dashed away after the car. But he pursued it only for a few seconds.

It speedily drew away from him, and he pulled up, realising that it was useless to try to come up with it.

The Cup Fighters!

"HURRAH for the Wanderers!" "Bravo, the Wanderers! Show 'em what you're made of!"

"There's Codling! There's Wills and Arthur Richards—and there's Harry Lestrade! Give 'em a cheer, boys—a real good 'un!"

It was Cup-final day, and Chelsea's ground, on which the Wessex Wanderers were meeting Liverpool Invicta in the last great struggle for the coveted trophy, was packed to overflowing.

No matter in what direction one looked, it was to encounter a solid sea of faces. The stands were packed. Every inch of seating accommodation and standing room appeared occupied; yet the turnstiles were still clicking merrily, as more and more intending spectators poured on to the ground.

Both teams had now made their appearance, the Wessex men having just trotted out on to the pitch, with Codling, their captain, at their head.

After the thunderous cheers that went up for them from the great army of supporters who had followed them here, there fell upon the watching thousands a tense, expectant hush.

The two captains were shaking hands at the centre. The coin was spun, the Liverpool skipper guessing correctly. He made his choice of goals; though, as there was but little wind, there was not much in it.

As the teams lined up and Harry Lestrade fell into his position at outside-left, he looked the essence of fitness.

He had long since recovered from the blow from Newbold's sandbag on that night of a month ago, when the disgraced player and Austin Courtney had attempted his life. In fact, he had resumed his training and practising with his club within a week of his unpleasant experience.

After Courtney and Newbold had escaped in the car of the motorist they had attacked, Constable Briggs had hastened to have a description of the pair circulated. In less than an hour every police-station throughout the United Kingdom had details of their appearance, and knew that they were wanted for attempted murder.

But, in spite of this, Courtney and Newbold had contrived to slip through the net thrown out for them. The car they had

THE POPULAR—No. 210.

Coming Shortly—A Topping New Serial of Dick Turpin!

purloined was found abandoned near London, and it was thought that the two were still hiding somewhere in the metropolis.

Pheep! The referee's whistle shrilled, and Codling set the ball in motion.

Many of the spectators had been looking at their programmes. Some changes had occurred in the Wessex team.

Thurston had replaced Harry Lestrade in his usual position of inside-left, and Harry had been placed on the wing.

Tony Wagg, the Wanderers' trainer, had made an experiment, and tried him there in a practice match, and had found his speed and trickiness so wonderful, his centres so accurate, that he had decided Harry must play at outside-left in the Final.

Codling having the ball passed back to him after the kick-off, punted it straight out to Harry.

It fell at the feet of the boy who trapped it cleverly.

He started down the touch-line at a run and at a speed that caused the Liverpool men opposed to him to open their eyes. Harry tricked the right-half, making to play the ball this way and then that, and then, as the right-back tackled him, he centred to Codling.

The latter shot for goal.

It was a splendid, unerring drive, that was greeted with a salvo of applause.

Spees and Marjorie Randall and her father, who were in one of the stands, had transferred their eyes from Harry to the captain, and they caught their breath. But the Liverpool goalie braced himself, leapt, and fisted the ball away.

Harry was right up with the leather, but

the clever Liverpool back smothered him, and the ball went over the line.

A corner was given.

Harry picked up the ball and sprinted to the corner-flag. He deposited it in position, and waited.

The whistle sounded. The boy paused for a moment, hitching up his shorts. Then he ran at the ball, and sent it flying upwards with a splendid judgment. It fell fairly and squarely in front of the net.

Codling put his foot to it. It struck one of the uprights, and rebounded into play. A Liverpool back tried to clear. It was stopped by the chest of the leaping Harry, as he raced up, bounced away again, and landed in front of the goal.

Half a dozen feet got to it. It was screwed here and there, with the Invicta goalie waiting, heart in mouth, to pounce upon it. Out it came again, and Harry Lestrade's toe met it with a sharp thud.

Ah!

All over the enclosure breaths that had been indrawn were released. Scarcely a person who watched thought that the goal-keeper could save, as the leather described an arc dead for the net.

But the custodian showed the form that had won him his International. He sprang upwards and to one side, both hands outstretched.

He caught the sphere in his cupped palms, ran out, bounced it, and cleared almost to mid-pitch. It was a sensational save, and the whirring of rattles, the clanging of hand-bells, the clapping and wild cheers that came from the Invicta's adherents showed how keenly it was appreciated.

A bout of give-and-take-play was now seen, lasting some fifteen minutes, and

during all this time Harry Lestrade was somewhat starved.

The Liverpool attack was so determined that the Wessex forwards could not break away.

It was in the midst of this mid-field play that one of the Invicta's half-backs sent out to George Stone, the Liverpool team's well-known and deadly centre, who was placed some twenty-five yards from the Wanderers' net.

Stone took the ball on the run, and got the hide of his right boot to it. With the speed of a cannon-shot, it flew for the Wanderers' net, a regular pile-driver; it looked odds-on going through.

But Wills, the Wessex goalie, was not found wanting. His fist met the leather with a loud bouff! Arthur Richards pounced upon it, and ballooned it down the pitch, and a dangerous situation was saved.

Thus a game that was afterwards to be spoken of as one of the most strenuous in the history of football went on, and half-time came without either side having scored.

In the dressing-room Tony Wagg was somewhat sarcastic. He had discovered that it was good policy to "ladle out the acid," as he himself put it. Though the Wanderers could not have played a better game, the cunning Tony turned up his nose at it, and this had the effect he desired.

After the interval, the Wanderers came back on to the field with a determination to strain every nerve, every muscle, to prove the victors, and almost at once the forwards got away in a combined dash that left their opponents guessing.

(Continued on page 27.)

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THE POPULAR.—No. 209.

What You Have To Do.

Here is a splendid Footer competition which I am sure will interest you. On this page you will find a history of Bury Football Club in picture-puzzle form. What you are invited to do is to solve this picture, and when you have done so, write your solution on a sheet of paper. Then sign the coupon which appears underneath, pin it to your solution, and post it to "BURY" Competition, POPULAR Office, Gough House, Gough Square, E.C. 4, so as to reach that address not later than THURSDAY, February 1st, 1923.

The FIRST PRIZE of £5 will be awarded to the reader who submits a solution which is exactly the same as, or nearest to, the solution now in the possession of the Editor. In the events of ties the prize will be divided. The other prizes will be awarded in order of merit. The Editor reserves the right to add together and divide all, or any of the prizes, but the full amount will be awarded. It is a distinct condition of entry that the decision of the Editor must be accepted as final. Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

This competition is run in conjunction with "Gem," "Magnet," and "Boys' Friend," and readers of those journals are invited to compete.

I enter "Bury" Competition, and agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

Name.....

Address.....

P.....

"The Rival Sportsmen!"

(Continued from page 26.)

It was only the wonderful skill of the Invicta's custodian that prevented their actually netting a goal.

Within ten minutes this had happened again, the goalie having to fall flat, and only just managing to flit out in the nick of time.

The Invicta grew very much on their mettle. They met attack with attack, and, in their turn, menaced their adversaries' net.

Willis worked like two men, as did the backs. The watching thousands became too excited to shout. The silence that fell over the packed enclosure was almost uncanny.

Time began to grow short. There were those who predicted there would have to be an extension, when, with only some five or six minutes to actual time the leather was going monotonously in and out of touch.

Then, yet again, with Codling gaining possession, the Wanderers' forward line made a magnificent combined dash, the ball flying from one to another with a speed the spectators found difficult to follow.

Liverpool made determined, almost grim efforts to break up this onslaught. The referee watched keenly, for the play on their side grew distinctly rough. But the whistle he held clenched between his teeth remained silent, no actual foul occurring.

A shoulder charge grassed Codling. Thurston and a pursuing half collided and went down heavily together. The ball at the moment was at the toes of the inside-right, and, finding himself hard pressed, the latter took a chance by ballooning it over to Harry Lestrade, who was momentarily unmarked.

Just inside the touch-line Harry made a lightning dribble. He rushed the leather into the penalty area, curling inwards with it.

"Lestrade! Go on, Lestrade! Now, lad—now!"

The cries from the excited onlookers became deafening. In the stands people stood up and were yelled at by those behind to "Sit down!"

The right-back came at Harry with a rush. The boy side-stepped him and went on, with the other back speeding to tackle him and the goalie crouching between the sticks.

Just as the left-back reached the boy and thrust out a foot to whip the ball off his toes, Harry shot. It was a shot that the goalkeeper found unstopable, too.

He made a superhuman effort to save, but to no avail.

The ball missed his finger-tips and passed under the crossbar, coming to rest in the net.

"Goal!"

"G-o-a-l!"

The Wessex supporters, and others, too, yelled themselves hoarse. In fact, even those who had wanted to see Liverpool the victors applauded just as loudly, for almost to a man they were good sportsmen, and they simply could not help showing appreciation of football such as this.

And, amid the din, the referee's whistle phceped long and shrilly.

The game was over, and the Wessex Wanderers had won by the one goal to be scored.

The Cup was theirs—and through their youngest player, Harry Lestrade.

Even had not Austin Courtney abandoned the great sporting contest between himself and his cousin after his defeat in the Grand National, and, through his villainy, have become a fugitive from justice, the fortune could hardly have failed to go to the boy after this last great achievement.

Austin Courtney's Last Bow!

IT was late that night when Harry Lestrade returned to Wessex.

There had been celebrations in London by the club. After receiving the congratulations of Marjorie Randall, her father, and Specs, Harry had gone with his club to a well-known restaurant, where a dinner had been prepared, and then on with it to a couple of boxes that had been reserved at the London Hippodrome.

The lad had said good-bye to his teammates at the station, and he was now nearing Lestrade Castle, enjoying the brisk walk through a perfect moonlit night.

Harry Lestrade came within sight of the drive gates of his ancestral home, and he jerked himself out of the pleasant recollections of the evening's enjoyment that had been his.

A bent figure was approaching along the road in the opposite direction—that of an apparently very old man with long, unkempt white hair that fell from under a battered hat and rested upon his shoulders.

He was bearded, and, with the brim of his hat, casting a shadow over his face, very little of his features could be seen. He walked with the aid of a stick, and, as Harry drew nearer, he saw that his clothes were ragged and his boots so dilapidated that they looked in imminent danger of parting company with his feet for good.

The old man tottered feebly as he walked, and just as he reached the gates of the castle he swayed dizzily. He dropped his stick and shot out a hand as though to clutch at one of the gates for support. But, missing it, he collapsed in a huddled heap.

Harry Lestrade ran forward, fell upon one knee beside him, and raised him in his strong young arms.

"What's wrong?" he asked sympathetically. "I'm starving, young sir!" the vagrant answered, in a quavering voice. "I've not tasted food for three days, and—"

A sharp cry broke from the lips of Harry Lestrade. He had felt a sudden pain in his wrist, and, looking down, had seen that the old man held a syringe in his right hand.

In a flash Harry realised that he had been tricked. The syringe was a hypodermic one, and its needle had been thrust into his flesh. That some description of drug had been injected by it was certain, for already his head was beginning to swim and his vision growing blurred.

"You—you scoundrel!" the boy gasped weakly, as he tried to struggle to his feet. "You have drugged me! Who are you, and—"

The hands he shot out to clutch at the man who had tricked him were flung off. In

less time than it takes to write, he had been rolled beneath the seemingly aged vagabond, for his strength was rapidly leaving him.

In a haze the boy saw the face of his attacker glaring down into his. Just before he lost consciousness, he realised the truth.

The man's long white hair, his white beard, and straggling moustache had become palpably a disguise—a disguise from behind which the evil features of Austin Courtney peered out nakedly, a grin of fiendish triumph upon his lips.

Harry's Peril!

AS Harry Lestrade's muscles relaxed, his eyes closed and his head fell back, the disguised Austin Courtney leapt to his feet and whistled softly. From behind the trunk of a nearby tree at the roadside stepped another figure.

As its owner advanced and joined Courtney, it was possible in the moonlight to recognise him as Jem Newbold, the totally-suspended football player who unreasonably considered his downfall to rest at the door of Harry Lestrade.

"So you got him all right," he said, as he spurned Harry's limp figure with his foot.

He had grown a beard and moustache since the night of a month before when he and Courtney had made their attempt upon the boy's life in the saw-mill, which was perhaps the reason the police had not yet apprehended him.

"We'll make sure of the young prig this time, Courtney."

"We will," Austin Courtney spurned, as he stood for a moment looking down at the unconscious boy.

There was the light of something very like madness in his eyes. He had nursed his desire for revenge upon his cousin until it had become an obsession with him. His hatred of the boy who had beaten him cleanly and fairly in the great sporting contest between them, in spite of his own under-handed villainy, was now an all-consuming passion with him.

Quick! Let's get him into the car before someone chances along!" Courtney said. "We'll rush him to the coast and introduce him to the pleasant little surprise we have prepared for him," he added with an evil chuckle. "Then I'll give you the two hundred pounds I promised you if you saw this thing through with me, Newbold. We'll cross to Belgium and there part company."

"You don't think the skipper of that fishing-boat will let us down?" Newbold asked, after nodding.

"Not he," Courtney objected. "He is anxious to earn the fifty pounds I promised him to land us on Belgian soil and ask no questions. He'll be waiting all right, as he arranged."

Between them they picked up the inert form of the lad, and they carried it to where a small, closed car stood in the shadow of some other trees down the road.

They placed Harry within and lashed his wrists together behind his back. Newbold remained in the car with him whilst Courtney climbed into the driver's seat.

He threw in the clutch, and the car started forward. Courtney let it out and turned it into a road that led in the direction of Bexhill.

(The conclusion of our fine sporting serial will appear in next week's issue.)

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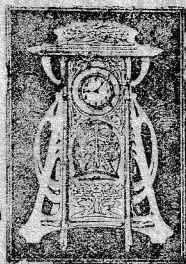
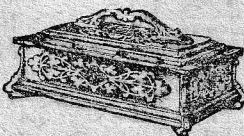
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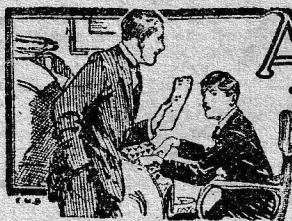
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"THE KIDNAPPING OF HOP HI!"

By Frank Richards.

There is no need to call next week's *POPULAR* a Chinese number. All the same, the Flowery Land is well represented as you will see from the above title, which concerns Greystriars and a most amazing event. There is something else, too, about China, but I will come to that part in a minute. It is enough to point out that the capture of the wily little Chinese is told with immense spirit. The yarn goes with a bang, and Hop Hi disappears. We have not heard half enough about the quaint little chap who is Al as a cook. But even a clever chink can be caught napping by kidnappers at time. Be on the qui vive for the mysterious stranger who has fell designs on the popular Celestial.

CHINA AGAIN.

Frank Richards & Co. have some rare business in "Heading North-West." That is the title of next week's *Backwoods* yarn. Yen Chin means to join up with the expedition into the further wilds. Frank Richards, Vere Beauleuer, and Chunky won't hear of it. Chunky is at fault here. Chunky hates doing the "chores," and you can bet your boots Yen Chin would manage all that. The ingenious Chin does not take "No!" for an answer; he is as obstinate as Bunter himself. Note his ruse with the concealed pin, and the stupefaction of Miss Meadows. The

Cedar Creek chums are tracked into the wilderness by Yen Chin. You will be interested in the amazing incidents in this rollicking story.

EXIT THE "TEMPORARIES."

The Rookwood fellows never took the new masters seriously. You remember how the strike of the real masters at Rookwood was countered by the introduction of a troop of new hands. The latter were N.G.—in the opinion of the stalwarts of the school. Next week's ripping story is called "A Successful Campaign," by Owen Conquest. It reveals the ignominious fate reserved for the temporary masters. They were a futile lot of stopgaps. Rookwood may have been pleased to see them or not, but, anyway, it had no use for them.

"UNDER TWO BANNERS."

Next Tuesday's yarn of St. Jim's and the football feud is prodigious. It goes with a record swing. Cardew and Tom Merry get at loggerheads. It actually comes to this over the furious football fight—there are two teams. Cardew intends to go his own road—i.e., have his own way, always the style with the strong man, and Ralph Reckness is all that. The developments are ingenious and impressive. Both leaders have a powerful following, and the two camps figure splendidly. I can refer you to this tale of Mr. Martin Clifford with easy confidence, for it is a winner.

MR. BUNTER'S WEEKLY.

You have to stand on ceremony with the Porpoise at times. Peter Todd may lament the distinguished personage with a cricket-stump now and again, but the fact remains that Bunter is distinguished, and since he has been a shining light of the Greystriars Parliament (vide the "Magnet" Library) it seems only right and proper to treat the Owl with respect. Peter Todd can continue with his cricket-stump eccentricities, but Bunter rises superior to such setbacks. Next week W. G. B. produces a *Fat Boy's* Number of the famous supplement. Who said Peckham? You will be disposed to say the new issue is the merriest yet, and that means no end. Bunter as editor goes on from triumph to triumph. He has over-awed the printer, and his chariot, so to speak, rolls gloriously through all the weird regulations of grammar. Bunter is sui generis—you might pass the Latin tag, for even the revered Owl of Greystriars lapses into the classic language at times.

IN EVERY WAY AND EVERY DAY.

This ancient phrase is attributed to M. Cœne, but it can be applied to the steady upward movement of the *POPULAR*, which gets better and better. Mr. Victor Nelson's fine serial, "The Rival Sportsmen," has reached a really dramatic culmination, and the new serial will be starting soon. The title is:

"STAND AND DELIVER!"

That is what you will be disposed to say to any reluctant newsgiver who hesitates to part with his last copy of the *POPULAR*, just because the man wants to read Mr. David Goodwin's dashing highwayman yarn himself. But just order early, so as to make sure. There will be an extra rush, of course. The new romance of Dick Turpin is a brilliant bit of writing. It would be a shame to miss a line.

Your Editor.

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